



# HYPERREALISM: THIS IS NOT A BODY

## AN UNEXPECTED FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER WITH OUR HUMANITY

Québec, February 25, 2026 — **From February 26 to October 12, 2026**, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is hosting the Canadian premiere of *Hyperrealism: This Is Not a Body*, as part of an international tour that has taken it to 17 cities from Bilbao to Québec City. This major exhibition showcases a selection of works exemplifying hyperrealist sculpture on a national and global scale. **Featuring some forty breathtakingly realistic pieces by 35 artists from Québec, Canada and abroad**, it explores how the human figure has been depicted in sculpture from the 1970s to the present day.

Hyperrealism is an artistic trend that emerged in the 1960s in the United States as painters and sculptors broke with abstraction to cultivate this new form of realism inspired by contemporary society. Drawing inspiration from the special effects used in cinema, these artists use innovative materials such as silicone, fibreglass, and resin to recreate the appearance and textures of the human body in great detail. The technical precision with which bodily details of these pioneers and subsequent generations of artists is such that their works seem to confront us with real-life replicas.

This uniquely designed exhibition brings together sculptures by pioneers of the genre and renowned artists such as **Berlinde de Bruyckere, Maurizio Cattelan, Carole A. Feuerman, Duane Hanson, Sam Jinks, Tony Matelli, Ron Mueck, Evan Penny, Patricia Piccinini, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, and George Segal**. The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec presentation is also enriched by creations by Québec and Canadian artists who are part of this artistic movement that straddles the edge of reality: **Alain Benoit, Stanley Février, Louis Fortier, Milutin Gubash, Karine Payette, and Mark Prent**.

Acting as mirrors of the human condition, these pieces reveal the transformations in society and our relationship with the body over the last fifty years. These artists' illusionist approach gives substance to reflections on the human experience. Their works address universal themes such as childhood, old age, loneliness, self-perception, the passage of time, and death, while offering critical perspectives on contemporary society that go far beyond the challenge of mere verisimilitude.

Is it a real character? Is it a sculpture? Their three-dimensional pieces blur the boundaries between art and science, exploring themes such as simulacra, genetic manipulation, and self-awareness. The exhibition's title echoes René Magritte's famous painting "Ceci n'est pas une pipe," [This is not a Pipe] which questions the relationship between art and reality.

"A gallery of larger-than-life characters awaits you at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. These pieces by prominent hyperrealists from here and abroad raise fundamental questions about our relationship with the body in both our personal lives and society as a whole. It's a deeply moving exhibition and a human-scale experience that leaves no one indifferent," says **Jean-Luc Murray**, Director General of Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

"Presenting *Hyperrealism: This Is Not a Body* in Canada for the first time is a great honour, especially at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. It is an incredible privilege to host this exhibition in a city renowned for its exceptional cultural heritage and in one of the country's most esteemed museums. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Musée's team, who have made it possible to enrich the exhibition with a selection of exceptional additional works from Québec and Canada," explains **Maximilian Letze**, Managing Director of the Institut für Kulturaustausch and curator of the exhibition.

"The exhibition provides a fascinating insight into the vibrancy and contemporary relevance of hyperrealism. As our ability to distinguish truth from falsehood is undermined by artificial intelligence, the boundaries between the real and the virtual are becoming increasingly blurred. The meaning of our existence and our humanity must now be seen from new perspectives. Hyperrealists accompany us on this great adventure, showing us less-travelled paths," says **Caroline Lantagne**, the MNBAQ's exhibitions curator and curator of the Québec presentation.

## AN INTERNATIONAL TOUR: FROM BILBAO TO QUÉBEC CITY

This touring exhibition, which began in 2016 at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Bilbao, Spain, and has been acclaimed by audiences and critics alike, has also been shown in Monterrey, Taipei, Brussels, Paris, Rome, and Osaka, among others. Organized and toured by the Institut für Kulturaustausch in Tübingen, Germany, it is now stopping in Québec City **for the first time on Canadian soil.**

The Québec presentation features works by Québec and Canadian artists and gives pride of place to several pieces from the MNBAQ collection. It also includes loans from the National Gallery of Canada, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Giverny Capital Collection, and the Art Mûr gallery, which represents artist Karine Payette.



