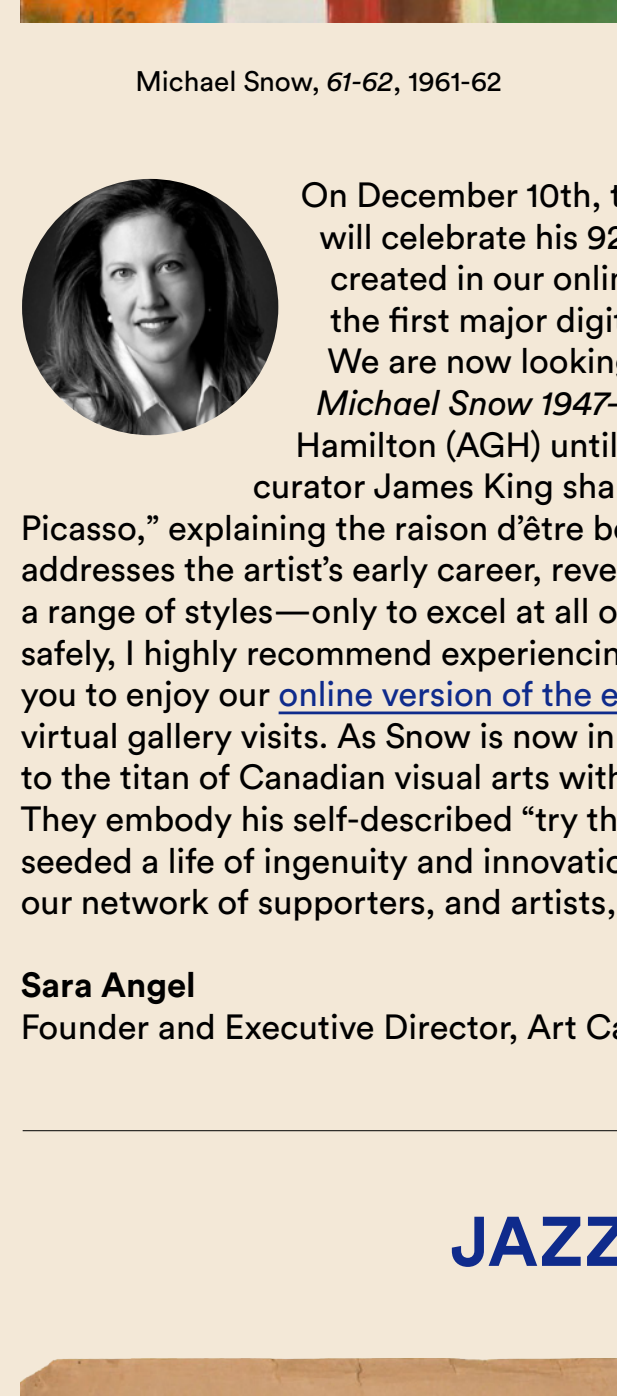
