

## GET OUTSIDE

Public art encounters across Canada

Douglas Coupland, *Digital Orca*, 2009

As museums begin to open across the country, there is a good reason to stay outside. The range and variety of visual culture is tremendous—stone sculptures, dynamic fountains, colourful murals, mixed media installations, bronze monuments. Often commissioned for specific spaces, these works are some of the most accessible art that the country has to offer. This week we're showing you a small selection of some of our favourites. We hope they inspire you to cast your eyes on the public art in your neighbourhood.

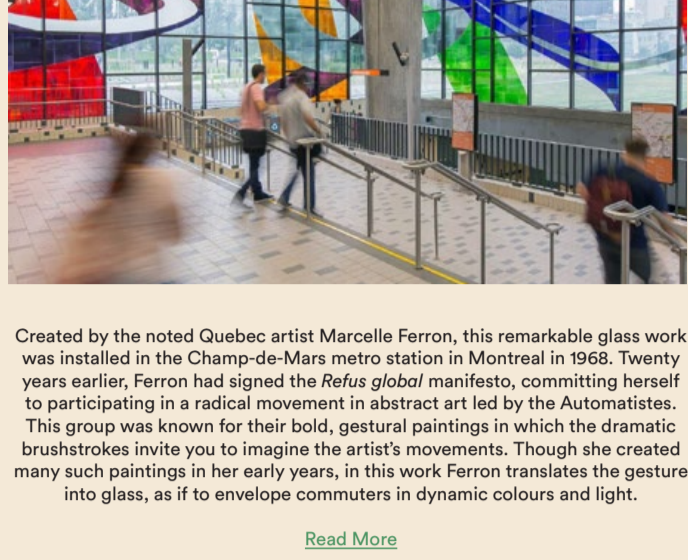
Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

Winnipeg

## BLOODY SATURDAY

by Bernie Miller and Noam Gonick



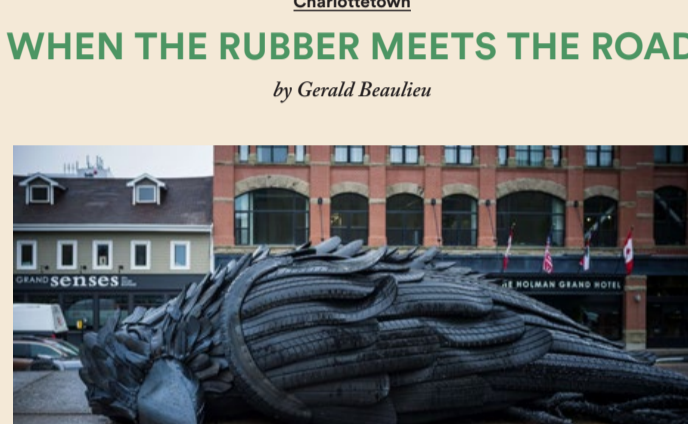
"So much that defines Winnipeg, its achievements and its rebellious core, was forged on Bloody Saturday," said the artists of this work, which was unveiled last year on June 21, 2019—the 100th anniversary of Bloody Saturday—to commemorate the transformative events a century ago when a protest begun by First World War veterans resulted in the Winnipeg General Strike. Strike breakers rocked a streetcar off its tracks and torched it—triggering the deaths of two protesters and the hospitalization of twenty-seven others. The artwork is across from City Hall at a busy corner, visible to thousands of vehicles daily.

