

Society PAGES

SUMMER 2023 | No. 77 | \$5.00



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the Literary & Historical Society of Quebec.
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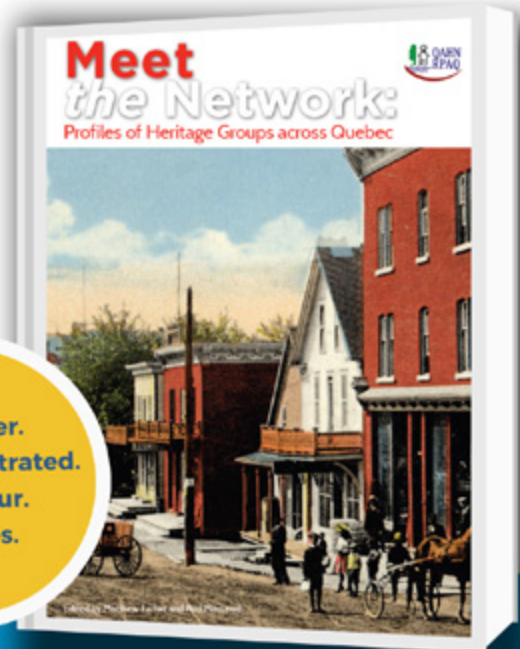
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Kathleen Hulley

kathleenhulley@morrin.org

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Jeanne Lebossé-Gautron

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Friday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Saturday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday	12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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Letter from the President

Gina Farnell



A longtime debate in the field of education has been “nature or nurture.” Are we who we are because of our genetic makeup (nature) or are we the product of our social, cultural, and physical environment (nurture)?

I recently had the privilege of visiting beautiful Norwegian fjords. Awed by the majesty of the mountains, waterfalls, and rivers, I believed the words told to me by a local guide. “When you live in such an environment you are humbled by its beauty and power, and you develop a deepfelt respect for it.” Norwegians are very ecologically minded. Although a fossil-fuel-producing country, Norway is minimally dependent on such energy. Already 80% of their cars are electric. You can say that their environment has nurtured their lifestyle, values, and vision for their future.

We have no control over our DNA, but as adults we do have some control over what nurtures us. As members of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec we choose to support the Morrin Centre, a space where you may find challenging books to read, enriching cultural events, and uplifting entertainment. You may nurture your mind and soul and live a whole spectrum of emotions by reading a good book. You may travel through time and space by attending a workshop or a conference. You may just want to produce your own dopamine by attending a fun-filled event.

Looking at the summer months ahead, I invite you to come and visit the Centre on your own, with family, and with friends. Our guides will be there to welcome you into a nurturing environment. Our library volunteers and staff will be there to help you find the right book. Our entire staff is gearing up to offer you another season of culturally friendly activities.



From the Executive Director

Barry McCullough

Spring is always a busy time for the Morrin Centre and 2023 was no different as it featured the 14th annual Imagination Writers’ Festival; *Yes, And...*, our improv workshop series; and the *Pixels & Pages* book club. I hope that you have been able to participate in some of this exciting programming.

Summer is a time when the team is busy planning out the Centre’s cultural programming for the fall and winter. I can share that the cultural calendar is already shaping up to be full of rich and engaging events and activities.

The Centre will be busy this summer offering guided tours to visitors from all around the world. We fully expect 2023 to be our busiest year for tours since 2019 as we continue to emerge from the effects of the pandemic. Our Book Quest summer reading program will be back in person this year. We are currently in the process of hiring a coordinator for the program and details will be announced soon.

The Morrin team is busy preparing this summer’s *Arts Alive* festival, which will take place August 25-26. The lineup has not yet been finalized, but it promises to be another weekend of great music and wonderful artisanry. Be sure to check www.morrin.org and stay connected to our social media accounts to get the latest updates on *Arts Alive* and our other programming.

Wishing you a warm and sunny summer.



In honour of National Poetry Month this past April, the Morrin Centre held its fourth annual *Society Pages* Poetry Contest. The contest generated an immense amount of interest, with submissions from the Quebec City region as well as from further afield. We were delighted with the number of high-quality entries that we received!

Congratulations to Jeanette Marcotte, who won the contest with her magnificent, and visually stunning, poem "In Defiance of Entropy."

We also selected three honourable mentions that impressed us. These are included here (in no particular order): "Saint-Édouard-de-Lotbinière" by Loch Baillie, "Blizzard" by Carole Lehoux, and "Caramelized Subtleties" by Sierra Duffey.

