

MUSEUMS

A vital cultural asset **for Montreal**



Société des directeurs
des musées montréalais

Montreal's museums help to forge the city's cultural identity. For over a century now, they have been a major part of Montreal's cultural life. But what have museums done for their city over the years?

And what do they intend to do in future?

Players in the city's transformations and evolution for decades, partners in its economic life, the thirty member museums of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors give their brief answers to these questions in the following pages.

MONTREAL’S MUSEUMS: A VITAL CULTURAL ASSET

Montreal’s first museums appeared in the 19th century, when the city was Canada’s industrial and economic metropolis. Curiosity cabinets had been popular since 1824, and in 1827 the *Natural History Society of Montreal* exhibited its rich collections for the public to admire. The Museum of Fine Arts first emerged in 1860 as the “Art Association of Montreal.” As time went on, these institutions would become true tourist attractions, drawing visitors from across North America and confirming the city’s coveted title of cultural metropolis. **Montreal has been a cultural metropolis** for a long time now, and **its museums have contributed to that distinction with strength, energy and originality.** We can unhesitatingly say that Montreal’s museums have contributed to defining its cultural character.

MONTREAL’S MUSEUMS: DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Over the space of a century, Montreal’s museums have constantly renewed their cultural presence in the city. Today they are places of both memory and modernity, echoing past trends and present-day aspirations and concerns. They are major cultural sites in the city, whose modern outlook is reflected in their efforts to make culture accessible to all. They put their collections on-line to benefit as many people as possible, share their collections widely, bring artists closer to the public, draw on their imaginations and inventiveness and invite visitors to explore new relationships with knowledge.

Montreal’s museums are a deep-rooted part of the society around them, working hand-in-hand with the city that helps shape them. In a word, they are unarguably unique spaces fostering modernity and cultural democracy in Montreal. Cultural venues, which today have become spaces for all cultures. Places that support the City and its aspirations for growth, as well as residents and their hopes to make culture part of their lives.

This is why Montreal’s museums welcome over **four million visitors** a year—enthusiasts in every field, eager to learn more about themselves and the rest of the world, other times and great masterpieces of humanity.

Visitors to member institutions of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors, 2001

TYPE OF VISITORS	NUMBER OF VISITORS	
	NUMBER	%
Individuals or organized groups	4,289,158	100.0
Total	4,289,158	100.0

MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS: PLACES OF KNOWLEDGE, PEOPLE PLACES

Montreal's museums are unique **cultural spaces** in the city. They are oases that broaden Montrealers' access to knowledge. Dynamic places that give residents tools to help them learn, from visitor activities to educational programs, guided tours and interactive exhibits... Montreal's museums take an original and imaginative approach to helping visitors better know, understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.

To complement classroom learning, every year Montreal's museums put on **educational activities** for more than 500,000 students in the Greater Montreal region. It's an opportunity for young people to view the world from a different angle, seeing history, art, science, architecture, film and humour in a whole new way, and opening **new doors to knowledge**.

School and youth groups visiting member institutions of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors, 2001

TYPE OF VISITORS	NUMBER OF VISITORS	
	NUMBER	%
School and youth groups	591,000	100.0
Total	591,000	100.0

MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS: STOREHOUSES OF MEMORY

As collectors and curators, museums offer Montreal access to a rich storehouse comprising over **four million objects**. These items tell not only of local history but also of humanity as a whole, and are made available to a wide audience every year in over **two hundred exhibitions**.

Through this material evidence of artistic, scientific and historic heritage, through these tangible witnesses and traces that have been carefully conserved, our Museums can offer all Montrealers the privilege of educational and entertaining voyages between the present and the past. For preserving memory is the builder's first concern; indeed, it is a way of building for the future.

MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS: CREATING WEALTH

Montreal's museums enrich the heritage of Quebec as a whole through their immensely valuable collections. Even the buildings that house these collections add to our heritage, for Montreal's museums manage and maintain a **built heritage worth close to \$1 billion**. With their collections and the quality of the premises they make available to the public, Montreal's museums are the guardians of **one of Quebec's most important cultural assets**. Montrealers can enjoy these treasures year-round, and of course they are a constant attraction drawing visitors to our city.