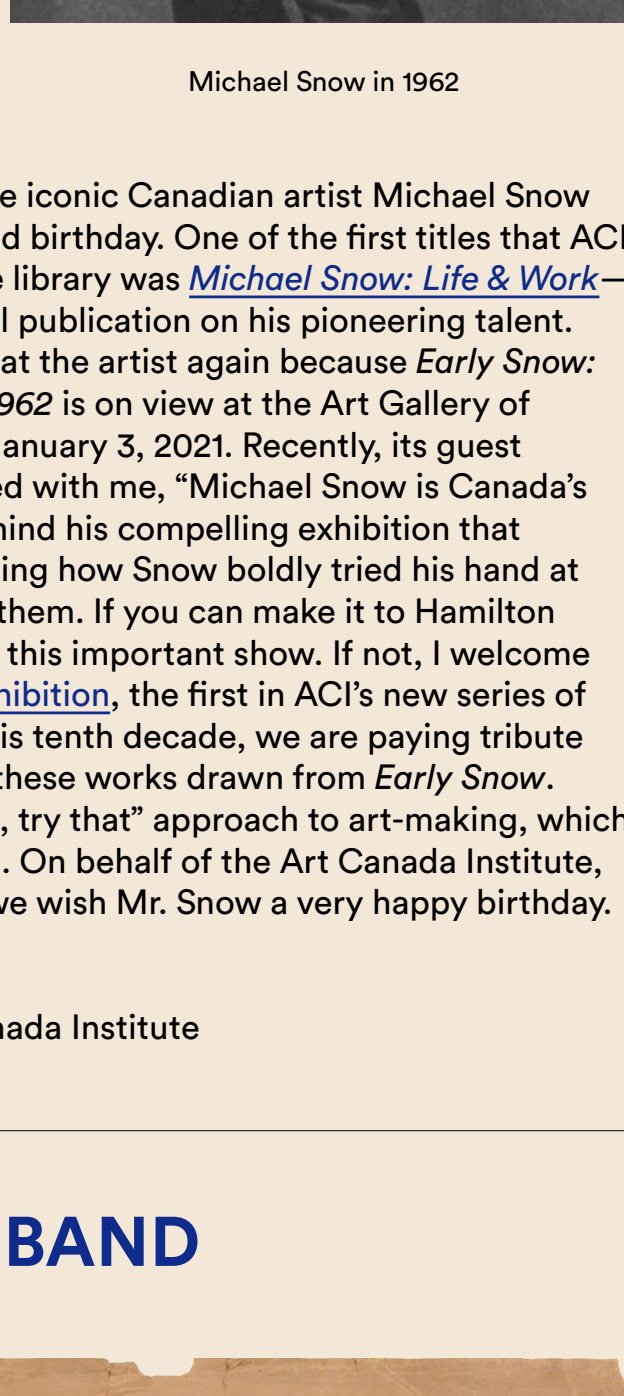


