

MOMENTA 2019

Biennale de l'image

The life of things



Elisabeth Belliveau, *Still Life with Fallen Fruit (after A Breath of Life, Clarice Lispector)*, 2017-19, video still.

5 sept – 13 oct
Montréal



MOMENTA

13 exhibitions, 39 artists, 20 countries
momentabiennale.com

MOMENTA

An international contemporary art biennale devoted to the image.

An exceptional rendezvous in Montréal's most important museums, galleries, and artist-run centres.

A thriving hub of interaction and exchange, transforming our understanding of the world one artwork at a time.



MOMENTA

The Director's Statement

This year, the biennale celebrates its 30th year with the launch of the 16th edition. In 1989, VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine organized the first Mois de la Photo à Montréal to mark the 150th anniversary of photography. Since that time, the organization has revised its mandate, becoming MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image in 2017. This was the beginning of a new direction with regard to the image, as the biennale shifted its focus to encompass a diversity of art forms beyond the medium of photography.

The name change was a chance for us to reflect on our mission and aspirations. The objective that now guides our actions is that of having a sensitive and sensible impact on the world by means of images. We bring this intention to life through our contribution to cultural and social innovation, by increasing the outreach of artists from Quebec and Canada, raising public awareness of today's issues, and acting as a social agent and catalyst in the contemporary art field.

Under the theme *The Life of Things*, MOMENTA 2019 explores the nature—or even the personality—taken on by objects conveyed through images. Considering the relationships between people and things, we also delve into the issues associated with the notion of power that is accorded to living beings while being withheld from the “non-living.” Through the eyes of 39 artists from 20 countries, the biennale examines the economic, social, and cultural contexts in which material production is prevalent. This poetic and inspiring proposal was set out by curator María Wills Londoño and developed in collaboration with Maude Johnson and myself. Together, we wanted to enrich our understanding of the complexity and ambivalence of our relationships with the objects that inundate our planet and alienate us, even as, paradoxically, they express aspects of our identity.

To complement the exhibitions and in the spirit of making art inclusive and accessible, MOMENTA has developed an education program for visitors from all walks of life. MOMENTA Creative includes many educational activities intended to help viewers learn more about the works exhibited and the social issues that they address from pedagogical and creative perspectives.

Audrey Genois
Executive Director

With this artistic and educational programming, MOMENTA 2019 is the occasion to ask urgent questions on (over)consumption and reflect on related social and environmental issues.

MOMENTA | Biennale de l'image is an international contemporary art biennale devoted to the image. Based in Montréal, the biennale has taken place every two years since 1989. Its activities include exhibitions, public events, educational programs, artistic and social collaborations, and more. The event's mandate is to implement unifying and structuring initiatives for art dissemination and education, thus encouraging reflection on and access to contemporary art. More than 170,000 people from different cultural, professional, and social backgrounds visited our biennale in 2017, including 5,000 participants in our educational activities. We anticipate 200,000 visitors to this year's exhibitions and activities.



The Curator's Statement

In the 16th edition of the biennale, *The Life of Things*, we examine the representation of objects not through the supposed transparency of the image, but through transversally political artworks. Material production can become haunting, excessive, enchanting, inebriating—such that, from one moment to the next, objects may become obsolete and lose their symbolic potential. Such frenetic production redefines the limits of objects, turning them into mere “things,” even to the extent of impacting their ontology. With respect to the issues of consumption that characterize the contemporary world, these thingified objects are given dizzying visibility even as, ironically, they are rendered invisible by boundless accumulation. For its 2019 edition, MOMENTA examines this paradox through works whose poetry and critical input shake up the horizons and compose new perspectives regarding our relationships with objects.

MOMENTA brings into dialogue the consumerist and symbolic dimensions of things, instigating a discourse specifically about those things. Here, things are considered beyond their materiality to bring forth their potential for being power structures in themselves, exuding a unique energy. Four thematic components were developed to ground the theme in current concerns: Cultural Objects and Material Culture; Thingified Beings or Humanized Objects; The Absurd as Counter-Narrative of the Object; and Still Life in an Age of Environmental Crisis. The biennale explores both the ontological issues of the object represented and the material existence of the image. Why make the object the central theme of an event about the image? Precisely to liberate the image from its formal and conceptual flatness, and ultimately to approach it as an object that documents another object. Here, the photograph is deployed in time and space. When we consider the object—both visual and material—as a receptacle for and catalyst of meaning, we can challenge the cultural and social perceptions behind the categories (ritual, utilitarian, decorative, and so on) that it introduces and to which it is confined.

