

IN MEMORY OF SHE
Presentation of the project and unveiling of the maquette

Gaspé, November 24, 2009. – Today, a group of citizens presented a collective artistic project entitled *In memory of She* at the Musée de la Gaspésie. The project's Masterpiece Committee unveiled the scale model of the proposed art work: a sculpture by Gaspesian artist Renée Mao Clavet that pays homage to the Feminine and the contribution of women to the history of the Gaspé Peninsula.

THE PROJECT

Prompted by this year's commemoration of Jacques Cartier's arrival in Gaspé, Gaspesians expressed the desire to see recognised the role women have played in our regional history. "*History tends to be portrayed through male characters,*" explains Gaston Morin, project initiator and godfather. "*This project seeks to honour the memory of the women of all origins who, in alliance with men, have left their mark on each page of our history,*" adds Cynthia Patterson, project godmother.

The project seeks to:

- Honour the memory of women and illustrate the contribution of the Feminine to our history;
- Raise public awareness about art and the cultural diversity of our community;
- Valorise civic involvement and cooperation to ensure the success of a group project and;
- Heighten the community's feeling of belonging in terms of its environment and history.

Essentially, the proposed work aims to pay homage to all these women who were mothers, wives, daughters, nurses, teachers... so that their existence remains not only part of our history but also of our present.

THE WORK

The proposed work, *In memory of She*, consists of a monumental, semi-figurative sculpture representing the Gaspesian Woman, bearer of life, bearer of the future. By means of a variety of symbols¹, the sculpture seeks to communicate the unique emotions, values and contributions of the women who have fashioned the Gaspé. Rooted in the soil, this sculpture will become an integral part of our physical and social environment. The monument's setting will be landscaped to encourage passers-by to stop for a while at the site, return to it and gather there.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

To take the project from proposal to reality, the Masterpiece Committee is launching a fundraising campaign. The goal is to collect \$200,000, all of which will be used to produce the work and develop the site. The project should be completed by fall 2010.

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Source: Émilie Devoe - Musée de la Gaspésie
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In collaboration with Marie-Claude Brière, MCBrière, agence-conseil.

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¹ For the work's symbolism, see the appendix.

APPENDIX

Symbolism of the work

She incarnates hope and the courage of crossings.

- Her **features** express fragility, strength, suffering and compassion in equal measure;
- Her **hands**, open palms raised towards her **rounded belly**, illustrate openness to the other and confidence in the future;
- Her **shawl** protects and keeps her warm. It reveals **texts** in English, French and Mi'gmaq, thus expressing her European and Aboriginal roots;
- Her **book** and **bag** illustrate experience, knowledge, the wisdom of the ancients, and the heritage she carries along proudly as she continues her voyage...

The team

Masterpiece Committee: **In charge of the work, its production, artistic direction, logistics and technical aspects**

Gaston Morin	Spokesperson, project initiator and godfather
Cynthia Patterson	Spokesperson, project godmother
Sébastien Lévesque	Project sponsoring organisation, Musée de la Gaspésie
Renée Mao Clavet	Professional sculptor, in charge of producing the maquette
Irène Jeannotte	Assistant sculptor, member of the Mi'gmaq Nation
Michèle Vandekaa	Assistant sculptor, Anglophone citizen
Rita Gagné	Ursuline, citizen's presence
Carole Gingras	Development Officer, SADC de Gaspé

Communication and Financing Committee: **In charge of public relations, organised activities with the community and with young people, and ties with partners and donors**

Danièle Rail	Head, Communication and Financing Committee
Danièle Laurin	Citizen
Aline Perry	Ville de Gaspé
Carole Gingras	Development Officer, SADC de Gaspé
Odette Cavanagh	Citizen

Outside support:

Marie-Claude Brière	MCBrière, agence-conseil
Émilie Devoe	Musée de la Gaspésie

Financial partners and donors

- Ville de Gaspé
- SADC de Gaspé
- L'Intersyndicale des femmes
- Les filles de Marie-de-l'Assomption
- Les sœurs de la Charité du Québec
- Ursulines
- Sœurs de la présentation de Marie du Québec
- Sœurs de St-Paul de Chartes
- Les sœurs missionnaires du Christ Roi
- Private donars
- **And you ?**