## ARTISTS WORKING AT THE FRONTIER OF REALITY

This exhibition showcases the pioneering hyperrealists whose work has had a significant impact on the evolution of sculpture in the last fifty years. At a time when the art scene in the United States was dominated by abstraction, American artist **Duane Hanson** was one of the first to create sculptures that imitated the real presence of “ordinary people” with uncanny verisimilitude. The exhibition includes *Two Workers* (1993) and *Bodybuilder* (1985–1990), sculptures based on live models and complete with clothing and accessories.

**John DeAndrea**, his counterpart, relies on complex moulding techniques in search of perfect realism and is inspired by the codes of classical statuary. New Yorker **George Segal**, active in the 1960s, made

a name for himself worldwide with his monochrome sculptures featuring figures moulded from life and engaged in familiar activities against a backdrop of real objects.

The exhibition also explores the evolution of hyperrealist sculpture and brings together other major artists who continue this quest for realism, including **Sam Jinks**, **Ron Mueck**, and **Marc Sijan**. Their emotionally powerful works capture intimate moments of human experience, such as the birth of a child or old age. While some of their works are on a human scale, others challenge our perception of reality by playing with scale and size in uncanny ways.

Australian artist **Patricia Piccinini** transforms human figures into strange creatures and creates improbable hybrids, as seen in *The Comforter* (2010). Together with **Evan Penny**, who uses digitally manipulated images, she makes us consider the impact of biotechnology and genetic modification.

Some pieces also serve as a starting point for exploring social and political issues. One example is *Ave Maria* (2007) by Italian artist **Maurizio Cattelan**, who is renowned for his satirical and irreverent creations that poke fun at art and institutions.



Several Québec artists also offer reflections on social issues. Cast from the kneeling body of Haitian-born artist **Stanley Février**, *this flesh* (2017–2019), highlights the violence experienced by people of African descent. Forged from a larger-bodied model, Alain Benoit's *Stud/Template* (2003) questions social and aesthetic norms dating back to antiquity. In *On Either Side* (2016), Montrealer **Karine Payette** examines the utilitarian relationship between humans and other animal species.

## EXHIBITION NARRATIVE: 50 YEARS OF HYPERREALIST SCULPTURE

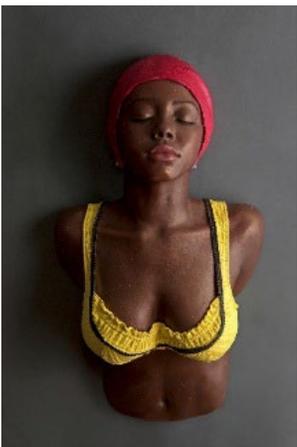
The exhibition, which is presented on the first floor of the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion, is divided into six sections that showcase the myriad possibilities explored by hyperrealist artists. **Each section is organized around a central concept pertaining to form** and provides a basis for considering the work of individual artists. The selection offers a condensed yet ambitious overview of hyperrealism's trajectory and illustrates the extent to which representations of the human form are subject to constant change. Throughout the tour, **a selection of videos has the artists themselves reveal to visitors some of the secrets behind the works.**

### 1. DECEPTIVE MOVES: HUMAN CLONES



In the 1960s and early 1970s, Duane Hanson and John DeAndrea created remarkably realistic sculptures using complex technical processes. The high degree of realism achieved created an illusion of physical authenticity, and the effect was so convincing that it gave the impression of being in the presence of flesh-and-blood alter egos. The hyperrealists of this period largely modelled their work on real humans, family members or close friends. As a result, “real” bodies entered the gallery space. This surprising innovation has transformed the codes of art by connecting it directly to reality.

### 2. PIECE BY PIECE: PARTS OF THE BODY



Representing the human body one part at a time. This tendency can be traced back to the early 1980s and the work of the American sculptor, Carole A. Feuerman. Her famous swimmer sculptures appear to be in complete harmony with themselves: introverted and self-determined. Thereafter, beginning in the 1990s, many artists began to give a new, individualized format to the hyperrealist effect. Instead of creating the illusion of flawless corporeality, a whole entity, they focused on specific parts of the human body, using them as a vehicle for humorous or even disturbing messages. For instance, Maurizio Cattelan's *Ave Maria* (2007) uses isolated arms to evoke contemporary history.