Thank you to everyone who participated. We hope that you enjoy reading these poems as much as we did!

Saint-Édouard-de-Lotbinière

By Loch Baillie

If I wanted to disappear here, I could. Fold myself into the purple cornfield or lie flat in the graveyard by the school. It's so quiet I can hear the sky moving and the moon's grown so big now I can't see past it. Everything is this place and yet it means nothing to me. I thought no one lived here but you, and now we're in the middle of the street and your friend's friend is in her doorway in her towel, hair dripping, silhouetted by the flashing TV. The ads go on and on forever. I don't even hear what she says to us.

Blizzard

By Carole Lehoux

Mid-January
morning, it rages
in from the north-east
and like a thousand monsters,
it bellows outside my door. The house
hisses and cracks at each of its roars. Trees groan, whirl,
bow under its relentless whip. Windowpanes
fill with its icy spit. An implacable god
has unleashed its wrath upon
my day, threatening
to bury me in
its way.

Caramelized Subtleties

By Sierra Duffey

Darling you're known
wood-smoke cologne
marrow and bone
 holds the spirit
 stronger than flesh

Copper-chained keys
antiquated stones
 make me a home
 for weathered hearts

We'll go to the start
and remember simplicity

I like you
and you like me
let's continue
into what we could be

The future doesn't hold promises
the way I hold precious
the scars that you bear

Swirling cocoa repair
cinnamon embrace
 steadiness toasted
 into unsteady days
 leaf-gilded stairways
 and temperate hills

Hush babe

I know the world's been cruel
and I know the world's been crazy
The atmosphere is hazy
and your exes have been lazy
 in caring for your soul
It's okay, it doesn't phase me.
 I can take control

Let your tension dissipate

Remember,
I can be your autumn
and Sunday-morning blaze

I can be
-- caramelized subtleties
in your silver-slumber gaze

Sovita Chander

Sovita Chander passed away on April 22, 2023, at the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, after a brief illness. She faced her death with grace, courage and serenity, as can be seen in the blog she kept (braincancerjourney.substack.com) during her few short weeks between diagnosis and decease.

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1966, Sovita moved with her family in 1977 to Washington, D.C., where she spent her teenage years. She then attended McGill University, where she studied chemistry and history (BA 1989). She met her future husband, Don Fyson, in Montreal in 1986; they were married in 1989 and had two children, Jasper and Sacha. After relocating to Quebec City in 1996, Sovita developed a successful career in technology marketing, working for firms such as EXFO and Cardinal Health, acting as a consultant, and cofounding a health sector startup, Caristix Solutions. At the time of her death, she was working for PROMPT.

She also became involved in the anglophone community volunteer network in Quebec City, serving on the boards of organizations such as the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec (of which she was president from 2012 to 2016) and the Jeffery Hale Foundation.

She leaves behind Don, Jasper (Veronika), Sacha, her father Ramesh, her mother Renuka (née Sodhy), her sister Erina, her brother Suneil, and her entire extended family in Canada, the United States, Malaysia, and beyond.

A memorial ceremony in Sovita's honour was held at the Morrin Centre on Sunday, May 28.



Book Exhibits from the Special Collection: Western Fashion Through the Ages

Since 2022, the Library team has been curating exhibits of books from the special collections to feature in our new display case. Exhibits so far have included *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, *Reading In and About Quebec City*, *Popular Song in Quebec City*, and *Quebec in Verse*.

This past winter, Library Assistant Katherine Carberry put together an exhibit entitled *Western Fashion through the Ages*. She selected a series of books from our special collection to showcase and curated complementary displays of books from the regular, circulating collection that members could borrow and visitors could peruse.

Museum Collections Assistant Alena Krasnikova also selected several objects from our collection to complement the selection of books. The hatpins, miniature perfume bottle, and buttons are all part of the LHSQ's Stephens Collection. In case you missed the exhibit, here are some highlights.

—Kathleen Hulley
Head of Library & Collections



Western Fashion Through the Ages Book Exhibit, January–April 2023

by Katherine Carberry

Often relegated to the realm of frippery, clothing has been a mainstay of the human experience since prehistoric times. Its woven fibers bear the mark of traditional craft and more recent inventions, which shape our material realities and texture everyday life.

