L’avenir (looking forward)

“L’avenir (looking forward)”, the first exhibition highlights for BNLMTL 2014, examines how contemporary artists respond to the question of “what is to come?”

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Shifting between assessment and anticipation, clearly grounded in the “now,” and informed by echoes of the past, the Biennale de Montréal 2014 looks ahead and strives to unveil a range of possibilities and rekindle some that may have been prematurely extinguished.

Highlights include the North American premiere of Shirin Neshat’s film Illusions & Mirrors (2013), and Thomas
Hirschhorn’s *Touching Reality* (2012), a video installation that gives form to the ways in which the technological imperative to touch has changed our relationship to the world.

As our contemporary communication devices reformat the entire world into one world, our agency is often reduced to sliding our fingers across screens, gliding, tapping, pinching and zooming in on images, from the most delightful to the most horrid.

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A new project by Polish-born, US-based artist Krzysztof Wodiczko, who received the Hiroshima Prize in 1998 for his contribution as an artist to world peace, is co-produced with Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal for BNLMTL 2014. Wodiczko has realized over eighty such public projections, which often give visibility and voice to precarious or marginalized communities. For “L’avenir (looking forward)”, Wodiczko examines the specific conditions defining homelessness in the downtown neighborhood that is home to both the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal and the Quartier des Spectacles.

From the Arctic Perspective Initiative collective to the Second Life scifi-aboriginal narratives of Skawennati, from the playful economic speculations of Richard Ibghy and Marilou
Lemmens to Hajra Waheed’s new archi-sculptural explorations, BNLMTL 2014 will provide the opportunity to discover the works of Montréal artists who have, thus far, remained largely invisible in their home city despite having significant international profiles.

Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens’s *The Prophets* (2013), an installation of small whimsical sculptures made from ordinary household materials, turn graphs into models, giving physical form to economic abstractions. Goldin+Senneby propose an interplay between two modes of speculation: theatre and algorithmic trading models. For BNLMTL 2014, they literally connect the exhibition to financial trading by using the exhibition as a “laboratory” for developing algorithmic trading models with their collaborator Paul Leong, a New York-based investment banker working for Blackstone, who developed a trading strategy identifying early signs of mergers and acquisitions. This speculation’s financial performance determines the duration of the exhibition.
In two separate projects, Miami artist Jillian Mayer and Los Angeles artist Andrea Bowers tackle the ethos of our camera-phone and social media universe and consider the impact of technology on social interaction and image-making. A simple selfie or a few characters can have unexpected consequences in this new, fast-paced frontier.


Environmental topics such as global warming, the Arctic, biodiversity and water rights figure prominently in the exhibition and connect the work of a number of artists in BNLMTL 2014, including Ursula Biemann and Klara Hobza.

In her recent video essay *Deep Weather* (2013), Biemann beautifully connects tar sands exploitation in Northern Canada to a melting Himalayan icefield and the impending submersion of Bangladesh along with the related notion of water as territory of citizenship.

Berlin artist Klara Hobza’s open-ended quixotic project, *Driving through Europe* – a lifelong project that will take her from
Rotterdam to Constanța, Romania – deftly and humourously touches on old histories of conquest, shifting political alliances and water quality.

† Shirin Neshat, Illusions & Mirrors, 2013, video. © Shirin Neshat, realized with the support of Dior, Courtesy of the artist and the Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

from October 22, 2014 until January 4, 2015

L’avenir (looking forward)
Co-curated by Gregory Burke, Peggy Gale, Lesley Johnstone and Mark Lanctôt
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presented by Biennale de Montréal
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