### 3. CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE: PLAYING WITH SCALES

In the 1990s, the Australian artist Ron Mueck revolutionized figurative sculpture with his works in unusual formats. By radically enlarging or reducing the size of his figures, he focuses attention on existential themes like birth or death. Artists like Sam Jinks and Marc Sijan capture the fragility of life in their representations of human physiognomy— representations that, despite being partially smaller than life-size, are nevertheless astonishingly realistic. By contrast, the oversized works of Valter Adam Casotto and Ron Mueck produce a distancing effect, situating the human, and the viewer, in a new perspective.

### 4. NOBLE SIMPLICITY: MONOCHROME SCULPTURES

In the 1960s, after many years of predominance of abstract art, George Segal's monochrome sculptures reopened the door to realistic representations of the human figure. The absence of natural colouring initially diminishes the effect of realism, yet it serves to further enhance the aesthetic qualities of the human form. Subsequent generations of artists made effective use of this effect, creating such works as a means of posing questions about universal human nature.



### 5. THE MANIPULATED SELF: DEFORMED REALITIES

In recent decades, countless advances in science and new perspectives emerging from the digital age have radically shifted our understanding of reality. Influenced by virtual reality, artists like Evan Penny and Patricia Piccinini began to observe bodies from distorted perspectives. Tony Matelli defies the laws of nature, while Berlinde De Bruyckere questions death and the ephemeral character of human existence with her twisted bodies.

## 6. THE HUMAN CONDITION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, diverse figurative trends have emerged, enriching the ongoing exploration by artists of the human condition. The various facets of hyperrealism—realism, classical idealism, fantasy—sustain its links with earlier art movements, such as Surrealism, while pursuing the quest for meaning that lies at its heart. More than ever before, we are obliged to navigate between the real and the virtual. Our ability to distinguish truth from falsehood is being compromised by artificial intelligence, and the idea of modified humans looms ever larger. The meaning of our existence and our humanity must now be seen from new perspectives. Hyperrealist artists are there to accompany us on this journey and sometimes to suggest alternative routes.

### THE HUMAN FIGURE, FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

As visitors leave the exhibition, they can see a **timeline showing how representations of the human body have evolved in art history** from antiquity to the present day. It features famous works such as a statue of Aphrodite dating from the 5th or 4th century BC, Michelangelo's *David*, the *Venus de Milo*, the *Statue of Liberty*, and Constantin Brâncuși's *The Kiss*.

### STAGING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec exhibition features an original, luminous design that places visitors in direct contact with the artworks. The vast, uncluttered spaces allow you to observe these creations in fine detail and appreciate the various techniques employed by the hyperrealists. Light, treated as matter, plays an essential role. As visitors wander from one room to the next, they pass through scenes of everyday life and more intimate, hushed spaces before being immersed into a futuristic atmosphere. Each setting offers a fresh way to experience these disturbingly realistic works.

## EXHIBITION CURATION



MAXIMILIAN LETZE

Managing Director, Institut für Kulturaustausch  
Exhibition curator

Maximilian Letze started his career at the Institut für Kulturaustausch, where he organized his first international exhibition in 2002. He has held the position of Managing Director since 2015, focusing on international exhibitions in modern and contemporary art. To date, he has curated over 40 exhibitions worldwide. Letze studied Liberal Arts and Business Management at Emerson College in Boston and at Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi in Milan. He also earned an MA in Global Studies from the Erasmus Mundus Consortium (Universities of Leipzig, London Business School, and Wrocław University) in 2011.



CAROLINE LANTAGNE

Exhibitions Curator  
at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
Curator of the Québec presentation of the exhibition

Caroline Lantagne has a bachelor's and a master's degree in history from Université Laval and has been curating exhibitions at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec since 2025. Prior to joining the MNBAQ team, she held the position of Exhibition Project Manager at the Musée de la civilisation in Québec from 2011. She completed numerous projects there, including the permanent exhibition *This is Our Story. First Nations and Inuit in the 21st Century*, which won the 2014 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Museums: History Alive! More recently, she curated the 2023-2024 exhibition *Love Me Gender*, which won the Prix d'excellence from the Société des musées du Québec and the Janette-Bertrand Award from Fondation Émergence, which recognizes significant contributions to the fight against homophobia and transphobia.