Clothing's sister, fashion, enforces conventions and social norms, yet also provides a canvas for self-expression, resistance, and social change. Clothing and fashion merit close examination and careful consideration as their influence lingers long after being worn.

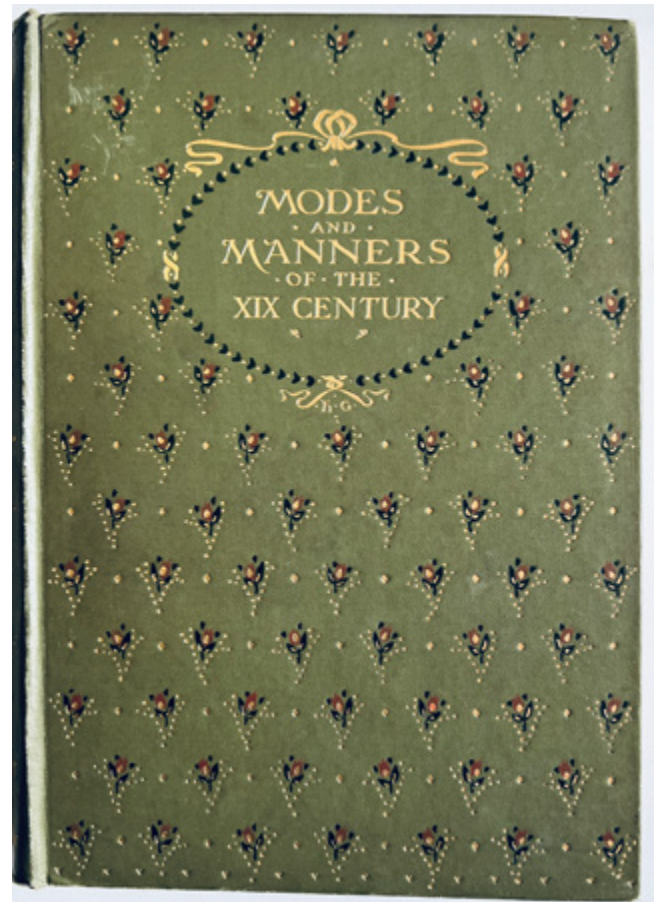
Books on Display

Abrahams, Ethel B. "Vase Painting." In *Greek Dress: A Study of Costumes Worn in Ancient Greece, from Pre-Hellenic Times to the Hellenistic Age*. London: John Murray, 1908.

Ashdown, Emily Jesse. *British Costume During the XIX Centuries (Civil and Ecclesiastical)*. London: C. & E.C. Jack, 1910.

Barbeau, Marius. "Mme. Françoise Venne, of St. Jacques L'Achigan, weaving a sash." In *Assomption Sash. Bulletin 93*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1939.

Calthrop, Dion Clayton. "A Woman of the Time of Edward IV. 1461–1483." In *English Costume from William I to George IV, 1066–1830*. London: A. & C. Black, LTD, 1937.



Fischel, Oskar and Max Von Boehn. "Constantin Guys, A Group." In *Modes & Manners of the Nineteenth Century: As Represented in the Pictures and Engravings of the Times*, Vol. III: 1843–1878. Translated by Grace Rhys. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1927.

Fischel, Oskar and Max Von Boehn. "LA MODE ARTISTIQUE." In *Modes & Manners of the Nineteenth Century: As Represented in the Pictures and Engravings of the Times*, Vol. IV: 1879–1914. Translated by Grace Rhys. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1927.

Hudson's Bay Company. *Henry Morgan & Co. Christmas Catalogue*. Montreal: The Modern Printing Co., 1992 reprint.

Labovitch, Mark. "A Norman Noble." In *Clothes through the Ages*. London: Quality Press LTD., 1943.





"LA MODE ARTISTIQUE., February 1895." In *Modes & Manners of the Nineteenth Century: As Represented in the Pictures and Engravings of the Times*, Vol. IV: 1879-1914. By Oskar Fischel and Max Von Boehn. Translated by Grace Rhys. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1927.