MICHAEL SNOW THIS AND THAT

By age thirty-four, the revered Canadian artist Michael Snow had already undergone many metamorphoses and experimentations in style. A new exhibition explains why, and how the result led Snow to his internationally renowned Walking Woman series—and far beyond.



Michael Snow, 61-62, 1961-62



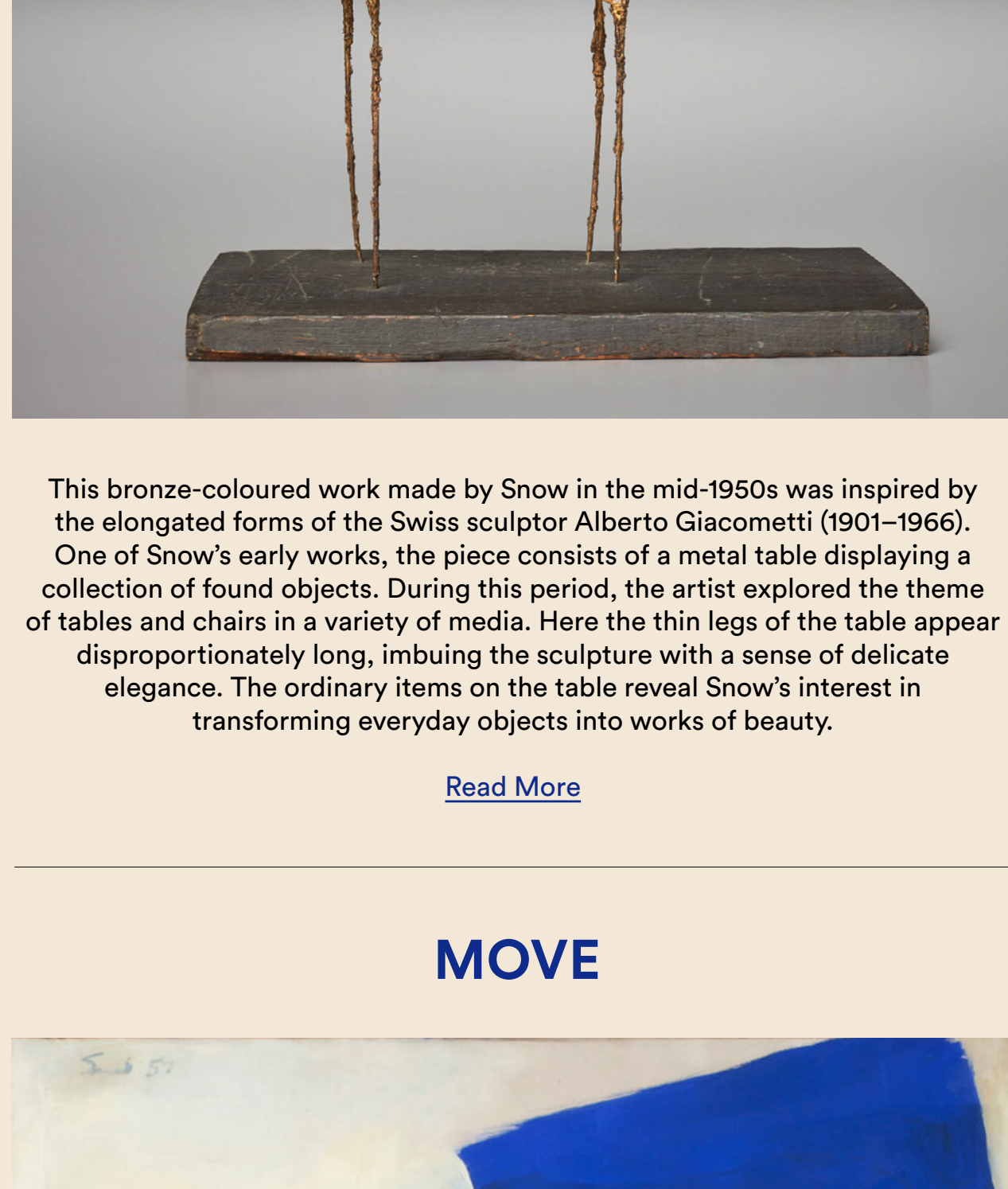
Michael Snow in 1962



On December 10th, the iconic Canadian artist Michael Snow will celebrate his 92nd birthday. One of the first titles that ACI created in our online library was [Michael Snow: Life & Work](#)—the first major digital publication on his pioneering talent. We are now looking at the artist again because *Early Snow: Michael Snow 1947–1962* is on view at the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) until January 3, 2021. Recently, its guest curator James King shared with me, “Michael Snow is Canada’s Picasso,” explaining the raison d’être behind his compelling exhibition that addresses the artist’s early career, revealing how Snow boldly tried his hand at a range of styles—only to excel at all of them. If you can make it to Hamilton safely, I highly recommend experiencing this important show. If not, I welcome you to enjoy our [online version of the exhibition](#), the first in ACI’s new series of virtual gallery visits. As Snow is now in his tenth decade, we are paying tribute to the titan of Canadian visual arts with these works drawn from *Early Snow*. They embody his self-described “try this, try that” approach to art-making, which seeded a life of ingenuity and innovation. On behalf of the Art Canada Institute, our network of supporters, and artists, we wish Mr. Snow a very happy birthday.

Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

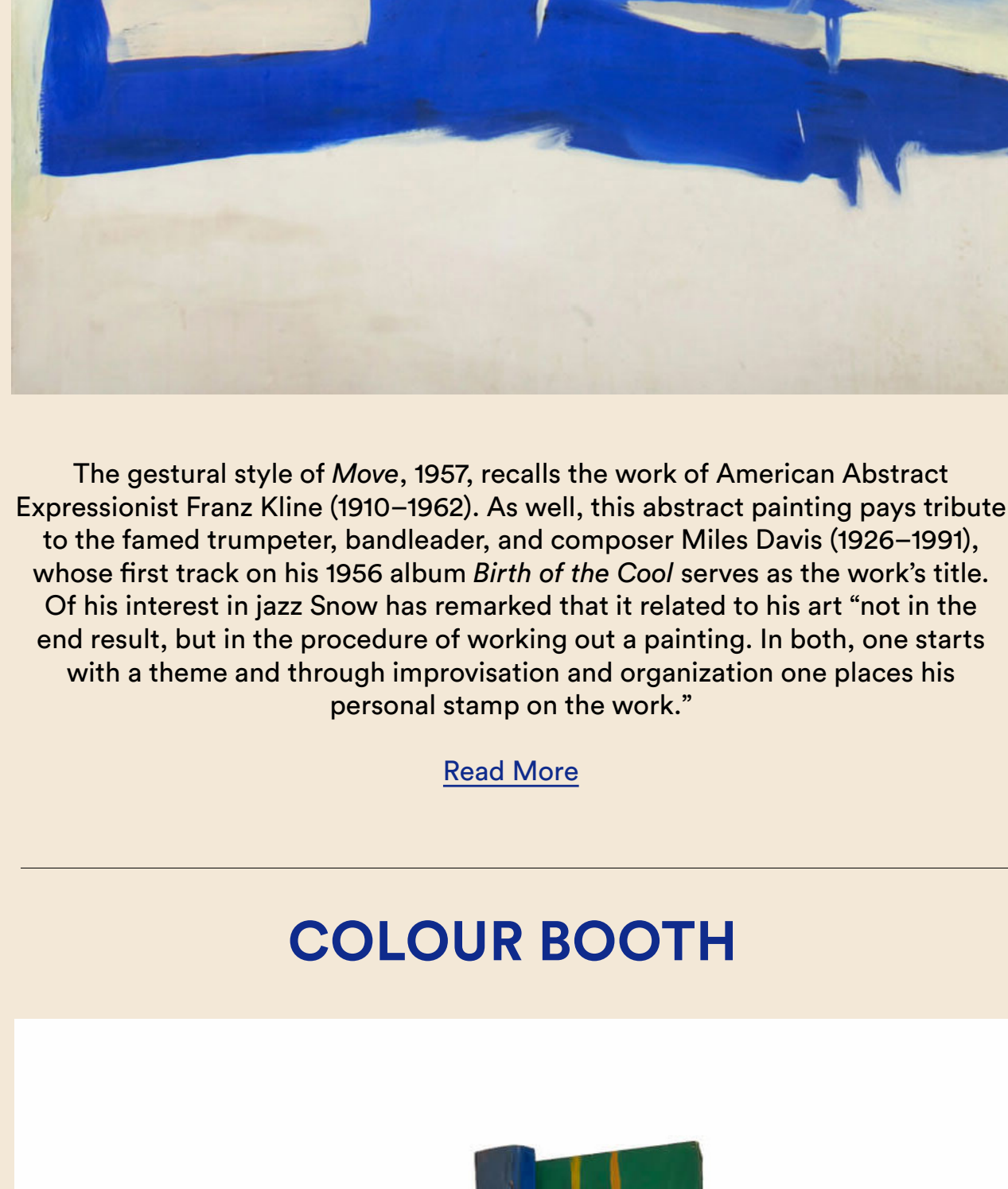
JAZZ BAND



Snow’s first surviving work, *Jazz Band*, 1947, captures the vitality of a live jazz performance—and the Cubist influence of Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). In the top right of the painting, Snow takes a cue from the Spanish artist, deconstructing and reassembling two musicians’ faces to embody multiple viewpoints. These Cubist elements reflect the experimental nature of jazz, particularly the freedom it offers to revise and reinvent. As the group of colourfully dressed musicians play their instruments, the music exerts a surreal, liberating effect on their bodies.