María Wills Londoño Curator



The constellation of exhibitions that gives shape to this edition of MOMENTA promises more than a glimpse into the life of things: proposed here is an incursion into the heart of matter and its meanings, an exploration of the diversity and extent of the relationships among objects, subjects, and images.

María Wills Londoño (Colombia) is an art researcher and curator. Her major exhibition projects offer reflections on the unstable condition of the contemporary image and alternative views of urban themes in Latin America. Among the exhibitions she has organized are *Urbes Mutantes: Latin American Photography 1944–2013*; *Latin Fire: Otras fotografías de un continente*; and *Fernell Franco-Cali Clair-obscur*, presented at the International Center of Photography in New York, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris, Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid (PHotoESPAÑA), Centro de la Imagen in Mexico City, Museo la Tertulia in Cali, and the Museo de Arte del Banco de la República in Bogota; she was the temporary exhibition curator at the last institution from 2009 to 2014. She co-curated *Pulsions urbaines*, presented at Espace Van Gogh for Les Rencontres d'Arles 2017; *Oscar Muñoz. Protographies*, which toured to Jeu de Paume in Paris and Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires from 2011 to 2013; and was co-artistic director of ARCO Colombia 2015. In 2018 she developed a research project to recontextualize the collection of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá to question the concept of modernity, concluding with the exhibition *The Art of Disobedience*. She founded the Visionarios program of the Instituto de Visión, to highlight important figures in Colombian conceptual art, and was director until 2018.

Thematic Components

Cultural Objects and Material Culture

An object's meaning derives in large part from human action and from the utilitarian or symbolic significance attributed to it. Material culture is founded on the relationship that societies have with the objects that surround them, whose complex legacy is revealed in their roles within religious and spiritual belief systems, but also, more broadly, in the belief in consumer products. Understanding of the past and of ancestral cultures relies, in part, on the objects that they are associated with and their representation. Objects become catalysts of identity, encouraging a sense of belonging to a particular group or community. Moreover, cultural objects are also products of the consumerism that drives contemporary societies. They are the prism through which are redirected or translated the individual and collective desires that help to buttress capitalist systems of production.

Here, the tensions among preciousness, craftsmanship, and commercialization are simultaneously dissected and reconstructed. By taking a critical point of view toward ethnographic or exoticizing approaches, this component emphasizes, by means of the image, a diversity of voices that recognize the essential role of alterity in reflections on the present.

Thingified Beings or Humanized Objects

Many elements in the world of objects serve as extensions of the human body. Some of these are created in a scientific framework to simulate vital functions, whereas others consist of physical modifications for aesthetic purposes. Following this logic, the body becomes object and the object becomes body: we are witnessing the commercialization of anatomical properties—and of people—as well as the vitalization of the material. The effects of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism have, for their part, subjugated natural and cultural diversity to the dynamics of authority and processes of otherization, turning the Other into an object of study, even of consumption. In some contexts of cultural violence, women are treated as objects, be it of desire or of commercial exploitation.

Acknowledging these complexities, this component explores the humanized object and the thingified being—the natural and the artificial made permeable. A critical look is offered at representation of the body—particularly the female body—in history, dwelling on clichés and stereotypes that cannot be ignored. An updated conception of female sensuality and sexuality, the outcome of many reappropriations of power, is highlighted here.



Thematic Components (continued)

The Absurd as Counter-Narrative of the Object

Through the prism of the absurd, fiction becomes a field for negotiating the real, gaining a credibility that problematizes accepted notions of reality. Objects are diverted from their meaning in order to probe the weight of the real; codes are deconstructed and contradictions emerge to disrupt beliefs and restore a capacity for wonder in contemporary societies that have been anaesthetized by stereotypes and labels that dictate what they must be. Staging and theatricality become recurring strategies for destabilizing the established order and suggesting a plural relationship with reality. Employing parody and humour, they generate irrational yet enchanting images and narratives that ultimately reveal a need for liberation.

This component makes visible the tenuous interstice between the absurd and the real. The strange, even grotesque experience of reality is investigated by means of imagination and fiction, two spaces or vectors that give rise to other types of engagement and resistance.

Still Life in an Age of Environmental Crisis

As a pictorial genre, still life appeared in the seventeenth century, mainly in Protestant countries where religious representations were generally forbidden. Not only does this genre engage reflection on the way artists today represent everyday life and organize objects, it also enables a political consideration of the excessive accumulation of goods in contemporary societies and of the environmental crisis—the death in “nature morte,” or the stilling of life. The irrational supply that results from production and consumption models leads to an exponential increase in the circulation, accumulation, and elimination of objects. In this context, reuse would seem a healthy response to the issues of mass production that characterize a capitalist contemporaneity.

