

MEGAPHONE: THE INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION THAT GIVES MONTREALERS A VOICE

*Presented by the National Film Board of Canada and the Quartier des spectacles
A Moment Factory creation staged by Étienne Paquette*

Montreal, August 27, 2013 – From September 4 to November 4, pedestrians in the Quartier des spectacles can take part in an experience that's at once aural, visual and interactive—and the only one of its kind in the world. [*Megaphone*](#), an installation about reappropriating public space, gives everyone an opportunity to join in on the discussion. As participants speak, their words will be transformed, in real time, into images projected onto the side of the President Kennedy building of Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), leaving their visual “footprint” on the urban landscape. Presented by the [National Film Board of Canada](#) and the [Quartier des spectacles](#), *Megaphone* is a [Moment Factory](#) creation staged by Étienne Paquette.

Programming that gets people talking

Every evening from Wednesday to Saturday, various public figures and organizations will get the ball rolling by sharing their thoughts on a given topic. For an hour or two, these speakers will discuss various compelling subjects and prompt the public to join in. Audience members or passers-by can then have their say until *Megaphone* shuts down for the night (11 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays). An emcee will be on hand to moderate the discussion.

François Cardinal, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, DeAnne Smith, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Rae Spoon, Mélissa Mollen Dupuis (Idle No More), Raoul Duguay and Les Zapartistes are just some of the speakers who have confirmed their participation in *Megaphone*. Various organizations will also sponsor certain evenings. Radio-Canada will host a verbal joust between Montreal's mayoral candidates on October 11; Equiterre, who will discuss several topics of current interest; *Le Devoir*, who will be hosting five special evenings based on the Montreal news scene; the Institut du Nouveau Monde will present a series of talks on participatory democracy; and École Urbania will preside over a weekly gathering entitled “Imagine Montreal,” addressing themes such as transportation and food localism.

Let the people speak!

Megaphone was created as a mouthpiece to let Montrealers' voices be heard, loud and clear! Inspired by the city's early 20th-century history of popular assemblies as well as the 19th-century British tradition of the Speaker's Corner, *Megaphone* gives everyone a chance to speak out and air their concerns.

Public launch of *Megaphone*

Wednesday, September 4 at 8 p.m.

At the Promenade des Artistes, Quartier des spectacles
Corner of Jeanne-Mance and De Maisonneuve W.

The public is invited to the opening night of ***Megaphone***, which will bring together speakers from every walk of life. Each one will add their unique voice to the event, so drop by and hear what they have to say.

List of opening night speakers*

Dominic Audet (Moment Factory), Éline Ayotte (City of Montreal), *Le Devoir* editor-in-chief, Josée Boileau, filmmaker François Girard, Nicolas Girard Deltruc (Festival du nouveau cinéma), Ivy (Quebec slam poetry league), Étienne Paquette (***Megaphone***), Tom Perlmutter (National Film Board of Canada), Catherine Perreault-Lessard (École Urbania), Jacques Primeau (Quartier des spectacles), Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, writer DeAnne Smith, Michel Venne (Institut du Nouveau Monde), and others, to be announced.

...after which the mike will be open to all!

The evening will be emceed by Louis-René Beaudin.

*In alphabetical order

"We're working to turn the Quartier des spectacles—the cultural heart of Montreal—into a unique open-air public space where we can show installations and works that make use of sophisticated technology, and treat people to something extraordinary. ***Megaphone*** is a perfect example. Capturing people's words and visually representing them in a downtown public space is something that has never been done, and it's a whole new way of bringing the Quartier to life. ***Megaphone*** allows everyone to participate, and generates discussion, putting technology to the best possible use: fostering interaction between individuals!" said Jacques Primeau, chairman of the board of the Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles.

"After Amsterdam, Park City and New York, the NFB and its Digital Studio, guided by Hugues Sweeney, are back in Montreal with an original work by Moment Factory. ***Megaphone*** taps into the collective memory of our great orators while serving as a powerful public platform that's anchored in today's realities. Produced with the Quartier des spectacles, the installation is totally innovative, putting a whole new spin on getting your voice heard," said Tom Perlmutter, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada.

