

# A tent full of art

## Papier 11, at the Place des Festivals, aims for a spot on world art fair map

BY JOHN POHL, THE GAZETTE   APRIL 9, 2011

Art rears its pretty head on the Place des Festivals next weekend as the city's galleries woo the public with a big tent full of works on paper that are billed as quality art at affordable prices.

Papier 11, the Contemporary Art Galleries Association's annual art fair, boasts free admission and a guidebook that discusses one featured artwork from each of the 38 participating galleries. The exhibitors, mostly from Montreal but including a number of prominent Toronto galleries, will show art in a temporary structure at the north end of the festival plaza at Bleury St. and Maisonneuve Blvd., Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

The art fair's public vernissage is Friday evening, but there is also a \$125-per-ticket benefit opening on Thursday, where you can mingle with some of the 400 artists whose works are on display, while enjoying wine and fine foods.

Jean-François Bélisle, director of AGAC, the gallery association, said last year's Papier 10 at the Blackwatch armoury resulted in sales of \$500,000 for the 24 participating galleries. The armoury was a great venue, but too small, he said, for an event that hopes to put Montreal on the world art fair map. Place des Festivals, now the permanent home for outdoor events like the jazz festival, is both centrally located and highly conspicuous. The construction of the 15,000 square-foot rigid tent in the days leading up to the fair will itself draw a lot of attention, he said. Outside, on the plaza, eight cube structures with reproductions of art will lead visitors to the tent, where they will be handed "a printed version of an audioguide."

"This could be the visitor's first contact with the art world," Bélisle said. "We want to make it nicer, more interesting."

Every hour, guided tours, in French and English, will be conducted by volunteers from art history programs at Université de Montréal, McGill, Concordia and UQAM. There were hundreds of replies to the art fair's call for volunteers, he said, indicating a high level of interest in this year's fair.

Bélisle dismissed the idea that Montreal is not a good art market. "It's not what I'm finding," he said. "There's a big market for \$500 pieces, and all the galleries are ready to finance purchases" with monthly payments.

Also, he noted that works on paper are generally less expensive than paintings.

Roy Heenan, founder and chairman of the Heenan Blaikie law firm and patron of Papier 11, said "everybody is bound to see something they like." At a fair, he noted, "you have a chance to compare works with others."

Heenan said in a phone interview that he has acquired 1,000 works of art - most by living artists - over the past 50 years. His advice to beginning collectors? "Don't buy as an investment, but buy what pleases you and helps you relax."

Here are three works featured in the Papier 11 guide, written by Amanda H. Beattie:

Gabor Szilasi's *Lac Balaton* is a photograph from 1954 featuring a man and a woman on a motorbike. "The motorcycle's speed draws the viewer into the thrill of a fleeting movement that will soon be out of frame," Beattie writes. Blurring the background eliminates the context to focus on the couple. "The viewer is invited to wonder about what connects this man and woman."

For Art45's Serge Vaisman, who is showing the Szilasi photograph, it's a "timeless moment where we are all young and free and fast. It is a forward-looking and optimistic photograph and I think this is the reason for its appeal to so many."

Alex McLeod created *Mountain Lake Terror* on a computer. The playful quality of the lustrous shapes clashes with the title of the work, Beattie writes. She notes a haunting stillness whose human presence is inferred by the boat stranded in the ice. "This print has a sensuous quality that entices spectators, inviting them to step into the artist's world and explore it from within."

Émilie Grandmont Bérubé, whose Galerie Trois Points is showing McLeod's work at the fair, says McLeod's dreamscapes cause the viewer "to question his dichotomy between the real and the virtual."

Galerie Simon Blais is showing work by Jacques Hurtuboise, including *Cracula*.

"Unexpected colour combinations establish a dimensionality that makes fragments of the image pop off the page," Beattie writes. "Combined with the geometric grid, this forms a steady image of a frenetic scene."

Nathalie Miglioli, who wrote an essay for a current show of Hurtuboise's prints, sees a trajectory in the frenetic scene that corresponds to a journey. "In front of the static eye, everything vibrates, everything ripples."

At Papier 11, a journey into the world of art awaits.

Papier 11 takes place on Place des festivals adjacent to the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Thursday through Sunday, April 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Information: [www.papiermontreal.com](http://www.papiermontreal.com). A roundtable discussion about collecting art starts at 2: 30 p.m. Sunday, April 17.

Tickets for Thursday's benefit opening can be purchased at [www.papiermontreal.com](http://www.papiermontreal.com), by email at [info@agac.qc.ca](mailto:info@agac.qc.ca), or by calling 514-798-5010.

There is only one more week to catch the large, 50-year survey of Hurtuboise's printmaking at Maison de la culture Frontenac. His dedication to clear colours and lines can be seen in his earliest works, but their freehand pencil lines are only matched for their freshness in some silkscreen prints of

floating lines in pink and black from 1979. More recent are digital prints from 2004 using road maps as backgrounds, which by 2010 come forward as abstract lines and ovals to unite the foreground composition.

Entre la soie et l'encre. Hurtuboise: cinq décennies d'impressions, continues until April 17 at the Maison de la culture Frontenac, 2250 Ontario St. E. For more information, go to [www.accesculture.com](http://www.accesculture.com).

Today is the final day of ART-SIDA, an art exhibition at Galeire Dentaire, 1239 Amherst St., leading up to next week's auction of work by 60 artists from Montreal, including Zilon, Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, that will benefit HIV AIDS Community Care Montreal. The auction takes place on Thursday, starting at 7 p.m. at Hôtel des Encans, 872 du Couvent St. The evening starts with cocktails and a buffet at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$35. Information: [www.artsida.org](http://www.artsida.org).

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