

Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal

A brief description of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal:

Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal is a major international biennale that investigates issues relating to contemporary photography. Bringing together artists, curators and other specialists of the image, the biennale creates a unique and exciting opportunity for studying the transformations of the image in our contemporary culture. Over the years, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal has become an important focal point within the field of contemporary photography.

Each presentation of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal consists of an array of free exhibitions distributed in various partner exhibition sites across the city, public space interventions, an important and lushly illustrated academic publication, a colloquium, a series of artists' talks, conferences, workshops and other educational activities. In addition we organize numerous festivities and networking opportunities for the general public, artists, curators, critics, and others interested in photography.

A brief history of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal:

Initially organized by VOX centre de diffusion de la photographie in 1989 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the invention of photography, the first presentation of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal included more than sixty exhibitions as well as a large number of related, stimulating activities. This original event was a catalyst, creating a gathering place unprecedented in the Montreal and Canadian artistic community, and served as an inspiration for transforming Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal into a biennale.

From the beginning, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal pursued the goal of educating the general public about photography as an art form. Over the years, interest in and appreciation for photography has grown among both local and international audiences. Photography is currently presented in galleries and museums; it is practiced by a larger number of artists; and it is increasingly sought after for private and public art collections. Through its activities, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal has contributed significantly to the recognition that Canadian and international photography and photographers currently enjoy, locally, nationally and internationally.

Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal today:

In September 2002, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal became an autonomous not-for-profit corporation and the change in administration was accompanied by a shift in the artistic direction for the event. For its 2003 presentation, Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal adopted a more artistically rigorous and cohesive approach for the biennale. A new Guest Curator, who proposes a compelling theme, is hired for each presentation of the event. This curator organizes all the exhibitions, the publication, the colloquium, and other activities around this single, unifying theme.

For the 2003 event, photographic historian, critic, writer and curator, Vincent Lavoie assumed this role and his theme was; *MAINTENANT. Images du temps présent / NOW. Images of Present Time*. All the exhibitions, the publication, and other activities formed a fascinating analysis of how contemporary photo-based artists were dealing with current and historical events; subject matter that is normally the domain of photojournalists, documentary photographers, and paparazzi. The 2003 publication received the coveted Grafika Grand Prix award for books.

In 2005, by virtue of a series of exhibitions, a publication and related activities, curator and photo historian Martha Langford examined the oft-neglected spectatorial imagination with her theme *Image & Imagination*. The 2005 publication has been short-listed for the Association of American University Presses' Book and Jacket Award in the illustrated scholarly category.

An important artistic, critical and public success, the 10th anniversary presentation of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal investigated the narrativity of the image. With her theme *Explorations narratives / Replaying Narrative*, 2007 Guest Curator Marie Fraser proposed a constellation of exhibitions that illuminated Montréal. Innovative and multidisciplinary in approach, many of the exhibitions looked at photographic issues through the lens of other practices, exploring the relationship between photography and other contemporary arts disciplines in regards to story-telling. We received over 330,000 visitors to our 2007 event.

For Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal 2009, French photo historian and independent curator Gaëlle Morel elaborated her theme of *Les Espaces de l'image / The Spaces of the Image* in which issues of scenography and installation were explored. The 2009 event was a particularly strong accomplishment in which the 24 solo exhibitions and public space interventions by artists issuing from 13 countries, the publication, the colloquium, and other activities formed a thoughtful, stimulating and coherent look on this rarely-addressed issue in contemporary photography.

The success of the consolidated curatorial/exhibition formula as manifested in our last four events confirms our vision of a strong and coherent biennale. In fact, in 2009, we were proud to have received Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation's inaugural Arts Achievement Award for our organization's important impact on the art of photography over the years. In an article published by Photo District News in 2007, Simon Bainbridge, the editor of the British Journal of Photography, situated Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal among the top ten photography festivals in the world.

We are delighted to name Scott McLeod as Guest Curator for Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal 2011. Scott McLeod is Director and Curator of Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art (Toronto) as well as an independent curator. The 12th presentation of the biennale, whose theme will be announced shortly, promises to be a particularly stimulating and engaging event.