Accessories from the Stephens Collection

Perfume bottle pendant, Stephens Collection 2004-212

Hatpin, Stephens Collection 2004-216

Hatpin, Stephens Collection 2004-213

Hatpin, Stephens Collection 2004-210

Hatpin, Stephens Collection 2004-206

Hatpin, Stephens Collection 2004-209

Button set, Stephens Collection 2004-272

Stephens describes the buttons and its provenance in her book *The Story of My Quebec Collection*:

"This box of sterling silver buttons is unique because they are in the original case; the date is c.1835. These buttons belonged to the Jones family. Corinne Jones was the wife of Allan Strang. Where the Daishowa Pulp & Paper Company (formerly the Anglo Canadian Pulp & Paper Mills Limited) stands today is the area where the first Jones in Quebec established his home and his shipyard. Jones came from Ireland and called his domain New Waterford Cove. His family must have held Admiral Nelson in very high regard because Jones,

the renowned ship-builder of New Waterford Cove, was named Horatio Nelson Jones. In the now very rare mid-19th century *Guide for Strangers*, written by Willis RUSSELL in 1857, there is a splendid description of this man and his shipyard. It was evidently one of the sights recommended by Mr. Russell. Willis Russell owned the Russell Hotel on Palace Hill, and then acquired the St. Louis Hotel on St. Louis Street, Quebec."

– Mary Hilda Stephens,
The Story of My Quebec Collection. Quebec
City: Imprimerie Enr., 2002, 13-14.

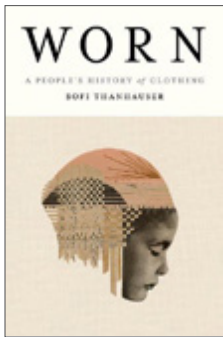
Don't forget to stop by the Library to see the most recent book exhibit, *Judging a Book by Its Cover*. It will be on display throughout the summer.

Book Reviews

Worn: *A People's History of Clothing*

by Sofi Thanhauser

Book review by Katherine Carberry



Sofi Thanhauser's *Worn* spirits readers through centuries of textile production that have fundamentally altered the Western world. Through a seamless blend of journalistic reporting and historical research, Thanhauser painstakingly details the long history of clothing while highlighting the industry's

continued exploitation of women, labour, and the environment.

Whereas other recent histories of clothing might devote attention to the actions of consumers, Thanhauser instead focuses on those who make. She traces the development of mechanized looms, cotton's primacy as "fashion's favourite," and the inevitable decline in garment quality resulting from the increased availability of affordable clothing. While the deplorable working conditions found in nineteenth-century American factories and cotton plantations are well known, this book draws attention to more obscure aspects of fashion and labour history. Most notably, she describes the devastating consequences of polyester production which exposed workers to lethal quantities of carbon disulphide.

Worn also broaches more recent and obscure events which continue to sever consumers from their clothing. These topics include John F. Kennedy's order to cull Navajo sheep, threats to China's silk industry, thirsty cotton crops, and the colonially inflected export processing zones in the Global South. These scenes expertly demonstrate how policies intended to facilitate production and trade have wreaked havoc on the earth's ecosystem and provided the ideal conditions

for corporations to exploit unfree labour. In doing so, she renders visible the threads binding millions of people through clothing. Through her skillful reporting, Thanhauser addresses the scale of the global textile trade and its immeasurable cost. *Worn* is an incisive and deeply affecting work that urges readers to curb consumption and create.

Worn: A People's History of Clothing (Pantheon Books, 2022)



Only the Clothes on Her Back: *Clothing and the Hidden History of Power in the Nineteenth-Century United States*

by Laura F. Edwards

Book review by Katherine Carberry



Only the Clothes on her Back explores how people living in the early years of the American republic used textiles and clothing to engage in economic activities despite being hampered by structural inequalities. By appealing to laws relating to theft and public order, women, both free and unfree, asserted ownership

over the textiles in their possession. This rich study of nineteenth-century American history brings attention to clothing's social and economic power at a moment when many Americans were subject to coverture and chattel slavery.

The laws that limited freedom did, however, provide some leeway with regard to textiles. The American legal system recognized women as the rightful owners of apparel and bedding. Likewise, servants were considered the owners of textiles given to them by their employers. This feature of the legal system underscores people's attachment to clothing as it was at once fungible and portable. These attributes were crucial in 1830s when the United States was in the

throes of a currency crisis and lucrative employment was scarce. Edwards identifies many examples of individuals suing under the name of a husband or master. She then stages detailed historical vignettes based on letters, ledgers, court records, commonplace books, and census records which she reads with the eyes of a detective. These detailed scenes, in turn, cogently argue that textiles provided those without legal rights with a vehicle for agency.