This component explores issues of death without opposing them to existence. The constructions and temporalities of things are here considered in a sardonic or comic style that questions the supposed neutrality of objects. The life of things is thus examined from a non-linear, recontextualizing perspective in which a critical space is articulated.



The Life of Things

Thematic Exhibition

22 artists / 2 venues

Galerie de l'UQAM
VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine

Presented simultaneously at two locations, the thematic exhibition meshes the four components together by generating a conversation fuelled by the works of twenty-two artists.

GALERIE DE L'UQAM

At Galerie de l'UQAM, the components **Cultural Objects and Material Culture** and **Thingified Beings or Humanized Objects** are put in dialogue through the works of:

LAURA AGUILAR United States

In the photographic series *Grounded*, Laura Aguilar stages her naked body in the rocky landscapes of Joshua Tree National Park, landscapes that she transforms into queer and decolonized terrain.

KADER ATTIA Algeria/France

In the video diptych *Open Your Eyes*, Kader Attia explores the "restoration" of the human body by comparing it to the concept of repair in "extra-occidental," or non-Western, cultures.

PATRICIA DOMÍNGUEZ Chile

In her installation *The isle of dogs; a curse in reverse*, Patricia Domínguez presents a critique of economic liberalism by creating her own "corporate" healing mythologies.

CHUN HUA CATHERINE DONG China/Canada

With her *Mother* series, Chun Hua Catherine Dong composes a portrait of her late mother through women who were close to her, by generating scenarios in which absence becomes a form of presence.

JENEEN FREI NJOOTLI Canada

In the film *Being Skidoo*, Jeneen Frei Njootli takes an intimate look at the North by considering the practice and aesthetics of reciprocity. The sculpture *Wind sucked in through bared teeth* testifies to the physical, cultural, and territorial violence experienced by Indigenous peoples.

GAURI GILL India

In her photographic series *Acts of Appearance*, Gauri Gill upturns the conventions of the ethnographic gaze by presenting members of the Adivasi community, in India, wearing masks as they "perform" their daily activities.

JÉRÔME HAVRE France/Canada + CAULEEN SMITH United States + CAMILLE TURNER Canada

In the video *Triangle Trade*, the artists created avatar puppets and distinct worlds to represent themselves, so as to vouch for blackness as a mode of experience that simultaneously touches on multiple futures and histories.

KEYEZUA Angola

In the photographic series *Fortia*, Keyezua offers a different image of disability, as the masks displayed in the images are made in collaboration with a group of disabled artisans from Luanda.

RAFAEL ORTEGA Mexico

In the six-channel video installation *Vidas, oficios y tareas*, Rafael Ortega takes a look at Mexican craft traditions by documenting creative energy as a living organism.

VICTORIA SIN Canada/United Kingdom

In the video series *Narrative Reflections on Looking*, Victoria Sin performs femininity by adopting a non-binary posture in which the materiality of implants and costumes subverts the processes of thingification.

The Life of Things

Thematic Exhibition (continued)

22 artists / 2 venues

Galerie de l'UQAM
VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine

Presented simultaneously at two locations, the thematic exhibition meshes the four components together by generating a conversation fuelled by the works of twenty-two artists.

VOX, CENTRE DE L'IMAGE CONTEMPORAINE

At VOX, the components **The Absurd as Counter-Narrative of the Object** and **Still Life in an Age of Environmental Crisis** are put in dialogue through the works of:

ELISABETH BELLIVEAU Canada

In the video installation *Still Life with Fallen Fruit (after A Breath of Life, Clarice Lispector)*, Elisabeth Belliveau presents multiple compositions in which the artificial and the natural merge and life and death are alternately transposed from one thing to another.

MAEVE BRENNAN United Kingdom

In the film *The Drift*, Maeve Brennan presents the portraits of Mohammad, a young mechanic; Hashem, an archaeological conservator; and Fakhry, the gatekeeper to the Roman temples of Niha, for whom hoarded, fragmented, or forgotten things give meaning to their lives.

PETER FISCHLI AND DAVID WEISS Switzerland

In the video *Der Lauf der Dinge*, Peter Fischli and David Weiss document a series of events that occur through a concatenation of physical and chemical reactions.



Felicity Hammond, *Public Protection, Private Collection*, 2016, installation view.
© Felicity Hammond

FELICITY HAMMOND United Kingdom

In the installation *Public Protection, Private Collection*, Felicity Hammond plays on representation and visibility; she contrasts up-scale architectural project with the wastage required for the construction of such luxurious sites.

