

## Introduction – Place des Montréalaises exhibition

Proudly displayed on Montréal's new place des Montréalaises, the photographic exhibition *Women: Inspiring Citizens* introduces us to women who are helping Montréal soar in social, scientific, and cultural terms.

The twenty-one exceptional women featured in the exhibition have won recognition in one or more of the following categories:

In the **Creative** zone, passionate artists from different backgrounds help create Montréal's cultural identity, using art to advance the causes they care about.

The **Committed** category spotlights women who are performing miracles. Inexhaustible in their dedication, they work tirelessly, each in their own way, to improve their community's quality of life. Their reach often extends beyond Montréal's geographical boundaries.

The **Ground-breaking** category presents strong-minded women who have opened locked doors, achieving success beyond anything we could have imagined. Thanks to them, women in Montréal today can say: "Yes, for us, anything is possible."

The **Learned** category highlights the exciting work carried out in Montréal's universities by women who are world-famous scholars and scientists. Acting on many different levels, these women of learning are both pushing back the limits of knowledge and helping to make it accessible to all.

This exhibition makes no attempt to provide a comprehensive portrait of women's many remarkable contributions to our city. *Women: Inspiring Citizens* is simply intended as a tribute to some of these women, seen through the lens of talented photographer Frédérique Ménard-Aubin.

A deliberate choice has been made to spotlight women whose name and face are often unfamiliar to the general public, but whose achievements have left their mark on the metropolis. Each portrait is intended to honour the strength and commitment of women who, throughout their exceptional journey, are helping our city flourish day after day. Their profiles are as different as their origins, their fields, and their roots in Montréal's different neighbourhoods. What these women have in common is that they are unique Montrealers – and deeply inspiring citizens.

## Place des Montréalaises

Inaugurated in November 2017, **place des Montréalaises** is an urban public space bridging the gap between Montréal's downtown and its historic sector. Providing a dazzling view of the city, **place des Montréalaises** is a new meeting-place that citizens are invited to appropriate for themselves and make into one of Montréal's most vibrant sites.

## **CREDITS**

A City of Montréal exhibition organized by the Division de la culture et des bibliothèques of Ville-Marie Borough.

### **Commissioner**

Élisa Mottard

### **Photographer**

Frédérique Ménard-Aubin

### **Graphic designer**

Isabelle Toussaint

### **Reviser and translator**

Catherine Browne

### **Makeup artists**

Marie-Claude Bernier

Marilyn Duval

Dominique T. Hasbani

Valérie Duhamel (assistant)

Claudia Morin-Arbour (retoucher)

### **Selection Committee**

Conseil interculturel de Montréal

Conseil jeunesse de Montréal

Conseil des Montréalaises

YWCA Montreal

### **Documentary podcast**

Portrait sonore

### **Musicians (documentary podcast)**

Sylvaine Arnaud, double bass

Évelyne Grégoire-Rousseau, harp

Corinne René, percussions

### **Acknowledgements**

Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports

Sébastien Dallaire – Generique Design

The City of Montréal warmly thanks the twenty-one inspiring women portrayed in this exhibition for their openness, their welcome, and their enthusiasm at every stage of the project.

## **Joanne Burgess**

### **Learned**

Joanne Burgess has made her mark on the Canadian academic world through her research on Montreal's history and heritage.

The Laboratoire d'histoire et de patrimoine de Montréal, which she founded in 2006, is still directed by her today while she continues her career as a professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Specializing in the history of work and industrialization in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Québec and Canada, she has focused on Montréal's industrial and commercial development from 1840 to 1960 and the impact of this development on Montréal society.

In 2016, Universities Canada identified her as one of fourteen "Researchers and innovators to know" for her team's work in developing exciting new digital research and communication tools relating to history and heritage.

Joanne Burgess is a remarkable educator who regularly works with history museums so that knowledge of Montrealers' shared history can be made available to all.

## **Henriette Kandula**

### **Committed**

Henriette Kandula, a deeply committed advocate for the rights of Québec's Black communities, is a social entrepreneur known for her work with immigrants.

Kandula is the director of Chantier d'Afrique du Canada (CHAFRIC) and sits on the board of several other community organizations including Afrique au féminin, the Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité et l'accessibilité aux soins de santé et des services sociaux (ACCÉSSS), and the Black Youth Socio-Economic Development Summit – the latter bringing together some thirty-odd organizations. She has also taken part in public consultations, consistently advocating for the social and economic integration of Black communities and their active participation in Québec society.