Make no mistake, this book is far from being a dull work of legal history. With dips into pawn shops, crime, the homespun movement, and shopping, Edwards' work is expansive and has much to fascinate the reader. Her work carefully considers the law's overlooked role in histories of material culture, thus providing a significant contribution to the current understanding of American legal history and offering a wider view of the social and economic practices of women and people of colour.

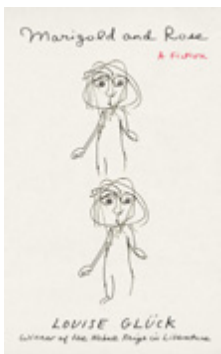
Only the Clothes on Her Back: Clothing and the Hidden History of Power in the Nineteenth-Century United States (Oxford University Press, 2022)



Marigold and Rose

by Louise Glück

Book review by Frank Beltrano



Noble Laureate in literature Louise Glück claims she became obsessed with videos of her twin granddaughters sent to her by her son during the pandemic. Despite the fact that she has always been a poet and an essayist, she was inspired to write a short novel, *Marigold and Rose*, dedicated to her real granddaughters, Emmy and Lizzy.

The book is a treasure of short paragraphs, perhaps best described as stanzas of prose poetry. It is whimsical and enchanting. Glück enchants us with speculative whimsy about what goes on in the developing minds,

or more accurately, perhaps, the souls, of baby twins.

The subjects of the novel are followed from birth to the age of one year. But they are too young to understand time and space so their narration jumps about in time and space. Marigold is a writer, which makes us imagine she has Glück's DNA, and Rose is an extrovert and perfect, so maybe she has inherited from mother's side of the family.

There are ten chapter titles that may have been inspired by the videos and bits of reality, such as "Sharing with Bunnies," "The Childhood of Mother," "Rose and the Elephant," and "The Good Provider." The other chapter titles are the author's wonderful imaginings. These include "Marigold's Dream," "Forward Motion," "Once Time," and "The Winged Soul," a chapter that begins with the delightful line: "Everyone understood that Marigold lived in her head and Rose lived in the world." (39)

To a parent or a grandparent or anyone who just loves babies, Glück's imaginings of what might be going on in these little minds is a joy. They are also insights into what makes language so magical.

To write about the book, I read it joyfully three times, each time noticing new connections. For example, the first paragraph of the book ends with Rose thinking to herself, "I am also stripeless" (3), and the last paragraph of that first chapter contains a zebra in a book that Marigold is flipping through. Elsewhere in the book, things click like one might imagine things click in an infant's innocent mind. Glück's writing makes us want to dream our way through this work, but it is rewarding to read it mindfully.

Marigold and Rose (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2022)



New Aquisitions

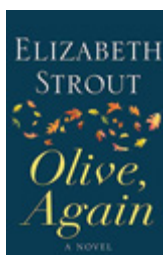
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Books with an * are also available on OverDrive.