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Montreal

## WINDOWS FOR STATION CHAMPS-DE-MARS

by Marcellé Ferron



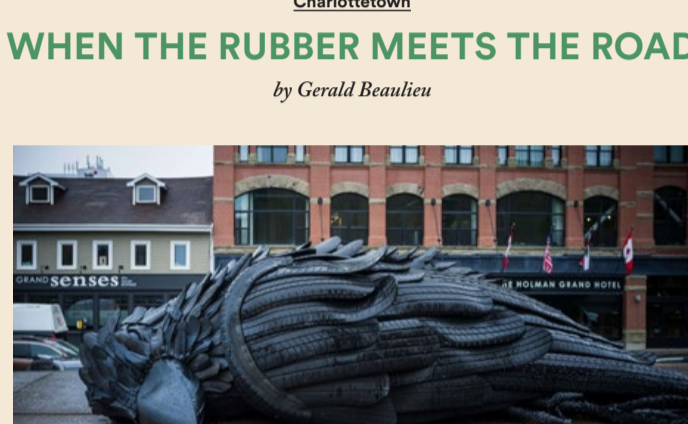
Created by the noted Quebec artist Marcellé Ferron, this remarkable glass work was installed in the Champ-de-Mars metro station in Montreal in 1968. Twenty years earlier, Ferron had signed the *Refus global* manifesto, committing herself to participating in a radical movement in abstract art led by the Automatistes. This group was known for their bold, gestural paintings in which the dramatic brushstrokes invite you to imagine the artist's movements. Though she created many such paintings in her early years, in this work Ferron translates the gesture into glass, as if to envelope commuters in dynamic colours and light.

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Halifax

## GOT DRUNK AND FELL DOWN

by Chris Hanson and Hendrika Sonnenberg



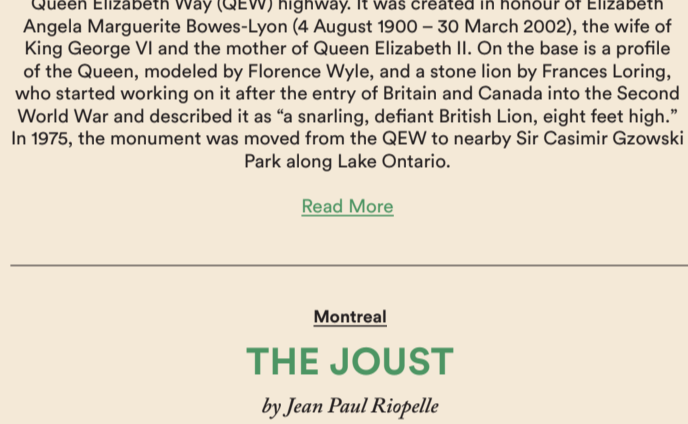
Installed as a temporary display in 2013, the popularity of this work of three disorderly, personified streetlamps on South Battery Pier, near Bishop's Landing, soon made it a permanent fixture on the Halifax waterfront. It was created by the Brooklyn-based Chris Hanson and Hendrika Sonnenberg, who met in Halifax while studying at NSCAD. In a city with one of the highest number of pubs per capita, Halifaxians identified with the playfulness of these waterfront sculptures: one is fallen over, one relieving itself in the harbour, and the other is perhaps checking its phone.

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Charlottetown

## WHEN THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

by Gerald Beaulieu



Gerald Beaulieu created two gigantic crow sculptures—each is about five metres long and more than 360 kilograms—for outside the entrance of the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown. The sculptures are large and lifelike, their eyes seemingly expressing both pain and accusation; they are somehow anything but dead. The works, inspired by roadkill, are made from old tires. "I admire Crows...as scavengers it is what they do: clean up a lot of our mess," said Beaulieu. Commissioned for the centrally-located arts centre, they were installed there for several months before being moved to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in the autumn of 2019.