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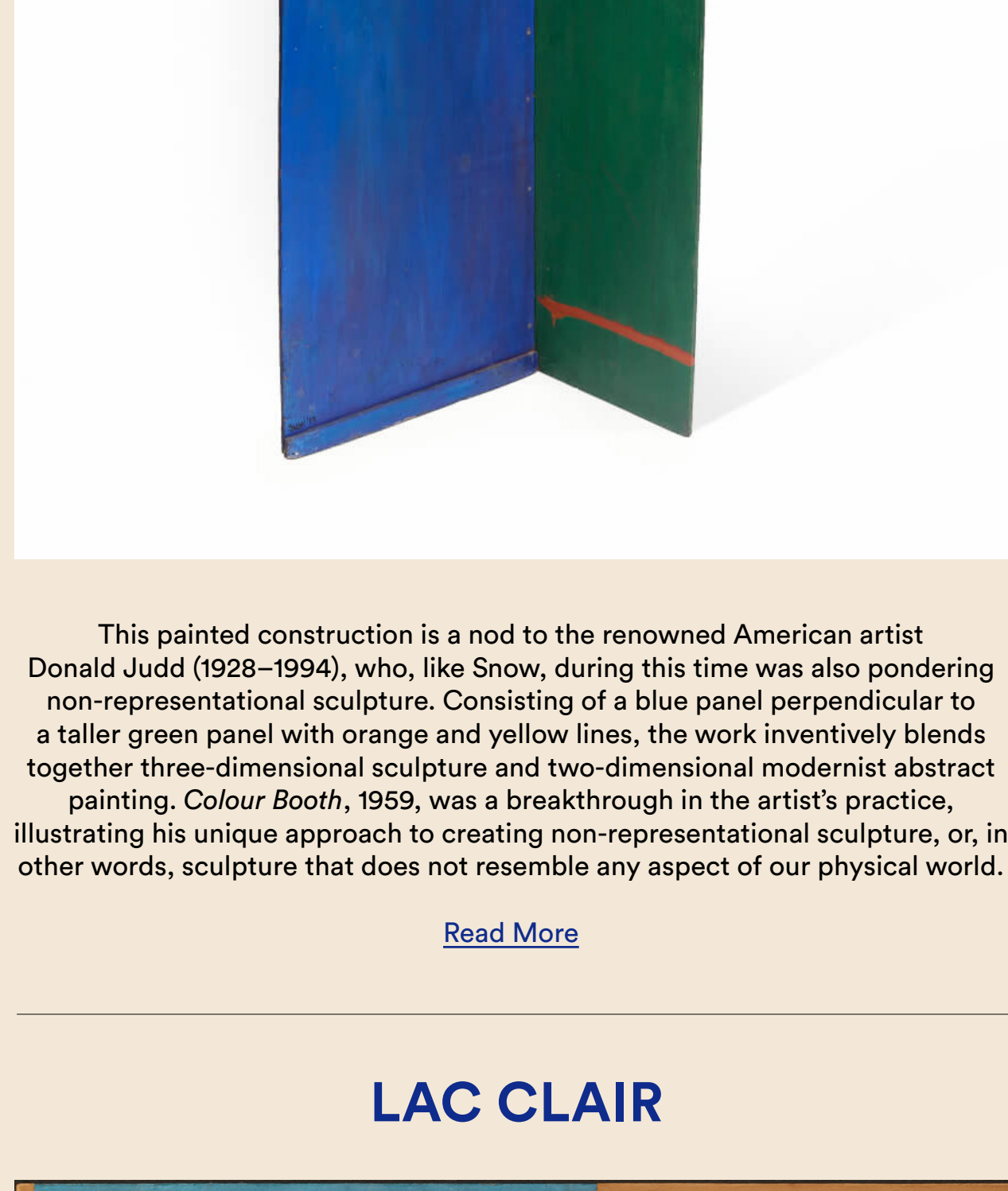
THE TABLE



This bronze-coloured work made by Snow in the mid-1950s was inspired by the elongated forms of the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966). One of Snow’s early works, the piece consists of a metal table displaying a collection of found objects. During this period, the artist explored the theme of tables and chairs in a variety of media. Here the thin legs of the table appear disproportionately long, imbuing the sculpture with a sense of delicate elegance. The ordinary items on the table reveal Snow’s interest in transforming everyday objects into works of beauty.