Henriette Kandula is an indefatigable grassroots activist who is convinced that people from Black communities must not only take, but also make their own place in order to achieve full participation as citizens.

## **Brunilda Reyes**

### **Committed**

Arriving in Québec in 1995, Brunilda Reyes, originally from Chile, chose to settle in the borough of Montréal-Nord. Determined to support the community that had welcomed her and to provide help to those who need it most, in 2001, she founded a social economy enterprise called *Les Fourchettes de l'espoir*.

The organization headed by Brunilda Reyes acts on several fronts to increase economic and social equality. One of its goals is to provide low-income families with access to healthy and reasonably priced food. *Les Fourchettes de l'espoir* also organizes workshops to help people develop healthy life habits, which are supported by its collective kitchens program. Teenagers and young adults are supported through participative and social reintegration activities, as well as community housing projects designed to answer their needs.

## **Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire**

### **Ground-breaking**

Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire has worked to build bridges at every stage of her impressive professional career.

She was the first woman to earn a degree in civil engineering from Polytechnique Montréal, in 1963, and was also the first woman in Québec to work in consulting engineering. Her remarkable path led her to a number of key positions including Québec's General Delegate abroad and, more recently, chair of the Board of Directors of the Corporation of École polytechnique de Montréal. Once again, in both cases, she has been the first woman to take on the job.

During her time as President and Chief Executive Officer of Centraide of Greater Montréal, from 1991 to 2012, she built bridges between the wealthiest and the least affluent.

Ms. Thibodeau-DeGuire has received five honorary doctorates and is a member of Québec's National Order, the Order of Canada, and the Canadian Academy of Engineering. She was named a Fellow of Engineers Canada in 2011 and a Commander of the Order of Montréal in 2016.

## **Phoebe Greenberg**

### **Creative**

Phoebe Greenberg, businesswoman and film producer, is one of Montréal's most important patrons of the arts. In the heart of Old Montréal, she has created two powerfully resonant spaces dedicated to creating works of art and making them known to the public. Both are renowned for the quality of their avant-garde programming.

Passionately interested in the visual arts, Greenberg set up DHC/ART, a foundation dedicated to presenting contemporary art, in 2007. Every year, its programming includes two or three major exhibitions, public events, collaborative interdisciplinary projects, and educational activities.

In 2012, Greenberg went on to create Phi, a multidisciplinary artistic and cultural hub. Located in the Phi Centre, this institution brings together the visual arts, film, music, design, and technology, fostering encounters between disciplines and between artists and the public.

The creative spaces founded by Phoebe Greenberg are now internationally recognized. They support artistic development, help make art accessible to all, and actively contribute to Montréal's identity as a true cultural metropolis.

## **Maude Massicotte**

### **Committed**

Maude Massicotte was 23 years old in 2015 when she founded DéfPhys Sans Limite to provide outings and social activities for people, with or without a disability, who are between the ages of 18 and 30. Living with cerebral palsy herself, Maude puts her energy into advocating for greater inclusion of people living with functional limitations.

While still directing the organization she founded, Maude also works as a trainer at Formation AlterGo.

To encourage the full social participation of people living with physical disabilities, Maude is active on all fronts, fighting for adapted housing, universal accessibility, and the rights of people with impaired mobility in various areas including homecare and access to support.

Maude Massicotte is on the board of four organizations that support people living with disabilities, raising public awareness of the daily challenges they face and working to help them achieve greater inclusion as full citizens.



## **Binh An Vu Van**

### **Learned**

Scientific journalist Binh An Vu Van is a young woman who has been acclaimed for her remarkable work on public radio and television as well as her contributions to a wide range of magazines.

Vu Van is chiefly interested in the impact of science on society and, more broadly, on humanity. Her training in physics and computer science, combined with her talents as a communicator, enable her to dissect and popularize scientific information, making it accessible to all.

She is also concerned with the political and economic contexts in which science evolves. As president of the Association des communicateurs scientifiques from 2012 to 2015, she denounced censorship and its effect on the practice of scientific journalism.

While continuing to work as a journalist, in January 2017, Binh An Vu Van was appointed by the Government of Québec to the Commission de l'éthique en science et en technologie.

## **Yvette Bonny**

### **Ground-breaking**

Yvette Bonny, who became a Knight of Québec's National Order in 2007, is a distinguished pediatric hematologist.

She began teaching at the Faculty of Medicine of the Université de Montréal in 1972, helping to advance her discipline through research on a variety of childhood diseases including leukemia and sickle-cell anemia.