ANOUK KRUIHOF The Netherlands

In her sculptures *Folly*, *Skimmer*, and *Stonewall*, Anouk Kruithof presents an anthropomorphic trilogy in which critical tension is generated through the fusion of the synthetic and the natural.

TAUS MAKHACHEVA Russia

In the film *Tightrope*, Taus Makhacheva presents a spectacular metaphor for museums as repositories of cultural heritage and the risks that this entails.

BRIDGET MOSER Canada

In the video *Every Room is a Waiting Room Part 1*, Bridget Moser makes off-kilter uses of banal objects while emphasizing their comic potential, in order to challenge the categorical systems that inform our behaviour with respect to consumer goods.

MEAGAN MUSSEAU Canada

In the *[re]claim* series, Meagan Musseau focuses on the object and its representation by beading the names of Mi'kmaq locations on furs, embodying the existence and accentuating the visibility of these territories, but also of Indigenous traditions and the work done by these peoples.

JUAN ORTIZ-APUY Costa Rica/Canada

In the video *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, Juan Ortiz-Apuy draws a curious portrait of consumer society, a portrait in which human interaction with things ultimately becomes a form of socialization.

Solo and Group Exhibitions

15 artists / 10 venues + public space of Mile End

The fifteen artists presented in these exhibitions explore various facets of the components in greater depth through particular approaches and positions.

CENTRE CLARK

HANNAH DOERKSEN Canada

In the installation *Making a Religion Out of One's Loneliness*, Hannah Doerksen constructs a sanctuary of solitude at Centre CLARK. She examines the redemptive role of objects in situations that isolate human beings, opening a door to the object's possible social existence.

DAZIBAO

KAREN PAULINA BISWELL Colombia/France

+ **LAURA HUERTAS MILLÁN** Colombia/France

+ **ANA MENDIETA** Cuba

An invitation to consider other ways of configuring the feminine, the exhibition *Libertad* at Dazibao presents the works of Karen Paulina Biswell, Laura Huertas Millán, and Ana Mendieta around the notion of freedom. They examine the objectification of women's bodies and the forms it takes in societies today.

GALERIE B-312

MAGGIE GROAT Canada + **JAMIE ROSS** Canada

The exhibition *Living Entities* at Galerie B-312 brings together works by Maggie Groat and Jamie Ross, who explore the singular energy with which objects are charged by proposing consumerism patterns other than that associated with capitalism, allowing us to reimagine our rituals with objects.

LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY

JONATHAS DE ANDRADE Brazil

In the installation *Eu, mestiço* and the video *O Peixe*, at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Jonathas de Andrade addresses paradoxes linked to corporality. The theatrical and performative relationship at the centre of these works creates a distancing that allows for the critical reappropriation and dislocation of "corporalized" violence: a possible dethingification.

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

FRANCIS ALÿS Belgium/Mexico

In *Children's Games*, a filmed inventory of playful activities presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Francis Alÿs presents a renewed relationship with objects and, more broadly, with daily life, giving hope with regard to the socio-political circumstances under which these very objects obtain meaning.

MUSÉE D'ART DE JOLIETTE

In collaboration with **Les Rencontres d'Arles**

MARINA GADONNEIX France

In her photographic series *Phénomènes* at the Musée d'art de Joliette, Marina Gadonneix probes the theatricality of the laboratory—a place of experimentation in which the world is constantly replayed—by exploring scientific re-creations of various natural events.



Francis Alÿs, *Children's Game 10/Papalote*, from the *Children's Games* series, 2011, video still. © Francis Alÿs

Solo and Group Exhibitions (continued)

15 artists / 10 venues + public space of Mile End

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MONTRÉAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

ALINKA ECHEVERRÍA Mexico/United Kingdom

In the exhibition *Simulacres* at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, Alinka Echeverría revises the masculine and colonialist gaze that has shaped history by focusing on the exoticized and fetishistic nature of representation through collages made from archival photographs.

MCCORD MUSEUM

CELIA PERRIN SIDAROUS Canada

In the installation *The Archivist* at the McCord Museum, Celia Perrin Sidarous explores the ghostly and historiographic charge of objects by examining the museological practices of archiving and displaying objects in order to shed light on the gestures involved in these practices.

OCCURRENCE

RAPHAËLLE DE GROOT Canada

In the exhibition *Entre mer et terre* presented at Occurrence, Raphaëlle de Groot delves into the often-invisible relationships between human, cultural, or identity contexts and the material world, through the deployment of various images and objects collected during her stay in Minganie in 2016 and 2017.