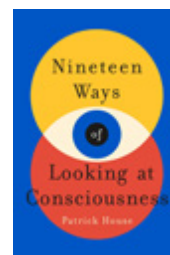
***Birnam Wood* ***

Eleanor Catton
Fiction
C369 2023



Olive, Again*

Elizabeth Strout
Fiction
S925 2019



Nineteen Ways of Looking at Consciousness

Patrick House
Non-Fiction
153 H835



***Code Name Sapphire* ***

Pam Jenoff
Fiction
J51 2023



Camera Girl: The Coming of Age of Jackie Bouvier Kennedy

Carl S. Anthony
Biography
BIO K35 2023



The Patriarchs: The Origin of Inequality

Angela Saini
Non-Fiction
305.42 S132



On the Ravine

Vincent Lam
Fiction
L213 2023



Humanly Possible

Sarah Bakewell
Non-Fiction
144 B168



The Secret Commonwealth

Philip Pullman
Young Adult
YA PUL 2020



Homecoming

Kate Morton
Category
M889 2023



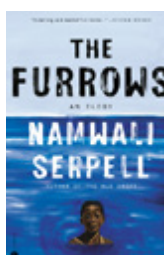
Dinner in One

Melissa Clark
Category
641.555 C594



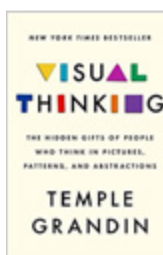
Swim Team

Johnnie Christmas
Junior Fiction
JF CHR 2022 GN



The Furrows

Namwali Serpell
Fiction
S486 2022



Visual Thinking

Temple Grandin
Category
152.14 G753



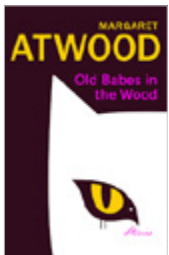
Goodnight, Anne

Kailie George & Genevieve Godbout (ill).
Junior Picture
JP GEO 2018

What's New on OverDrive

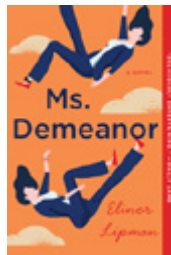
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Books with an * are also available as a physical copy in the Library.



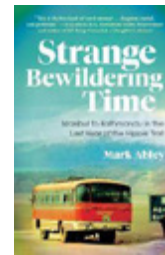
Old Babes in the Wood *

Margaret Atwood
Fiction



Ms. Demeanor

Elinor Lipman
Fiction



Strange Bewildering Time *

Mark Abley
Category



The Mitford Affair

Marie Benedict
Fiction



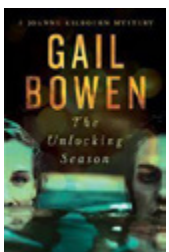
Coronation Year *

Jennifer Robson
Fiction



Best Canadian Poetry 2023

John Barton (ed.)
Poetry



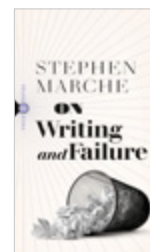
The Unlocking Season

Gail Bowen
Fiction



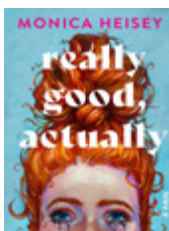
We Two Alone

Jack Wang
Short Stories



On Writing and Failure *

Stephen Marche
Non-Fiction



really good, actually

Monica Heisey
Fiction



To Track a Traitor *

Iona Whishaw
Fiction



Ordinary Wonder Tales *

Emily Urquhart
Essays



So Shall You Reap *

Donna Leon
Fiction



The Fake *

Zoe Whittall
Fiction



The Heartbeat of Trees

Peter Wohlleben
Non-Fiction



Imagination Writers' Festival 2023: A Resounding Success

by Jeanne Lebossé-Gautron



What a festival! In my four years of Imagination Festivals, I must admit, this one was my favourite. Not only did I get to meet and listen to fantastic authors, but I finally got to experience a full Imagination festival, with the (in person) return of the beloved Books & Wine and Books & Brunch, as well as the Imagination Café. From the many comments from attendees and guests alike, this return to a full festival delighted absolutely everyone.

Once again, we started the festival with a children's event, this one with the delightful Katherine Battersby. The week continued with a series of fascinating authors and artists: Peter McAuslan, Ali Hassan, Darren Groth, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Sylvain Neuvel

(and his Portuguese translator Michel Teixeira), Melissa Blair, and Cheuk Kwan. On the Wednesday evening, Blair, Groth, and Kwan (and the audience!) enjoyed a fantastic Books & Wine event hosted by Bianca Thériault, a sommelier from Vins au féminin.

The Saturday programming kicked off with two youth events: Storytime with Geneviève Godbout and a writing workshop with David Homel. Attendees then enjoyed presentations by Kim Fu, Maureen Brownlee, Laura Trethewey, and Clark Blaise, as well as an emerging authors panel with Darby Bradford, Trynne Delaney, and Kasia Van Schaik held in partnership with the Québec Writers' Federation. The day wrapped up with the best-attended event of the festival: a storytelling panel with Patrick deWitt, Éric Dupont, and Heather O'Neill.

On Sunday, April 16, the last day of the 2023 festival, attendees ate brunch with Dimitri Nasrallah, attended a translation workshop with Darby Bradford and a presentation by Amy Tector, and enjoyed poetry and music during Literary Notes, held in partnership with the Orchestre symphonique de Québec, featuring poets Tawahum Bige, Shane Neilson, and Daniel Scott Tysdal, and musicians Mélanie Charlebois (violin), Jean-François Gagné (viola), and Diliانا Momtchilova (cello).



Author Cheuk Kwan and host Héloïse Leclerc



Emerging Authors panel. Left to right: host Sarah Barclay and authors Trynne Delaney, Kasia Van Schaik, and Darby Bradford.