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Toronto

## THE QUEEN ELIZABETH WAY MONUMENT

by William Lyon Somerville, Frances Loring, and Florence Wyle



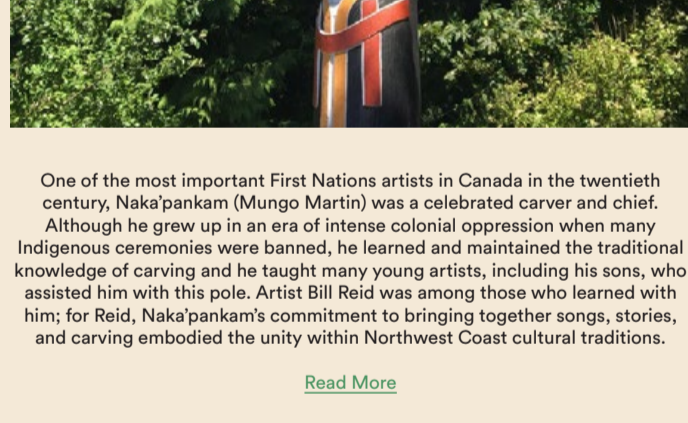
Also known as the Lion Monument, this decorative art deco column—designed by architect William Lyon Somerville—was installed at the entrance to the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) highway. It was created in honour of Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon (4 August 1900 – 30 March 2002), the wife of King George VI and the mother of Queen Elizabeth II. On the base is a profile of the Queen, modeled by Florence Wyle, and a stone lion by Frances Loring, who started working on it after the entry of Britain and Canada into the Second World War and described it as "a snarling, defiant British Lion, eight feet high." In 1975, the monument was moved from the QEW to nearby Sir Casimir Gzowski Park along Lake Ontario.

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Montreal

## THE JOUST

by Jean Paul Riopelle



Cast circa 1974, this kinetic public art installation by Jean Paul Riopelle is comprised of thirty bronze elements that surround a "Tower of Life" placed in a pond and are surrounded by a ring of fire that is created by natural gas and doused each hour by shoots of mist. The figures depict various animal and mythological figures—including the Owl, the Fish, the Bear, and the Dog—drawn from Riopelle's childhood and imagination. The "joust" in question in this work is not hockey (in Quebec a hockey game is a *joute de hockey*), but a game called "capture the flag". The work was first installed at Montreal's Olympic Park for the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, near the Pie-IX Metro station—a location that Riopelle came to dislike after a café opened a short distance from the piece, an establishment that he felt trivialized his work of art. Thanks to the generosity of many donors, the sculpture was transferred to Place Riopelle, in the heart of Montreal's business district, where it is still located today.

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Toronto

## FLIGHT STOP

by Michael Snow



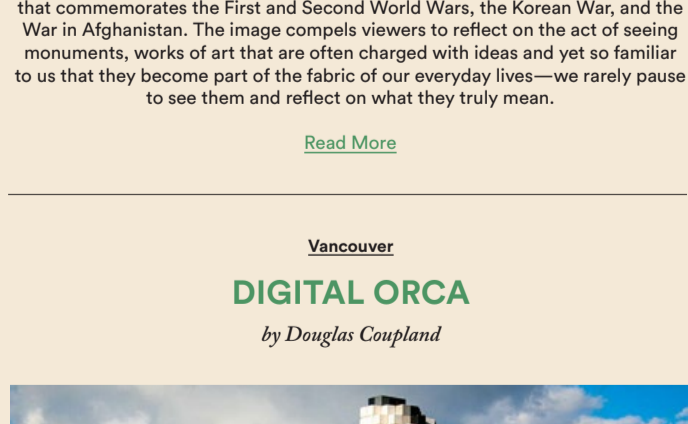
Perhaps no public work of art is as well known as *Flight Stop*, a sculpture comprised of sixty Canadian geese, frozen in mid-flight, created by the revered multi-media artist Michael Snow. For over forty years, millions of visitors to the Toronto Eaton Centre have enjoyed the now iconic work. As art historian Martha Langford explains, Snow's original intent was to depict a flight of geese breaking formation as if to land in the mall. Highly complex to construct, each bird was produced from Styrofoam layered in fibreglass and sheathed in photographs of a single goose. In 1981, the Eaton Centre put Christmas bows on the geese. Snow objected and the case went to the Supreme Court, who concluded the Eaton Centre violated Snow's intellectual property rights. Today the case is a landmark in copyright law.

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Victoria

## THE STORY POLE

by Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin)



One of the most important First Nations artists in Canada and chief of the twentieth century, Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin) was a celebrated carver and storyteller. Although he grew up in an era of intense colonial oppression when many Indigenous ceremonies were banned, he learned and maintained the traditional knowledge of carving and he taught many young artists, including his sons, who assisted him with this pole. Artist Bill Reid was among those who learned with him; for Reid, Naka'pankam's commitment to bringing together songs, stories, and carving embodied the unity within Northwest Coast cultural traditions.