The Project

In memory of She

At the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, Gaspé – the Birthplace of Canada – has witnessed the genesis of an inspiring and unifying project. A group of local citizens, representing the First Nations as well as the English-speaking and French-speaking communities, has been working with the Musée de la Gaspésie and the SADC de Gaspé for several months now in order to offer the people of the Gaspé and why not, the country... an ambitious legacy: *Sculpting a poem...to the women of our history.*

Project aims:

- . Honour the memory of the women – Aboriginal and others who have come here from elsewhere since the time of Jacques Cartier – who in alliance with men have signed each page of our history with their lives.
- . Illustrate the contribution of the feminine to the history of our area, develop the art and cultural history of communities, promote cooperation as a way to succeed as a community; involve children in the creation of the work and finally, heighten the feeling of belonging to the environment and the community.
- . Preserve a reminder of all these women who were mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, nurses, teachers... so that the memory of their presence is written in the heart of our history.

Project description:

Create a fibreglass, semi-figurative sculpture imitating a variety of textures and standing about 24 feet tall (7 to 8 metres), based on the scale model created by the sculptor, Renée Mao Clavet.

The sculpture will represent a pregnant woman in movement. Her clothing bears symbols that speak of the First Nations, the founding peoples and the various groups of women who have marked and continue to mark our lives. Her shawl floats around her, revealing inspiring texts hidden in its folds. Her features, fashioned by her strengths and fragilities, speak of tenderness and compassion, suffering and hope, wisdom and respect.

The sculpture will be erected in the heart of the town of Gaspé by November 2010.

Renée Mao Clavet

Visual arts artist



Initially, her passion and talent led her to study at the École de sculpture Bourgault-Legros, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli from 1975 to 1977.

She also completed professional training in the application of casting in monumental art, sculpture in stone, modeling-casting and art foundry with Gérard Bélanger.

For over thirty years, Renée Mao Clavet has explored sculpture using such media as wood, ceramic, stone and bronze. For her, sculpture is not a goal in itself. *"It's a means amongst many others to approach the medium and communicate with it. As we work with a medium, we learn to respect it and ourselves."*

Since 1976, her work has appeared in numerous solo and group shows, the last one in 2009 – *Percé en tête-à-tête* with Kittie Bruneau at the Musée Le Chafaud in Percé.

Her artistic career also features many other professional endeavours, including the production of life-size sculptures, an impressive commission involving the production of 100 ice sculptures throughout the Gaspé along the *Route des Glaces* for the Traversée de la Gaspésie (TDLG) – a cross-country ski event, the opening of an art gallery in Percé – the Studio d'art Mao, the creation and installation of a 42-foot diameter brick mosaic for Place Suzanne Guité in Percé and several other similar accomplishments

In the works of Renée Mao Clavet, the relations between body and spirit come closer together, converging towards the same ideal of freedom.

Renée Mao Clavet, Visual Arts Artist, Percé
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Artistic approach associated with the project

For a number of years, I have been using direct carving to create my sculptures. I try to capture the movement of the blocking out to preserve the rough cut. Using primarily the female body as a form of expression, I prefer intuition and symbolic expression as an approach to creation.

Through my latest solo shows *Mémoire d'eau* and *Murmure du Ruisseau*, I examined this natural resource and its indispensable vitality... the urgency felt by humans to recharge, even to move on to another way of doing things to preserve life and enrich the collective experience. In our societies today, there is a yearning for identity, and in a number of communities around the world, a willingness to pay homage to pioneering women.

In the project presented here, my work will explore the contribution of women in our societies, how she has evolved, her ability to adapt and her spiritual destiny. In this new spirit, I would like to introduce the idea of receptivity to otherness with universality as a horizon.

My training in the use of casting in monumental sculpture encourages me to become involved in a large-scale project. This project would give me an opportunity to put into practice my knowledge in this area, explore my full potential in monumental sculpture and finally create a large size sculpture that will have a major impact on my work.

The collaboration of sculptors from different communities brings to the project the opportunity to create closer ties between our communities and aims to leave a significant work as a legacy for future generations.