Along with this significant social role, Montreal's museums are also dynamic parts of the Quebec economy. They create over **3,500 jobs**, injecting nearly **\$100 million** into the economy and accounting for spinoff on the order of **\$127 million**. They are not only a cultural asset that contributes to the **city's added value**, but also vibrant economic players boasting the creative resources and distinctive skills that Montreal, with its dynamism and originality, is so good at attracting.

Economic contribution of member institutions of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors, 2001

INDICATOR	VALUE
Amounts injected into the economy	\$90,613,555
Total spinoff (direct, indirect and induced)	\$127,817,579
Number of jobs	3,500
• direct	2,474
• indirect	1,026
Wages	\$91,731,190

Source: Locus Loisir et Culture inc., *Étude sur les retombées culturelles, économiques, touristiques, sociales et communautaires des musées montréalais*, March 1999.

MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS: CREATING IDENTITY

Montreal's museums, thanks to their interest in the city and its many faces, contribute to **modernizing the city's identity**. Montreal is a city of transformations, progress, artists and aesthetes, thriving on creativity. Its museums reflect this passion in countless ways, and the cultural keystones they represent in the city contribute to shaping **Montreal's specific identity**. An identity woven from its variety, an identity born of a mixture of many genres. And Montreal defines itself in this way with energy and originality, if one compares the many museums it has to offer with those in other North American cities.

Comparison of the Montreal Administrative Region with other North American cities

Indicator	Montreal	Toronto	Vancouver	Boston	Baltimore	Philadelphia	San Francisco
Number of museums	61	54	42	46	40	56	51
Regional museum associations	Société des musées québécois (SMQ) Board of Montreal Museum Directors (BMMD) Association of Montreal history museums (RMHM)	Ontario Museum Association	British Columbia Museums Association	New England Museum Association	Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums	Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums	California Association of Museums Association of west coast museums
Common activities organized by museums	Montreal Museums Day (members of the BMMD)	Museum Month (May), during which some museums in Toronto organize special activities and events (but not in common)	No common activity among Vancouver museums	No common activity among Boston museums	No common activity among Baltimore museums	No common activity among Philadelphia museums	No common activity among San Francisco museums
	Montreal Museums Card (BMMD members)	Toronto Museum Passport					
	Best Friend award (by the BMMD)						
	Museum Collections Centre (planned by the BMMD)						
	Musées en fête (SMQ)						
	Discovery activities (RMHM)						
Tourism promotion activities	Montreal Museums Card (BMMD members)	Toronto Museum Passport		Citypass		Citypass	Citypass

Montreal’s museums help the city to carve out an enviable place for itself on the North American scene. It enjoys a reputation as a cultural metropolis thanks to its many museums—focussed on authenticity, history, art and daring. They contribute to making **Montreal a North American cultural metropolis**.

WITH THEIR QUALITY, ENERGY, MODERNITY AND DIVERSITY, MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE CITY'S CULTURAL WEALTH.

MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS: A TREMENDOUS CULTURAL ASSET FOR MONTREAL, A VITAL CULTURAL ASSET.

BOARD OF MONTREAL MUSEUM DIRECTORS

The Board of Montreal Museum Directors was founded in 1987. Its mission is to bring together the museums of Greater Montreal and encourage communication, mutual assistance and collaboration among its member institutions. It supports members' efforts to make their institutions accessible to the widest possible audience.

Members of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors

Canadian Centre for Architecture
 Centre d'histoire de Montréal
 Château Dufresne Museum
 Château Ramezay Museum
 Cinémathèque québécoise
 Écomusée du fier monde
 Environment Canada Biosphere
 Just for Laughs Museum
 Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery
 Maison Saint-Gabriel
 Marguerite Bourgeoys Museum
 McCord Museum of Canadian History
 Montréal Biodôme
 Montréal Botanical Garden
 Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre
 Montréal Insectarium
 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
 Montréal Planetarium
 Montréal Science Centre
 Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
 Musée de Lachine
 Musée des Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal
 Musée des maîtres et artisans du Québec (formerly the Musée d'art de Saint-Laurent)
 Musée Marc-Aurèle-Fortin
 Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History
 Redpath Museum
 Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada
 Stewart Hall Art Gallery
 Stewart Museum at the Fort on Île Sainte-Hélène
 The Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada

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