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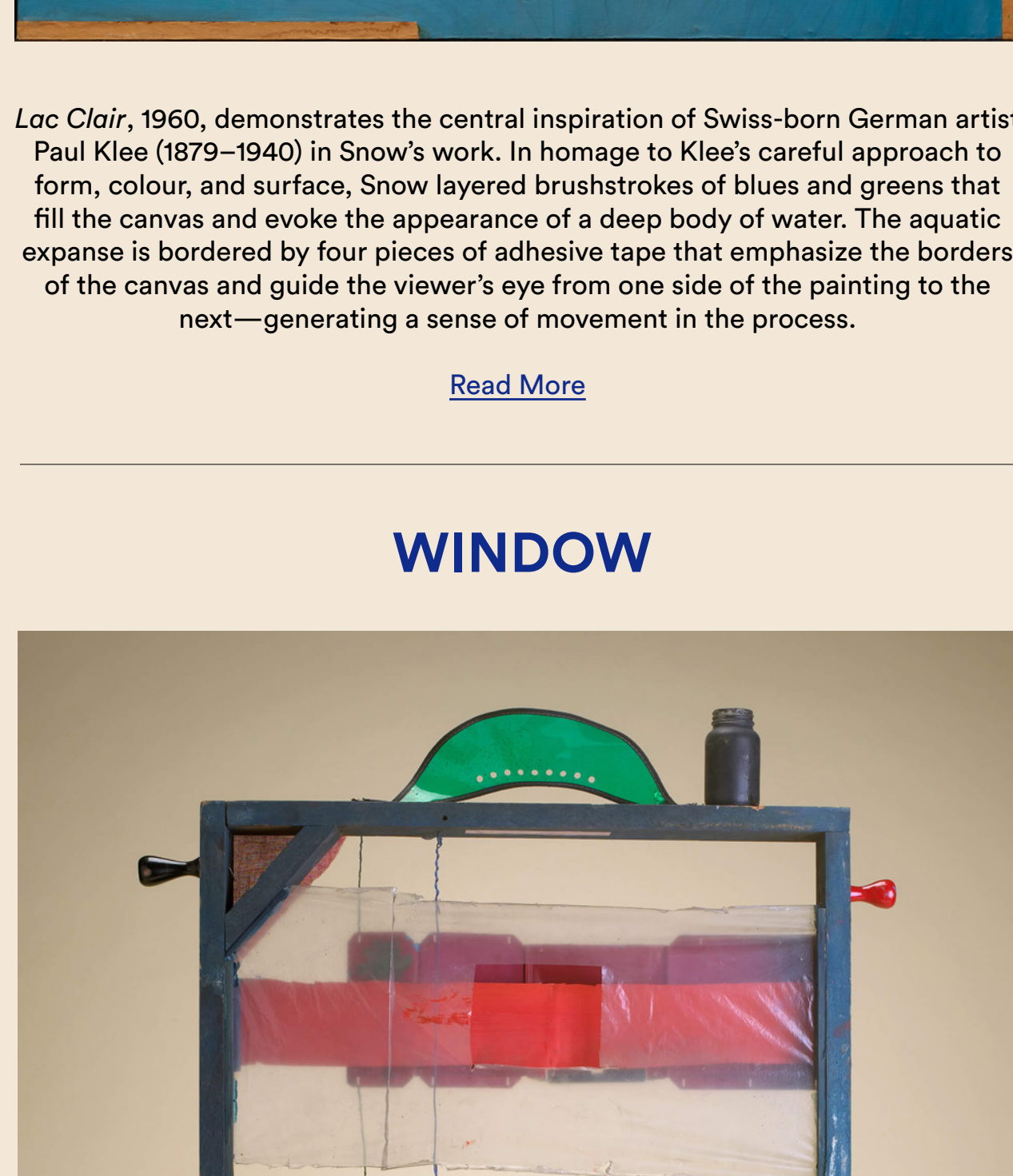
MOVE



The gestural style of *Move*, 1957, recalls the work of American Abstract Expressionist Franz Kline (1910–1962). As well, this abstract painting pays tribute to the famed trumpeter, bandleader, and composer Miles Davis (1926–1991), whose first track on his 1956 album *Birth of the Cool* serves as the work’s title. Of his interest in jazz Snow has remarked that it related to his art “not in the end result, but in the procedure of working out a painting. In both, one starts with a theme and through improvisation and organization one places his personal stamp on the work.”