Lucky attendees spotted authors attending events in the audience throughout the festival. One author even won the book drawn at the end of the event they were attending!

In parallel with our festival events, five of our authors (Katherine Battersby, Melissa Blair, Geneviève Godbout, David Homel, and Sylvain Neuvel) visited area schools, allowing about 500 students to meet authors and fire off all of their prepared questions at their just-as-enthusiastic literary visitors.



Literary Notes 2023. In the back, left to right: poets Shane Neilson, Tawahum Bige, and Daniel Scott Tysdal. In the front, left to right: Orchestre symphonique de Québec representative Marie-Ève Paquin and musicians Mélanie Charlebois, Jean-François Gagné, and Diliana Momtchilova.

All in all, quite a successful festival, wouldn't you say?

The Morrin Centre would like to thank the 1,040 people who participated in the 2023 Imagination activities, which a special thank you to everyone who filled out the survey. You are a tremendous help in our 2024 festival planning. ■

Storytelling Panel. From left to right: host Julia Caron and authors Heather O'Neill, Éric Dupont, and Patrick deWitt.



Upcoming Events: General Public



It's been Oolong time that the Morrin Centre hasn't held teatime...

After a four-year pause due to the pandemic, we are happy to announce that teatime has now returned to the Morrin Centre! Come and try out four different black teas, one of which is a customized home blend named *Morning Morrin*, all served with baked goods and treats from local suppliers.

During the event, we will discuss Victorian etiquette, the origins of tea, the history of tea and teatime, and how it all came to be. From Emperor Shennong to Catarina de Braganza, from Robert Fortune to Thomas Sullivan, visitors will get the chance to learn the wacky and unusual history of tea, all while practicing recently learned etiquette throughout the teatime.

Teatime will be offered every Sunday from June 4 until the end of August. Reservations are required and can be made via Eventbrite or via morrin.org/teatime.



Arts Alive! Quebec is back for its ninth year this summer. Join us on **Friday, August 25 and Saturday, August 26** for two days of music, art, and activities!

Following our traditional (and successful!) schedule, visitors will enjoy concerts on the Friday evening and a series of activities and showcases by local artisans and community members on the Saturday afternoon. Children and adults alike will find something to do and appreciate, and visitors may even be handed a mystery (delicious) surprise as they walk along the Chaussée des Écossais...

Arts Alive! Quebec will take place on the Chaussée des Écossais in front of the Morrin Centre. In case of rain, the festival will move to College Hall, the Morrin Centre ballroom.

Are you an artisan based in Quebec City? Reach out to us at info@morrin.org. We still have a few spots left to fill in our Artisan Fair lineup!



Members'

Appreciation Day

Stay tuned for this exclusive, members-only event in the Fall!

New Exhibit

This fall, keep your eyes peeled for our new permanent exhibit in the prison cells!

Book Workshop

Come learn more about some of the most interesting books in the LHSQ's collection!



BOOK QUEST

July 8 to August 26

Join the Morrin Centre summer reading program!

3-6 YO

Saturday mornings

Storytime and craft activities



7-12 YO

Saturday afternoons

Experiments and craft activities

Register now at morrin.org/BookQuest

Co-created and delivered by 2,200 public libraries across Canada, this national bilingual program is developed by Toronto Public Library in partnership with Library and Archives Canada. Sponsorship is generously provided by TD Bank Group.



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Summer Reading Challenge!



Calling avid readers, seasonal readers, not-really readers, and everyone in between—from now until **September 21, 2023**, you have the chance to win a bundle of books by completing the Morrin Centre's annual Summer Reading Challenge.

Complete the challenge by reading books that fulfill **seven** of the **ten** categories below, and email your list to library@morrin.org. For an extra chance at winning, complete all **ten** categories!

Please note: The same book cannot count for two different categories.

- A book by an author with the same name as you
- A graphic novel
- A book of poetry
- A memoir by an Indigenous author
- A book that deals with illness or disability
- A book written for children
- A book set in the region (city/province/country) in which you born
- A book with an interesting cover or design
- A book about the environment and/or nature
- A humorous book

If you would like assistance in finding books in any of these categories, please ask for help at the library desk! Or explore our featured collections on OverDrive at morrin.overdrive.com for some Summer Reading Challenge suggestions!

Good luck and happy reading!