## RELATED ACTIVITIES

### AUDIO GUIDE



Take a free tour of the *Hyperrealism: This Is Not a Body*. exhibition and surround yourself with its disturbing representations of the human body. This audio tour invites you to explore a selection of outstanding works that showcase the artists' meticulous techniques, highlight the interplay between illusion and reality, and explore the ethical, social, and emotional issues raised by these sometimes larger-than-life figures. It's a fantastic opportunity to discover an artistic movement that challenges perceptions and questions the senses.



### GUIDED TOURS

#### Guided tours in French

February 28 to October 12, 2026

Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m., 3 p.m., and 7 p.m.

*Tours also available on Friday, April 3  
and Monday, April 6*

Price: free for ticket holders

The Museum tour guides will take you to the heart of a movement where the body becomes a field of exploration—part technical marvel, part disconcerting illusion—raising profound questions about our relationship with reality.

*Exceptionally, no tours on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Guided tours in English will be offered during the summer months. Prices subject to change without notice*



### CINEMA: LE FIFA YEAR-ROUND

#### *Still Life: Ron Mueck at Work*

Sunday, March 1, 2026, at 11 a.m.  
and 1:30 p.m.

Location: Sandra and Alain Bouchard  
Auditorium

Price: Member: \$0 | Regular: \$12

Over the course of two years, Australian artist Ron Mueck granted filmmaker Gautier Deblonde access to his small London studio. This documentary offers a glimpse into the meticulous creation of three works by an artist who is as discreet as he is sensitive.

Director Gautier Deblonde | Documentary | 48 min. |  
2013 | No dialogue



## CONFERENCES

### *Hyperrealism: This Is Not a Lecture.*

Wednesday, March 25, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Sandra and Alain Bouchard Auditorium

Price: Members and ages 18–30: \$8

Regular: \$12

With **Caroline Lantagne**, curator of the Québec presentation of *Hyperrealism: This Is Not a Body* and **Bernard Lamarche**, curator of contemporary art (1960 to present) at the MNBAQ, discover how hyperrealist artists from here and around the world have shaped representations of the human body over time.

## SCHOOL BREAK

From March 2 to 6, during the school break, there will be activities for the whole family linked to the exhibition. Visitors of all ages are invited to explore the senses through a variety of activities, including an immersive sound experience, a guided tour of the exhibition and a body painting workshop developed by the artist Karine Payette.

To find out more: [mnbaq.org/school-break-family](https://mnbaq.org/school-break-family)



## FAMILY WORKSHOP

### *A notebook of one's own*

May 17 to June 21, 2026

Every Sunday, 1:15 p.m. and 3 p.m.

*\* Also offered on Monday, May 18, for National Patriots' Day*

Location: Famille Godin Passageway

Price: \$7 per person

In this workshop, you and your family can create a unique notebook in the style of a mini album or sketchbook. This hand-bound booklet will provide a precious place to record your thoughts. Used as a window on the present, it can be an anchoring point to which you return in the future.

LE **FIFA**

Quand le contact à l'art  
fait du bien présentée par



## AT THE MUSÉE'S LIBRAIRIE-BOUTIQUE



Open during museum opening hours, the Librairie-Boutique offers inspirational objects related to the exhibition as well as books on the theme of the body. You can pick up one of three postcard-sized reproductions of hyperrealist masterpieces for \$4, or one of three magnets inspired by the exhibition. And of course, don't forget your limited-edition signature tote bag for \$25.

## EXHIBITION CREDITS

*Hyperrealism. This Is Not a Body*

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec

Pierre Lassonde Pavillon

February 26 to October 12, 2026

An exhibition conceived and toured by the Institut für Kulturaustausch, and adapted by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Institut für  
Kulturaustausch



## INTERNATIONAL TOUR

Maximilian LETZE, Managing Director of the Institut für Kulturaustausch and curator of the exhibition

Lena POHLMANN and Lukas KOST, project coordinators

## EXHIBITION AT THE MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

Jean-Luc Murray, Director General

Anik DORION-COUPAL, Director of Exhibitions and International Partnerships

### **Curation and texts**

Caroline LANTAGNE, curator

**Curatorship**

Bernard LAMARCHE, curator of contemporary art (1960 to present)

**Design and graphics**

Philippe LEGRIS

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Our sincere thanks go to Tempora, creator of the timeline content.

