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Media arts – Montreal explores new avenues Quartier des Spectacles and MUTEK join the Connecting Cities Network

Montreal, January 22, 2013 – The Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and MUTEK are pleased to announce that they have joined the Connecting Cities Network as associated partners. With the only members outside the European Union, Montreal represents the North American bridgehead for the network of cities dedicated to adventurous exploration of new uses for urban media, particularly the exhibition of creative content.

Through the network, Montreal is linked to partners in Berlin, Linz, Istanbul, Liverpool, Brussels, Helsinki, Madrid, Vienna, Zagreb and Marseille.

“We are very happy to extend the Connecting Cities Network beyond Europe with our two associated partners in Montreal: the MUTEK festival and Quartier des Spectacles. Montreal is not only a hub for new-media art; I would describe the work being done there as best-practices in digital urban development. Quartier des Spectacles’ permanent projection sites are a technological infrastructure that many other cities can only dream of, especially because they are made available for art and cultural content instead of advertising. I am sure there will be an exciting exchange of experience and knowledge with Montreal around the central question of how permanent urban media installations can have a meaningful impact on our societies,” said Susa Pop, of the Public Art Lab in Berlin, the initiator of the Connecting Cities Network.

Connecting Cities is a network whose aim is to create an exchange between urban activists, creatives, passers-by and city inhabitants from all over the world via media façades and large digital screens. In the years to come, the network will hold events, workshops, conferences, residencies and art labs for creatives to share their experience and expertise in the use of these new media. All members of the Connecting Cities Network will gather in Montreal in 2014 for an international conference, planned to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the MUTEK festival. The project was initiated by the Public Art Lab (Berlin) in collaboration with Ars Electronica Futurelab (Linz), Body Process Arts Association (Istanbul), FACT (Liverpool), iMAL (Brussels), m-cult (Helsinki), Medialab Prado (Madrid), Media Architecture Institute (Vienna), the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Riga 2014 and Videospread (Marseille). The associated partners are the University of Aarhus, Marseille-Provence 2013, [MUTEK \(Montreal\)](#) and [Quartier des Spectacles \(Montreal\)](#).

“Once again, Montreal is making a name for itself internationally thanks to the exceptional talent of its artists and cultural organizations. Montrealers can be very proud of the creative genius in their midst, which is gaining ever more international recognition. The membership of Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and MUTEK in the Connecting Cities Network, as the network’s only North American members, is a testament to the quality of their cutting-edge cultural programming and their openness to the best the world has to offer. I offer them my warmest congratulations, and thank them for being outstanding representatives for our cultural metropolis, both at home and abroad,” said Éline Ayotte, the Ville de Montréal’s Executive Committee member responsible for culture, heritage and design.

“Over the last 14 years, MUTEK has become an essential player in the world of digital art in all its forms, for audiences, artists and professionals alike. Today, there is a MUTEK network active in North America, South America and Europe. It is an essential platform for the exploration and promotion of artistic diversity, and reflects a trend-setting global cultural movement. MUTEK’s membership in the Connecting Cities Network as the first non-European associated partner is a natural extension of our activities, and will help raise our profile in Europe, and, along with it, that of Montreal’s expertise,” said Alain Mongeau, executive and artistic director of MUTEK.

“Our vision is to make Montreal’s cultural centre a showcase for creativity, particularly in media arts. Thanks to the permanent technology infrastructure of the Luminous Pathway, Quartier des Spectacles has become a prized site for artists wishing to experiment and innovate. Our membership in this network is one more step toward fulfilling our vision, because it will allow us to enrich our work with ideas from elsewhere, and promote Montreal and its artists on the world stage,” said Jacques Primeau, chair of the Quartier des Spectacles Partnership.

Quartier des Spectacles is the only place in the world where building façades are used year round for displaying artistic content, specifically digital art. Eight façades and streetscapes are used as permanent projection sites: the Grande Bibliothèque, UQAM’s Centre de design, Cégep du Vieux-Montréal, Place de la Paix, Place Émilie-Gamelin, UQAM’s Président-Kennedy pavilion, the UQAM bell tower and the area surrounding Saint-Laurent metro station. The façades have been digitized to allow artists to integrate their architecture into their creations. Projection content is regularly refreshed, and two special events focused on the projections are well on their way to becoming essential media-arts happenings: the Parcours Numérique, presented as part of the International Digital Arts Biennial in collaboration with MUTEK and Élektra, and the video projection component of Luminothérapie, currently running until March 2.

About MUTEK

MUTEK is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the dissemination and development of digital creativity in sound, music, and audio-visual art. Its mandate is to provide a platform for the most original and visionary artists currently working in their fields, with the intent of providing an outlet of initiation and discovery for the audiences we seek to develop. Every year since 2000, the organization has presented Montreal’s MUTEK Festival, a major international event featuring original, innovative programming. Today, there are also MUTEK festivals in Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Spain. More information: www.mutek.org

About the Luminous Pathway in Quartier des Spectacles

The Luminous Pathway was the first expression of Quartier des Spectacles’ visual identity. It illuminates the Quartier’s rich diversity while respecting the environment. The Luminous Pathway is made up of 800 glowing red dots that identify cultural venues, original architectural lighting for 23 buildings, and 8 architectural video-projection sites with ever-changing content. It is a powerful, distinctive and unique urban experience! For more information, visit quartierdesspectacles.com.

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Source: Quartier des Spectacles Partnership and MUTEK

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