As director of the pediatric bone marrow transplant unit at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital from 1980 to 1998, Dr. Bonny was the first person to carry out a bone marrow transplant in Québec. During this period, she was responsible for all of the bone marrow transplants carried out on children in Québec.

In addition to her remarkable career, Yvette Bonny, born in Haiti, has shown an outstanding level of community involvement. Entraide bénévole Kouzin Kouzin and the Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal are two of the organizations that she supports.

## **Louise Nadeau**

### **Learned**

Louise Nadeau is emerita professor in the Department of Psychology of the Université de Montréal, and associate researcher at McGill University's Douglas Mental Health University Institute.

Her research interests include addiction to alcohol and gambling, driving under the influence of alcohol, and the prevention of recidivism. She is the chair of Éduc'alcool's Board of Directors.

Dr. Nadeau's research activities and clinical practice are characterized by an approach that combines social, clinical, and biomedical aspects. Using this approach, she has studied women with problems related to the use of psychoactive substances, helping to counteract prejudices about them.

The remarkable quality of Louise Nadeau's work was recognized when she became a Knight of Québec's National Order in 2017 and a member of the Order of Canada in 2018.

## **Nadia Myre**

### **Creative**

Nadia Myre is one of the most important figures in Indigenous art in Canada today. Of Algonquin origin, she has created a pluridisciplinary body of work dealing with identity, language, longing, and loss. Her work uses a participatory approach in which meeting and interaction with the other, or with a place, become a necessary element of creation.

The works of Nadia Myre are featured in Canada's most important public and corporate collections, including those of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. She was artist in residence at the McCord Museum in 2016, and her first solo exhibition in Montreal, *Tout ce qui reste – Scattered Remains*, was presented the following year at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.

Nadia Myre has received many awards and distinctions, including the prestigious Sobey Art Award (2014). She has also represented Canada at international biennales and participated in group shows in the United States and Europe.

## **Annie Pullen Sansfaçon**

### **Learned**

Annie Pullen Sansfaçon is a professor at the Université de Montréal School of Social Work. Focusing on anti-oppressive approaches and ethics, she has developed a unique expertise on resistance to the various kinds of oppression faced by trans children, trans young people, and their families.

Her research is recognized for its positive social impact and has been honoured by organizations such as the Women's Y Foundation, which gave her the 2017 Women of Distinction Award for Research and Innovation. The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse also presented her and her daughter with the Droits et libertés award in 2016.

Annie Pullen Sansfaçon is the cofounder of Gender Creative Kids Canada, a Montréal-based community organization established to sustain communities of parents of transgender children, support the children themselves, and foster understanding and acceptance of trans identities.

## **Lise Bissonnette**

### **Ground-breaking**

Lise Bissonnette is a visionary who, through the strength of her convictions, has made a remarkable contribution to the development of Québec culture and its accessibility.

Writer, journalist, and editor, she directed *Le Devoir* – a major Québec daily – from 1990 to 1998. To ensure the newspaper's long-term viability, she oversaw its financial restructuring during this period and the renewal of its contents and design.

Lise Bissonnette was then appointed by the Québec government to direct an extraordinarily ambitious project: the creation of the Grande Bibliothèque du Québec. Under her leadership, from 1998 to 2009, the institution was born and was successively merged with the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec and the Archives nationales du Québec.

Since its opening on April 30, 2005, the Grande Bibliothèque as imagined by Lise Bissonnette has continued to draw record numbers of visitors and is today one of Québec's leading cultural institutions.

## **Louise Arbour**

### **Committed**

Louise Arbour has distinguished herself through an exceptional career in the highest legal bodies in Canada and in the world.

In Canada, she was a judge of the Ontario Supreme Court and the Ontario Court of Appeal before being appointed to the country's Supreme Court, where she sat from 1999 to 2005.

At the international level, Ms. Arbour has performed Herculean tasks on behalf of the United Nations in the area of law and human rights. She was Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and acted as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2004 to 2008. Ms. Arbour returned to the United Nations in 2017 as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for International Migration, working to support the development of a first global compact on safe, orderly, and regular migration.

The Honourable Louise Arbour has received many titles and awards, including 40 honorary doctorates. She has been a Companion of the Order of Canada since 2007 and a Grand Officer of the National Order of Québec since 2009.

## **Donna Mergler and Karen Messing**

### **Learned**

Donna Mergler, neurophysiologist, and Karen Messing, ergonomist, are emerita professors at the Department of Biological Sciences of the Université du Québec à Montréal.

Their studies of environmental health, carried out in partnership with communities, labour unions, and other organizations, have won them great distinction. CINBIOSE, which they founded together in 1990, is a centre for interdisciplinary research on biology, health, society, and the environment.

