



Press Release

For immediate release

Montreal Museums Becoming Endangered Institutions

Montreal, September 20, 2011 – A survey conducted amongst the 38 member-museums of the Board of Montreal Museum Directors (BMMD) reveals that the majority of Montreal museums are chronically underfunded, a situation which immediately threatens both their employees and activities.

Conducted in the wake of the Société des musées québécois (SMQ)'s *États généraux des musées du Québec* scheduled for October, this survey, in which 25 of the 38 museums participated, reveals how this chronic underfunding is a major concern of the Montreal museum community.

General and operating subsidies received by Montreal museums from the ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec (MCCCFQ) are reported as insufficient. Levels of financial support have stayed virtually the same over the past 15 years, barring a partial indexation in 2005— a situation considered untenable and which cannot be immediately resolved by increased private sector contributions, if only in light of current economic conditions. Compensatory fundraising from individual businesses, foundations and religious communities simply cannot fill the gap. This survey also highlights how 7 Montreal museums, each recognized as official museums by the MCCCFQ, receive no funding from said Ministry. The BMMD call on the Quebec government to establish recurrent funding as to allow them to pursue their role as official museological institutions.

“Several BMMD member museums are financially very unstable, a situation worsened year after year by chronic underfunding,” stated BMMD Executive Director Manon Blanchette. “We call upon the MCCCFQ to recognize the situation and make room in

the next budget for a retroactive increase and an indexation of the last funding increase to account for the change in the cost of living.”

The outcomes of this underfunding as reported by participating museums include recurring cuts in personnel –up to 35% of museum staff in some cases– lack of operating funds needed to conserve and expand their collections, cuts in programming and the scaling-back of outreach activities (exhibitions, educational and cultural programming, etc.)

“We believe the Quebec government must promptly recognize the importance of museums in the cultural life of its citizens and their pivotal role in the tourism industry,” added Blanchette. “The MCCCCFQ must not only come to the assistance of museums in their pursuit of infrastructure initiatives but must also recognize the role of museums as the living voice of our cultural and historical heritage.”

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For interviews or further details

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