OPTICA

In collaboration with **LE BAL (Paris)**

BATIA SUTER Switzerland/The Netherlands

At OPTICA, Batia Suter combines printed and projected images in her video installation *Radial Grammar*. As they are released from their initial space, she draws a new visual language out of them. Suter articulates multifaceted realities and hybrid positions that challenge the image and its mechanisms of depiction.

OPTICA

MIGUEL ANGEL RÍOS Argentina

In the exhibition *The Geopoetics of Things* presented at OPTICA, Miguel Angel Ríos deals with the blind spots and omissions of dominant narratives in Latin culture, in which the succession of social, political, and ideological crises of the contemporary world is so intense that chaos is normalized

MILE END DISTRICT (PUBLIC SPACE)

IZUMI MIYAZAKI Japan

In her series of self-portraits exhibited, throughout the public space of the Mile End district, Izumi Miyazaki uses various objects from her daily life to create a strange universe punctuated by trompe-l'oeil, in which the settings, scales, and textures are distorted.



Raphaëlle de Groot, *Substances – Innun*, 2017.
Photo credit: Léo Harvey-Côté. © Raphaëlle de Groot

Join Us For the Opening of MOMENTA 2019

Inauguration September 4

Galerie de l'UQAM – VOX, centre de l'image contemporaine

The opening of the biennale will take place on Wednesday, September 4, with the inauguration of MOMENTA 2019 in the presence of the artists.

Openings September 3 to September 7 + October 5

Centre CLARK – Dazibao – Galerie B-312 – Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery – Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal – Musée d'art de Joliette – Montréal Museum of Fine Arts – McCord Museum – Occurrence – OPTICA

From September 3 to September 7, as well as October 5, there will be a series of openings, in the presence of the artists, in the MOMENTA partner galleries, artist-run centres, and museums.

Publication Launch, September 4

As with every edition, MOMENTA has produced a thematic publication to accompany the program, co-published with the German publishing house Kerber Verlag.

Excerpt from the back cover:

Today, mass production of objects is tending to redefine the lines between material things—supposedly inert and passive—and human beings—considered the only subjects endowed with agency. Far from being impermeable to this redefinition, the image is now spreading beyond the two-dimensional space: it is becoming an object in itself. The artists and authors in this book thus explore the universes that are being built between individuals and their material environment, highlighting the reciprocal relations that are formed between subject and object. The authors of the texts are Amanda de la Garza, Anne-Marie Dubois, Sara Knelman, Maude Johnson, Dominique Quessada, and María Wills Londoño. Kapwani Kiwanga and Maryse Larivière each present a series of artworks exclusive to this publication.

The publication will be launched at the inauguration of the biennale on September 4.



Mark Your Calendar

MOMENTA Creative

10 educational activities / 50 guided tours / 1 educational video game

MOMENTA Creative is composed of various educational activities and creative workshops that focus on the theme and exhibitions of the ongoing biennale. Offering sensitive experiences to a variety of audiences, this program is developed with the help of key organizations in a spirit of social cohesion and education through the image.

In addition to numerous guided tours for all types of publics, this educational program consists of different workshops, personalized and adapted to various audiences and groups.



Among the 10 workshops that will be offered, we are pleased to announce:

Creative workshop on self-determination for teenage girls

The participants will create a collective zine in dialogue with the exhibition *Libertad*, which brings together works by Latin American photographers and videographers engaged in a feminist approach.

Creative workshop on the environmental crisis for children

The children will be invited to create a still life in three dimensions from recycled materials, inspired by the techniques favoured by MOMENTA artists.

Performative talk for queer teenagers

The artist Jamie Ross will invite the participants to have an exchange around the creation of alternative communities and the urban experience as a queer and/or non-binary person.



Press Images



1 Elisabeth Belliveau, *Still Life with Fallen Fruit (after A Breath of Life, Clarice Lispector)*, 2017-19, video still.



2 Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner, *Triangle Trade*, 2017, video still. © Jérôme Havre, Cauleen Smith, and Camille Turner



3 Raphaëlle de Groot, *Substances - Inniun*, 2017. Photo credit: Léo Harvey-Côté. © Raphaëlle de Groot



4 Victoria Sin, *Preface/Looking Without Touching*, from the *Narrative Reflections on Looking* series, 2017, video still. © Victoria Sin



5 Francis Alÿs, *Children's Game 10/Papalote*, from the *Children's Games* series, 2011, video still. © Francis Alÿs

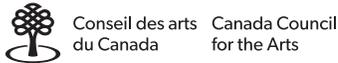


6 Maeve Brennan, *The Drift*, 2017, video still. © Maeve Brennan

Exhibition Partners



Governmental and Institutional Partners



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