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Calgary

## THE FOREST AND THE TREES

by Micah Lexier



This artwork is a grid of 1,225 hand-finished metal tiles—each 24 centimetres square—that form a metal tapestry evocative of both natural and digital worlds. Winnipeg-born Micah Lexier created *The Forest and the Trees* for the north tower lobby of Brookfield Place in downtown Calgary to bring prairie fields, forests, and lakes viewed from above into his public commission. He began thinking about this project after looking at a book of floral designs for cross stitch. Each tile is a low-relief sculpture, cast in aluminum and coated with bronze. Remarkable on how winter light transmits across the work's surface, Lexier has observed, "I could not have anticipated that the bronze would be so responsive to the light in the building, but this, in the end, has become the defining quality of the artwork for me."

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Charlottetown

## TOURING HOME FROM AWAY

by Jin-me Yoon



Perhaps the most powerful form of public art, monuments have been installed across the country, honouring leadership, achievements, and loss in cities, towns, and villages. In *Touring Home From Away*, Korean-Canadian artist Jin-me Yoon photographed herself looking at a monument in Charlottetown that commemorates the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and the War in Afghanistan. The image compels viewers to reflect on the act of seeing monuments, works of art that are often charged with ideas and yet so familiar to us that they become part of the fabric of our everyday lives—we rarely pause to see them and reflect on what they truly mean.

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Vancouver

## DIGITAL ORCA

by Douglas Coupland



Vancouver-born artist Douglas Coupland has explained this work that looks like a giant Lego structure of a creature jumping out of a video game: "Through the act of pixelizing an orca whale in three dimensions—a process that creates a crackling and unexpected sensation in the viewer's mind—the orca cliché is turned upside down and what we thought we knew well is rendered exciting and new." Installed in 2009 for the Vancouver Convention Centre Art Project, Coupland's mighty creature evokes the harbour area's history while merging technology and the natural world.

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**Image Credits:** [1] Douglas Coupland, *Digital Orca*, 2009, aluminum and stainless steel, Vancouver Convention Centre, British Columbia. [2] Bernie Miller and Noam Gonick, *Bloody Saturday*, 2019, weathering steel, stainless steel, tempered glass, light, Pattagez Plaza, Main Street at Market Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba. [3] Marcellé Ferron, *Windows for Station Champs-de-Mars (Les grandes vitres qui dansent)*, 1968, antique stained glass, 2000 m<sup>2</sup>, Station Champs-de-Mars, Montreal, Quebec. [4] Chris Hanson and Hendrika Sonnenberg, *Got Drunk and Fell Down*, 2013, Halifax Waterfront, Nova Scotia. [5] Gerald Beaulieu, *When the Rubber Meets the Road*, 2018, tires, 5 m (each), Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. [6] William Lyon Somerville, Frances Loring, and Florence Wyle, *The Queen Elizabeth Way Monument*, 1939–40, The Queen Elizabeth Way, Toronto, Ontario. [7] Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969–70 (cast in bronze c.1974), bronze, 380 cm high x 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions), Montreal, Quebec. [8] Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCCAN (2019). [9] Michael Snow, *Flight Stop*, 1975, 60 suspended fibreglass Canada goose forms surfaced with tinted black and white photographs, 32 x 20 x 16 m, Toronto Eaton Centre, Ontario. [10] Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin), *The Story Pole*, 1956, Sooke timber, 39 m, Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, British Columbia. [11] Micah Lexier, *The Forest and the Trees*, 2017, 1,225 cast aluminum tiles, bronze-coated with a patina finish, 8.4 x 8.4 m, Brookfield Place Calgary, Alberta. [12] Jin-me Yoon, *Touring Home From Away*, panel 7a, 1958–9, custom fabricated black anodized double-sided lightbox, ultrachrome translucent prints with polyester overlaminate, 81.5 x 66 x 12.5 cm. Courtesy The Virtual Museum of Canada. [13] Douglas Coupland, *Digital Orca*, 2009, aluminum and stainless steel, Vancouver Convention Centre, British Columbia.