"At Moment Factory, we like bringing people together in public spaces to experience something mind-blowing. It's been a pleasure to work closely with the NFB and the Quartier des spectacles, who share our vision of urban space and who've given us this great playground for further exploring our notions of public participation. Creating an interactive installation is always a challenge. What really fired up the team about ***Megaphone*** was being able to push the boundaries and possibilities of voice recognition, a technology still in its infancy, by using it creatively," said Dominic Audet, co-founder of Moment Factory.

"Not only is the Mégaphone a delightful tribute to oral tradition in Quebec, it also helps us rediscover the democratic essence of public debate. This is the city that produced the Ligue Nationale d'Improvisation, making it practically inevitable that we would one day have this platform open to anyone with something to say. I want to congratulate everyone involved in creating the Mégaphone, which allows us to loudly proclaim our pride as Montrealers and as members this culturally rich, francophone, cosmopolitan community," said Éline Ayotte, the Ville de Montréal's Executive Committee member responsible for culture, heritage and design.

The technology that makes *Megaphone* possible

Captured through a microphone installed on the Promenade des Artistes, the voices of *Megaphone* participants will affect the imagery projected onto UQAM's President Kennedy building, in real time. At the same time, the speaker's words will also be transferred to a voice-recognition system specially developed for *Megaphone* by the [Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal](#) (CRIM). A second, delayed transcription of the words will then be used to enhance the visual space as well as feed the database that informs the video content being projected when the megaphone is not in use. This will effectively reflect what has been said while providing an overall picture of the sound clips that have been stored.

Exhibition on the Promenade des Artistes

Megaphone also gives a nod to Quebec's history by paying homage to some of the province's greatest orators. An audiovisual exhibition will run along the Promenade des Artistes, highlighting the words and work of seven key figures: Pierre Bourgault, Clémence DesRochers, Camilien Houde, Michèle Lalonde, Gilles Vigneault, Kondiaronk and Irving Layton. In addition to being educational, the exhibition will also inspire anyone wishing to practise the art of oratory through *Megaphone*.

Megaphone

September 4 to November 4, Wednesday to Saturday, beginning at dusk
 Wednesday and Thursday until 11 p.m.
 Friday and Saturday until 1 a.m.

At the Promenade des Artistes, Quartier des spectacles
 Corner of Jeanne-Mance and De Maisonneuve W.

Have your say!

For the program schedule or to see the trailer, visit megaphonemtl.ca.

The content created by *Megaphone* will be available online, free of charge, at NFB.ca, under the heading "Speak Up!" For more details, go to NFB.ca.

About *Megaphone*

In September 2012, the National Film Board of Canada and the Partenariat du Quartier des spectacles announced that *Megaphone*, a project proposal by local firm Moment Factory, had been selected following a call for applications launched in April 2012 by PPP–Parti Pris Pluriel. The jury, led by filmmaker and director François Girard, was unanimous in its choice. Designed to be both urban and polemical in spirit, *Megaphone* offers Montrealers a unique opportunity to speak out anonymously and watch their ideas take on a new form in a public setting.

About the NFB

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) creates groundbreaking [interactive works](#), social-issue documentaries and auteur animation. The NFB has produced over 13,000 productions and won over 5,000 awards, including 4 Canadian Screen Awards, 7 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. To access acclaimed NFB content, visit NFB.ca or download its [apps](#) for smartphones, tablets and connected TV.

The Quartier des spectacles

The Quartier des spectacles has been the cultural heart of Montreal for over a century. Today, it's also a hub of economic, urban and cultural development that builds on its many strengths to consolidate Montreal's position as a major cultural city. Alive, creative, open to artistic and cultural diversity, the Quartier has something for everyone, from lovers of digital art to fans of world music. At all times of the day, 12 months a year, Montrealers and visitors flock to its 80 venues, its more than 40 festivals and its seven public spaces. Located in a unique urban setting that stands out for its bold lighting design, the Quartier des spectacles is a key destination for encountering the excitement of culture. For more information, visit quartierdesspectacles.com.

Moment Factory

Moment Factory is a new media and entertainment studio specialized in designing and producing multimedia environments that provide memorable experiences through a combination of video, lighting, architecture, sound and special effects. With over 300 projects to its credit since its inception in 2001, Moment Factory has developed a unique expertise. Its clients to date include Cirque du Soleil, Disney, Nine Inch Nails, Microsoft, Euronews, the Atlantic City Alliance, the City of Barcelona, Madonna and the Los Angeles International Airport.

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MegaphoneMontreal>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MegaphoneMTL>

An invitation to the launch is enclosed.

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