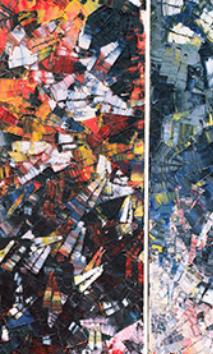
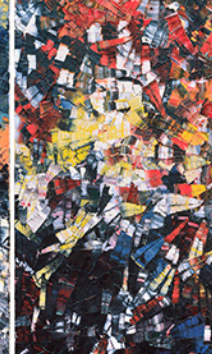


OCTOBER 20, 2023

JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE & THE ARTISTS HE INSPIRED

To mark the centennial of the birth of the Montreal-born artist, a new retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada revisits his epic oeuvre and its influence on generations of contemporary artists.

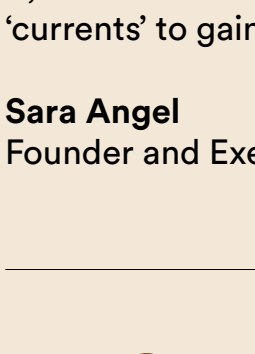
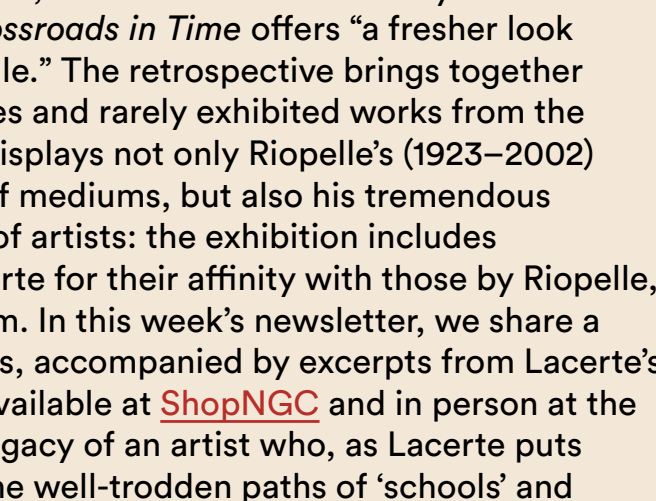


Left to right: Artists Jean Paul Riopelle, Manuel Mathieu, Aida Vosoughi, and Marc Séguin.



Above: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Homage aux Nymphéas - Pavane* [Tribute to the Water Lilies - Pavane], 1954, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Jean Paul Riopelle (Copyright Visual Arts-CARCC, 2023).

Left to right: Artists Caroline Monnet, Patrick Coutu, and Vera Frenkel.

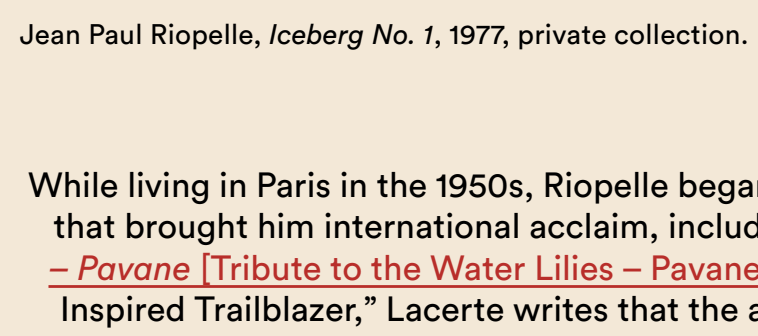


Riopelle: Crossroads in Time, opening on October 27 at the National Gallery of Canada, celebrates this country's most famed twentieth-century painter. In an interview with the Art Canada Institute, the exhibition's curator Sylvie Lacerte explained that *Crossroads in Time* offers "a fresher look at Jean Paul Riopelle." The retrospective brings together beloved masterpieces and rarely exhibited works from the 1940s to the 1990s. It displays not only Riopelle's (1923–2002) innovative approach in a wide range of mediums, but also his tremendous influence on subsequent generations of artists: the exhibition includes contemporary works selected by Lacerte for their affinity with those by Riopelle, many by artists directly inspired by him. In this week's newsletter, we share a selection of these contemporary works, accompanied by excerpts from Lacerte's writing (the exhibition publication is available at [ShopNGC](#) and in person at the gallery). They reveal the impact and legacy of an artist who, as Lacerte puts it, had an "overriding desire to leave the well-trodden paths of 'schools' and 'currents' to gain the greatest possible freedom of expression."

