

Are You Talking to Me? Conversation(s),
Works converse at the UQAM Gallery

From January 16 to March 15, 2003

Montreal, January 7, 2003 - The Galerie de l'UQAM is presenting an exhibition entitled *Are You Talking to Me? Conversation(s)*, bringing together 25 artworks and texts based on the idea of conversation. The concept is by **Louise Déry**, Director of the UQAM Gallery, who organized the project, together with **Didier Prioul**, a specialist in Canadian art history, and **Marie-Pierre Sirois**, a professor of Literature at Cégep de Maisonneuve, with a Masters in Museology. The exhibition catalogue was prepared with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Arts Council of Canada. The vernissage will be held on Wednesday, January 15 at 5:30 p.m. and the exhibition will open the following day.

Are You Talking to Me? Conversation (s) brings together works by fifteen Canadian artists and texts by ten authors who agreed to “play the game” by offering their response to the exhibition title. The dates of the works, (from 1830 to 2002), their media (video, painting, photography, sculpture, etc.), and the genres of the texts (fiction, dialogue, text/image) have created a vibrant project of remarkable variety.

The visitor will be confronted with *La Corriveau* by Alfred Laliberté, *La République* by Dominique Blain, Joyce Wieland's *O' Canada*, Kate Craig's *Delicate Issue*, Ozias Leduc's photographic self-portrait (circa 1899), to name just a few, and will be able to read a dialogue between Socrates and Plato by Georges Leroux, a three-character story by Denise Desautels, a conversation by Nicole Brossard, or an address to Glenn Gould by Louise Déry — a variety of experiences where image, word and music work together to create conversation that is animated but not altogether free of silence. You will also find works and texts by Olivier Asselin, Paul Béliveau, Carle Coppens, Greg Curnoe, Pierre Dorion, Chantal Durand, Yves Gaucher, Raymond Gervais, Eugène Hamel, Alfred Laliberté, Alexander Cavalié Mercer, William Notman, Didier Prioul, Rober Racine, and Marie-Pierre Sirois.

The works in *Are You Talking to Me? Conversation(s)* come from different artistic backgrounds. They were enlisted one after another as plans progressed to develop a project that would function as a conversation. The fact that they have not only been brought together but in combination with writings by various authors who went out to encounter them fosters private conversations that are conducive to complicity, confession, dialogue, digression, whispers – and silence. For the curators, the concept and the act of installing the works instigate a trial process that hinges on the obvious but often obscured fact that the works do not experience or survive mediation in the same way.

Arranging them as an enigma produces a particular hum that inhabits the exhibition space and invites the viewer to listen.

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This murmur whispers clues about the works themselves, about the possibilities opened by their juxtapositions in the exhibition and about how they are received. For this reason, the organizers chose to explore its echo by lingering briefly on the issue of the interface between art history and museology, particularly as concerns the relationship between exhibition practices and the production of knowledge.

Catalogue

The bilingual catalogue of about 200 pages includes a reproduction of all the works on display, the texts of the invited authors and essays by the three organizers. It differs from a classic catalogue in its scientific underpinnings from the field of museology, touching on several original theoretical points of view on the transformation of the museum institution over the past 20 years, on the exhibition as a model of mediation and on the relationship between works of art as conversational events. The catalogue will be launched in mid-February.

The exhibition will next appear at the Université de Moncton Art Gallery from May 7 – 25, 2003, thanks to the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Location and Schedule

The UQAM Gallery: 1400, Berri Street, corner of Saint Catherine, room J-R120
January 16 – March 15, 2003, from Tuesday to Saturday, noon to 6:00 p.m. / free admission

Information: (514) 987-8421

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