Donna Mergler's research in Québec, and with Indigenous communities abroad, examines the neurotoxic effects of pollutants in the environment and in the workplace.

Karen Messing has worked with labour unions and women's groups to analyze the constraints associated with low-wage work chiefly assigned to women, including problems derived from prolonged standing.

Donna Mergler and Karen Messing have received many distinctions, and the Research Chair on the Methodology and Epistemology of Joint Research has established an award in their name which is given to the best papers presented at the Chair's annual symposium.



## **Natasha Kanapé-Fontaine**

### **Creative**

Natasha Kanapé-Fontaine, poet/interpreter, actor, visual artist, and advocate for the rights of Indigenous people, has chosen an artistic approach that is based on exchange.

Her social commitment, focused on the struggle against discrimination, has been inspired by the Idle No More movement as it appeared and spread throughout Canada. Literary creation is one of the ways in which she encourages us to reflect on reconciliation, healing, our relationship to the other, and exchanges between peoples.

Her four critically acclaimed books of poetry, including the recent *Nanimissuat Île-Tonnerre*, were published between 2012 and 2018. With Deni Ellis Béchard, she has also cowritten *Kuei, je te salue*, an epistolary exchange on racism particularly intended for young people and designed to start a dialogue on difference.

In Québec, in Canada, and now elsewhere in the world, Natasha Kanapé-Fontaine is an exceptional Innu artist who uses art to advocate peacefully for the values that she holds dear.

## **Léonie Couture**

### **Committed**

La rue des Femmes, a relational health centre dedicated to helping women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, was founded by Léonie Couture in 1994.

Along with accommodation and healthy meals, the organization provides curative and preventive care, enabling these women to restore their relational health and rebuild their life.

La rue des Femmes offers a lasting solution to the suffering caused by violence, exclusion, poverty, and marginality. The organization's profoundly humanitarian mission is based on recognition of the fundamental right to health and safety.

Deeply committed to the cause of women experiencing homelessness, Léonie Couture became a Knight of Québec's National Order in 2012 and was inducted into the Order of Canada in 2017.

## **Caroline Ouellette**

### **Ground-breaking**

Caroline Ouellette is one of Canada's greatest female professional hockey players.

She has won a gold medal four times at the Winter Olympic Games, in Salt Lake City (2002), Turin(2006), Vancouver (2010), and as team captain in Sochi (2014).

Today, she continues to shatter records as a forward for Les Canadiennes de Montréal. In the winter of 2018, she became the highest scoring player in the Canadian Women's Hockey League. So far, she is a four-time winner of the Clarkson Cup, the women's equivalent of the Stanley Cup.

Alongside her career as an athlete, Caroline Ouellette has founded Girls Hockey Celebration, a nonprofit that organizes a yearly event for over 800 young girls from novice to pee-wee divisions. This event allows the best female pee-wee players to take part in the prestigious Québec International Pee-Wee Hockey Tournament. In 2010, the City of Montréal gave her name to the Caroline-Ouellette skating rink in Étienne-Desmarteau Arena, in Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie borough.

## **Victoria Kaspi**

### **Learned**

Victoria Kaspi is an internationally renowned Canadian astrophysicist who has been a professor at McGill University since 1999.

Her research deals chiefly with neutron stars, on which she is a leading expert. These heavenly bodies characterized by extreme physical properties are remnants from the explosion of massive stars. The world's most powerful radio and X-ray telescopes are required to study them.

In 2016, Kaspi became the first woman to receive one of Canada's most prestigious scientific awards, the Gerhard Herzberg Gold Medal for Science and Engineering.

Through her work, Victoria Kaspi contributes to the excellence of teaching in Montréal universities. She is also a highly positive example encouraging young women to show interest in scientific fields.

## **Vania Jimenez and Amélie Sigouin**

### **Committed**

La Maison Bleue is a nonprofit organization created in 2007 by Vania Jimenez and her daughter, Amélie Sigouin.

Family doctor, researcher, clinician, author, and mother of seven, Vania Jimenez immigrated to Canada at the age of 18. When she and her daughter founded La Maison Bleue, they brought together the resources needed to support pregnant women in vulnerable situations and to promote the child's optimal development up to the age of five. La Maison Bleue provides both medical and psychosocial support, enabling families living precariously to access a full range of professional services.

La Maison Bleue has followed over 4000 people since it first opened and currently operates in three Montréal neighbourhoods, Côte-des-Neiges, Parc-Extension and Saint-Michel.