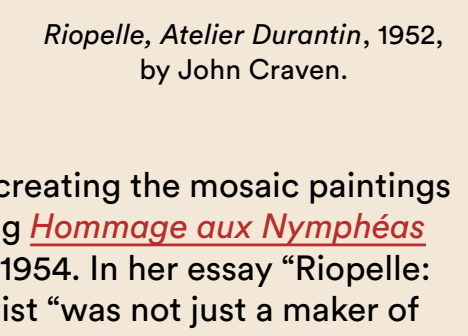
Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

RIOPELLE: INSPIRED TRAILBLAZER



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Iceberg No. 1*, 1977, private collection.

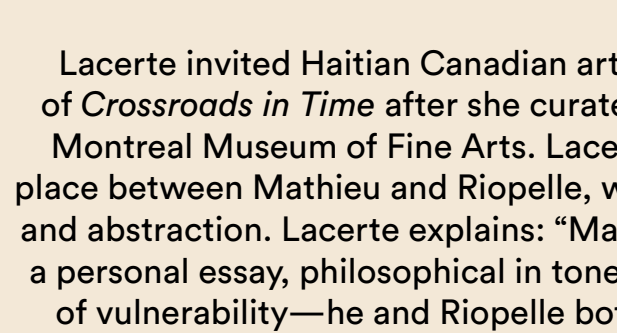


Riopelle, *Atelier Durantin*, 1952, by John Craven.

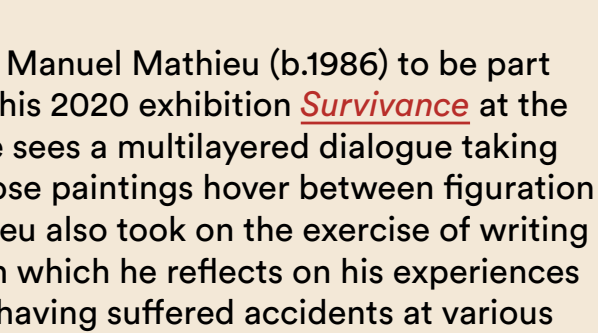
While living in Paris in the 1950s, Riopelle began creating the mosaic paintings that brought him international acclaim, including *Homage aux Nymphéas - Pavane* [Tribute to the Water Lilies - Pavane], 1954. In her essay "Riopelle: Inspired Trailblazer," Lacerte writes that the artist "was not just a maker of mosaics; he was a mosaic of an artist in himself: multidisciplinary before the term became common." In *Crossroads in Time*, Riopelle's diverse artistic production—including large black and white paintings like *Iceberg No. 1*, 1977 (left)—is explored in relation to that of his contemporaries, such as Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), [Françoise Sullivan](#) (b.1923), and Joan Mitchell (1925–1992). "And, because Riopelle's influence is still considerable," adds Lacerte, "the exhibition also considers artists of ensuing generations whose work offers formal, material, iconographic or metaphorical affinities with those of their predecessor."

STUDY ON VULNERABILITY

by Manuel Mathieu



Manuel Mathieu, *Study on Vulnerability*, 2018, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



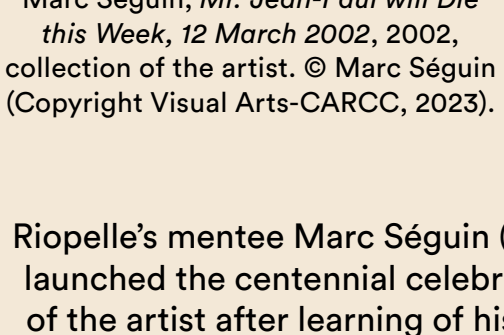
Manuel Mathieu, photograph by Alain Roberge / La Presse Archives.