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

Québec 

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ACCESS

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec  
Battlefields Park  
Québec City, QC G1R 5H3

Main entrance  
179 Grande Allée W.

### TO CONTACT US

418-643-2150 or 1-866-220-2150 (Toll-free)  
mnbaq.org

### OPENING HOURS

Monday	CLOSED
	10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (June 29 to September 7, 2026, inclusive)
Tuesday	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday	10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Thursday to Sunday	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
School break	Exceptional opening
Monday, March 2	10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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

### ADMISSION\*

Members	Free
Ages 31–64	\$25
Ages 65+	\$24
Ages 18–30	\$18
Ages 13–17	\$8
12 and under	Free
Family*	\$54
(2 adults and up to 5 children under 17)	
Indigenous communities	Free

Half-price on Wednesdays, 5–9 p.m.

\* Prices and times subject to change without notice

### AVAILABLE SERVICES

Parking, Librairie-Boutique, Wi-Fi, free wheelchairs, cloakroom, and nursing room

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR [NEWSLETTER](#)

A great way to stay up to date on MNBAQ news, events, and activities!

### FOLLOW US



\* Save when you buy a ticket online.

## PHOTO CREDITS

From top to bottom, left to right:

Tony Matelli, *Josh*, 2010. Silicone, steel, hair, urethane and clothing, 77 × 183 × 56 cm, edition of 3. Collection of the artist © Tony Matelli // Photo: Courtesy of the artist and the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Sam Jinks, *Woman and Child* (detail), 2010. Silicone, silk, human hair, acrylic, nylon, polyurethane foam, wood, edition of 3, 145 × 40 × 40 cm. Collection of the artist © Sam Jinks // Photo: Courtesy of the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney and the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Marc Sijan, *Cornered*, 2014. Polyester resin and oil paint, 74 × 38 × 71 cm. Collection of the artist © Marc Sijan // Photo: Courtesy of the artist and the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Alain Benoit, *Stud/Template*, 2003. Urethane and metal, 1/3, 170 × 80 × 70 cm. MNBAQ, purchase with a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts (2008.77) © Alain Benoit // Photo: MNBAQ, Denis Legendre

Stanley Février, *cette chaire*, 2017-2019. Plaster, wax, polyurethane foam and oil paint, 143 × 92 × 66.5 cm. MNBAQ, purchase (2019.1040) © Stanley Février // Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Duane Hanson, *Bodybuilder*, 1989-1995. Autobody filler, polychromed in oil, mixed media, with accessories. Courtesy of the Estate of Duane Hanson and Gagosian // Photo:

Carole A. Feuerman, *General's Twin*, 2009-2011. Oil on resin, unique variant of 6, 2/6, 61 × 38 × 20 cm. Galerie Hübner & Hübner, Frankfurt, Germany © Carole A. Feuerman / CARCC, Ottawa, 2025 // Photo: Courtesy of Galerie Hübner & Hübner and the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Evan Penny, *Panagiota: Conversation #1, Variation 2*, 2008. Silicone, pigment, hair, aluminum, 69 × 275 × 15 cm. Collection of the artist © Evan Penny // Photo: Courtesy the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Patricia Piccinini, *The Comforter*, 2010. Silicone, fiberglass, steel, human hair, fox fur, clothing, 60 × 80 × 80 cm. Olbricht Collection, Germany © Patricia Piccini // Photo: Courtesy of the artist and the Institute for Cultural Exchange, Tübingen

Maximilian Letze

Caroline Lantagne // Photo: MNBAQ, Emmanuelle Letendre-Lévesque

Guided tour at the Museum // Photo: MNBAQ, David Cannon

Bernard Lamarche and Caroline Lantagne // Photos: MNBAQ, Emmanuelle Letendre-Lévesque

Still from the film *Still Life: Ron Mueck at Work*

Family workshop at the MNBAQ // Photo: Emmanuelle Letendre-Lévesque

Postcards from the exhibition *Hyperrealism: This is Not a Body* // Photo: MNBAQ, Emmanuelle Letendre-Lévesque

– 30 –

## Source: MNBAQ

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