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COLOUR BOOTH



This painted construction is a nod to the renowned American artist Donald Judd (1928–1994), who, like Snow, during this time was also pondering non-representational sculpture. Consisting of a blue panel perpendicular to a taller green panel with orange and yellow lines, the work inventively blends together three-dimensional sculpture and two-dimensional modernist abstract painting. *Colour Booth*, 1959, was a breakthrough in the artist’s practice, illustrating his unique approach to creating non-representational sculpture, or, in other words, sculpture that does not resemble any aspect of our physical world.

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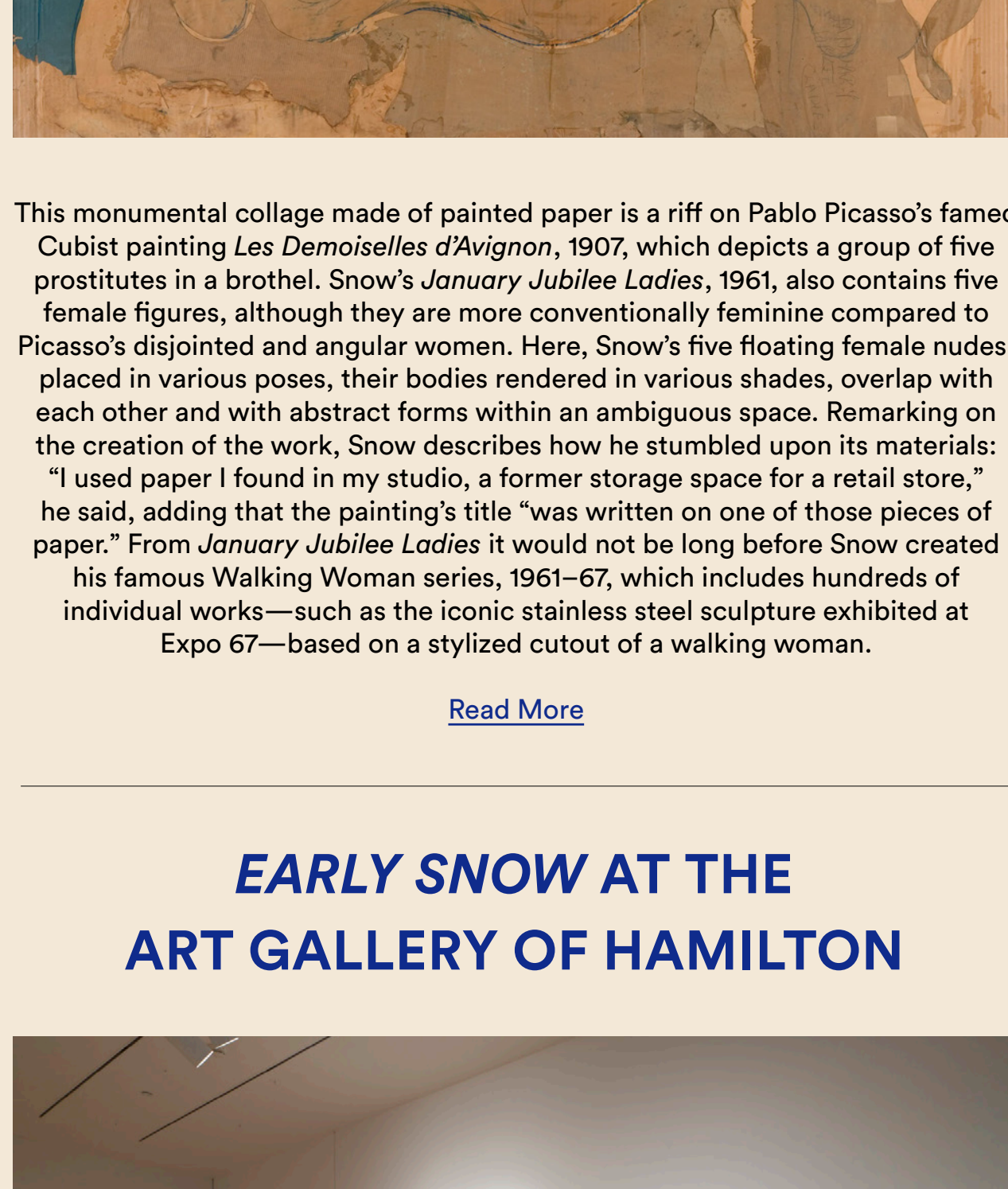
LAC CLAIR