Lacerte invited Haitian Canadian artist Manuel Mathieu (b.1986) to be part of *Crossroads in Time* after she curated his 2020 exhibition *Survivance* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Lacerte sees a multilayered dialogue taking place between Mathieu and Riopelle, whose paintings hover between figuration and abstraction. Lacerte explains: "Mathieu also took on the exercise of writing a personal essay, philosophical in tone, in which he reflects on his experiences of vulnerability—he and Riopelle both having suffered accidents at various times in their lives." Mathieu completed *Study on Vulnerability*, 2018, during a period of convalescence; Riopelle created his series of small works on paper, *Superbagnères*, 1964–65, while recovering from a skiing accident in the French Pyrenees.

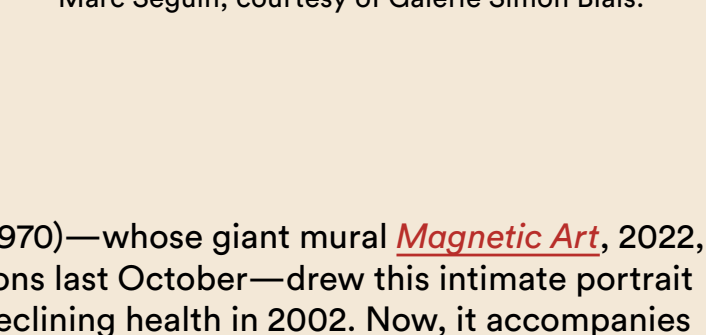
[Learn more about Manuel Mathieu](#)

MR. JEAN-PAUL WILL DIE THIS WEEK, 12 MARCH 2002

by Marc Séguin



Marc Séguin, *Mr. Jean-Paul will Die this Week, 12 March 2002*, 2002, collection of the artist. © Marc Séguin (Copyright Visual Arts-CARCC, 2023).



Marc Séguin, courtesy of Galerie Simon Blais.

Riopelle's mentee Marc Séguin (b.1970)—whose giant mural *Magnetic Art*, 2022, launched the centennial celebrations last October—drew this intimate portrait of the artist after learning of his declining health in 2002. Now, it accompanies an essay Séguin wrote for the exhibition publication, in which he "ponders Riopelle's legacy in an age of instantaneous communication via satellites, an age where painting alone has survived as it 'speaks and enters the 'hereafter,'" says Lacerte. "Séguin, who today paints in the studio on Ile-aux-Oies where Riopelle created *Homage à Rosa Luxemburg* in 1992, takes us 'backstage' for an uncompromising artistic quest that left a profound mark on him."

[Learn more about Marc Séguin](#)

DISPLACED LANDSCAPES II

by Aida Vosoughi



Aida Vosoughi, *Displaced Landscapes II*, 2021, installation view, Centre Ad.Iard, Frelighsburg, Quebec.



Aida Vosoughi, photograph by Martin Morissette.

"Made with diluted acrylic paint, the 360 drawings in Aida Vosoughi's *Displaced Landscapes II* were inspired by places that had been transformed by ecological disasters or armed conflicts, particularly in the Middle East," where the Montreal-based artist is from, writes Lacerte. "Hung at different heights and in superimposed layers, these blurred drawings are arranged in a mosaic of landscapes that combine in what seems to be an abstract work. The overall impression is reminiscent of the ink watercolours that Riopelle painted in the 1950s and the paintings of his *'mosaic' period* in which nature and landscapes were reflected in unusual ways."

[Learn more about Aida Vosoughi](#)

THE FUTURE LEFT BEHIND

by Caroline Monnet



Caroline Monnet, *The Future Left Behind*, 2021, private collection.



Caroline Monnet, photograph by Ulysse del Drago.

"In a reflective essay that blends sincere admiration and critical distance, Caroline Monnet—a multidisciplinary artist of French and Anishinaabe background—takes a step back to better observe Riopelle as monument," writes Lacerte, who curated Monnet's 2021 exhibition *Ninga Minéb* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. "In doing so, she is reproducing the effect of distancing herself for a better overall view in her work *The Future Left Behind*, displayed near Riopelle's oil painting *Iceberg I*. Her allegorical bird's eye view of a village in the Far North opens a circular dialogue between Indigenous art and Riopelle's work while pointing out the breaking points between vision and power."

[Learn more about Caroline Monnet](#)

RÉCIF, EXTRAIT 4

by Patrick Coutu



Patrick Coutu, *Récif, Extrait 4*, 2015, courtesy of Patrick Coutu.



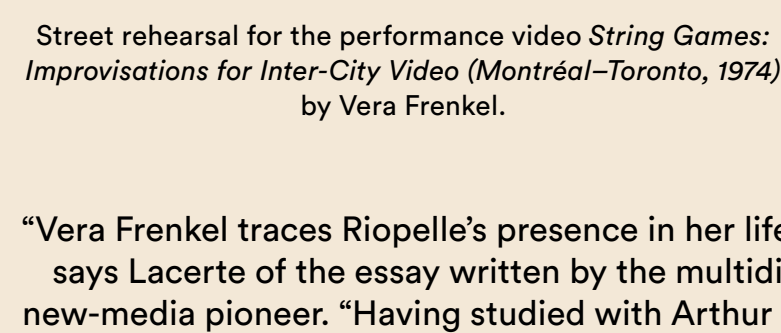
Patrick Coutu, courtesy of Patrick Coutu.

Displaying evidence of their own fabrication processes, "the sculptural installations in the series *Récifs* [Reefs] by Montreal artist Patrick Coutu offer eloquent examples of the affiliations between himself and Riopelle," writes Lacerte. "Their different methods of working aside, the two artists share the use of a material—bronze—and an approach to their craftsmanship. Far from being smooth, their sculptures have rich reliefs, [created in one case by kneading the clay or wax](#), and in the other by pixelating the elements. Each technique conveys a common interest in nature and its textures."

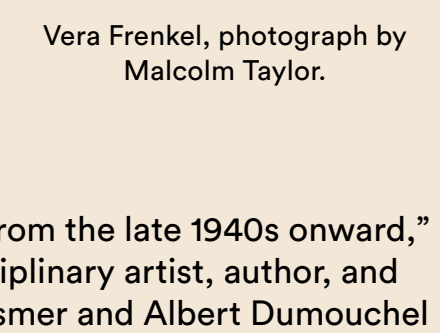
[Learn more about Patrick Coutu](#)

STREET REHEARSAL FOR THE PERFORMANCE VIDEO STRING GAMES: IMPROVISATIONS FOR INTER-CITY VIDEO (MONTREAL-TORONTO, 1974)

by Vera Frenkel



Street rehearsal for the performance video *String Games: Improvisations for Inter-City Video (Montreal-Toronto, 1974)* by Vera Frenkel.



Vera Frenkel, photograph by Malcolm Taylor.

"Vera Frenkel traces Riopelle's presence in her life from the late 1940s onward," says Lacerte of the essay written by the multidisciplinary artist, author, and new-media pioneer. "Having studied with Arthur Lismer and Albert Dumouchel before moving to Toronto, Frenkel expresses her admiration for the artist as a student in Montreal, where she and her colleagues saw him as a model of freedom in his thinking and art practice. She describes the haunting revelation she had upon learning of [Riopelle's fascination with string games](#) and the connection between his *Jeux de ficelles* [string games] and her own 1974 work *String Games: Improvisation for Inter-City Video (Montreal-Toronto, 1974)*."

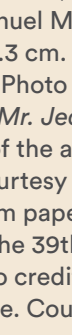
[Learn more about Vera Frenkel](#)

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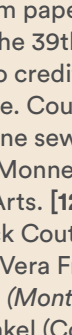
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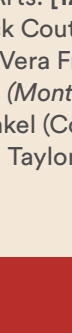
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