Lac Clair, 1960, demonstrates the central inspiration of Swiss-born German artist Paul Klee (1879–1940) in Snow’s work. In homage to Klee’s careful approach to form, colour, and surface, Snow layered brushstrokes of blues and greens that fill the canvas and evoke the appearance of a deep body of water. The aquatic expanse is bordered by four pieces of adhesive tape that emphasize the borders of the canvas and guide the viewer’s eye from one side of the painting to the next—generating a sense of movement in the process.

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WINDOW



In 1915, the artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) coined the term “ready made” to describe prefabricated, often mass-produced objects—including a bicycle wheel and urinal—which he elevated to the status of art by designating them as such. With *Window*, 1960, Snow references the French Surrealist. This unusual double-sided sculpture is the first of his works to feature a frame as a central component; the first to incorporate transparent coloured glass or plastic; and the only one to include unaltered found objects.

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SECRET SHOUT



Secret Shout, 1960, is one of Snow’s abstract paintings from 1958 to 1961 that demonstrates his unique ability to blend the two branches of Abstract Expressionism: gestural movement painting (as created by artists including Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock) and colour field works (think Mark Rothko and Robert Motherwell). *Secret Shout* is divided into three interconnected sections, which, when read from left to right, move from the brightness of the yellow ground colour to the darkness of the black field. The lines enclosing the movement of brushstrokes and generate moments of tension, exemplifying Snow’s extensive experimentation with framing.

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EARLY SNOW AT THE ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON



This online exhibition has been made possible through a partnership with the Art Gallery of Hamilton, which created the exhibition *Early Snow: Michael Snow 1947–1962*, on view from February 8, 2020 to January 3, 2021. Guest curated by Dr. James King, it is the first exhibition to focus exclusively on the first fifteen years of Snow’s prolific career and features over forty works that illustrate his diverse artistic practice. Click on the link below to view a virtual tour of the AGH’s landmark exhibition.

[See the Virtual Tour Here](#)

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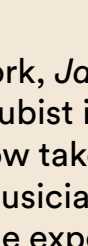
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Image Credits: [1] Michael Snow, 61-62, 1961-62, oil and graphite on canvas, 152.8 x 114.6 cm. Collection Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Gift of Avrom Isaacs, 2006 (2006/659). [2] Michael Snow poses in 1962 with a jumping figure cut-out and *Green in Green*, photo courtesy Michael Snow. [3] Michael Snow, *Jazz Band*, 1947, tempera or gouache, 66 x 73.7 cm. Collection of Michael Snow. [4] Michael Snow, *The Table*, 1955, metal plate, metal wires and found objects covered with putty (possibly epoxy) and metallic paint (possibly bronze powder) on a painted wood base, 26 x 39.3 x 31 cm (with integral base). Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [5] Michael Snow, *Move*, 1957, oil on canvas, 152.2 x 101.6 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. [6] Michael Snow, *Colour Booth*, 1959, oil, wood, 203.3 x 44 x 49.3 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. [7] Michael Snow, *Lac Clair*, December 1960, oil and paper adhesive on canvas, 178 x 178.3 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [8] Michael Snow, *Window*, 1960, wood, acrylic, polyethylene, glass, paper, cotton, wire, sheet metal, chrome-plated sheet metal, 86.4 x 67.3 x 10.2 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. [9] Michael Snow, *Secret Shout*, January 1960, oil and charcoal on canvas, 132 x 190 cm. Collection of Marilyn and Charles Bailie. [10] Michael Snow, *January Jubilee Ladies*, 1961, chalk, gouache and paper collage on corrugated cardboard, 137.2 x 190.5 cm. Global Affairs Canada Visual Art Collection, Ottawa (C.C.73). [11] Installation view of *Early Snow: Michael Snow, 1947–1962* at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2020, Courtesy Art Gallery of Hamilton.