A Tribute to Gail Cameron

By Barry McCullough



Gail Cameron was the first person I hired after being named Executive Director in 2012. It turns out that was a great and obvious move because she ended up staying with the team longer than anyone else I have brought into the team. Her contributions certainly extend well beyond longevity as she was always the first

to volunteer to lend a hand with whatever needed to be done, even if it was beyond the scope of her regular responsibilities. Gail is one of the most dependable people I have had the pleasure of working alongside. The entire Morrin Centre community is fortunate that Gail chose to give her final working years to it because the Centre is certainly in a stronger position thanks to her contributions. Although we were all sad to see her go, if she really has left, hers is a well-earned retirement.

On behalf of the whole team, I want to wish her a happy and healthy retirement full of arts and crafts, spoiling her grandchildren, and glamping. The only thing I wonder, though, is whether we are 100% certain she isn't still tucked away in a hidden corner of the Morrin Centre working on something?



An Interview with Gail Cameron

Interview by Kathleen Hulley

In 2022, Gail Cameron retired from the Morrin Centre. As accounting clerk, Gail was central to the day-to-day functioning of the Centre, ensuring that everything ran smoothly on the financial side of things—that tax receipts went out, that our bills were paid, and that we were paid, often patiently reminding staff to submit their timesheets! Gail's contributions to a multitude of Morrin Centre projects were also invaluable—from helping with the Imagination Writers' Festival and Literary Feast to co-planning Volunteer Appreciation Night and writing wonderful reviews for Society Pages (luckily for us readers, Gail hasn't retired from that!).

Although we miss Gail as part of the Morrin team, we're lucky that she still stops by the Centre to borrow books and attend events, now as a member of the Society. Her

positive outlook and kindness are always a welcome presence! Earlier this year, I sat down with Gail over Zoom for an interview. Here is a shortened version of her reminiscences.

Kathleen Hulley: *When did you first learn about the Morrin Centre? And when did you first start working here?*

Gail Cameron: I started working at the Morrin Centre in November 2012, and the reason that I knew about the Centre was because my brother, Steve, was on Council for a few years before that. So, I had gravitated around the Morrin Centre and was already a member. When I first became a member, I went to help out my brother and sister-in-law because they

were having a bake sale as a Society fundraiser in the Library. I naturally bought baked goods!¹ There was a raffle, and one of the raffle prizes was a free Morrin Centre membership. I won a family membership and have been a member ever since. That must have been in 2007.

And when I heard about the job opening, it was actually my brother who phoned me. He knew that I was thinking of finding a part-time position since we had just sold our family business. Steve spoke to Barry and then told me about the possibility: "If you're interested, get in touch with Barry and send in your CV." Steve was no longer on council at that time, but he was still in touch with the Morrin Centre. I ended up getting an interview, and the rest is history!

Renaud (my husband) and I had just taken a trip to Paris. It was our big trip after selling the business and starting semi-retirement. I had said, "Well, when we get back from our trip, I'll start looking for something." We got back at the beginning of the week, and by the end of the week, Steve called to tell me about the job.

KH: *So it's thanks to Steve and the bake sale raffle that you worked at the Morrin Centre!*

The Morrin Centre team has a number of traditions. Can you tell us about the ones that you like in particular?

GC: I liked how lunch time was always a time when we gathered and told stories. There was no "office talk" around the lunch table, so it was a stress-free space in which we could just be ourselves and chat.

¹ Gail's homemade muffins are beloved by Morrin Centre staff!

This down time was part of team building. Of course, one of the main traditions was our birthday celebrations, where we would get together and have tea and cake. Rosemarie already mentioned that [in the 2020 *Society Pages* interview with Rosemarie Fischer, the Centre's former Management Assistant]. But an element that I would like to mention is our failed attempt at "surprising" people! Oh, what we did to try to surprise people on their birthdays... This became especially tricky once everyone knew what to expect on their birthdays.

KH: *I think I was one of the last people who everyone tried to surprise. The tradition had already been in place for many years, and I was new.*



GC: Yes! I remember saying, "Oh no, there's water everywhere near the collection." I don't think that you were surprised, although I liked those failed attempts at getting the birthday person down to the kitchen.

At one point for Stefanie [our tours coordinator], we said, "There is somebody who needs your signature for tour stuff." Totally failed attempts, but it was always fun to try. Naturally, every time there was always someone or something that delayed the celebration. Sometimes, Barry would be on the phone. Or, we would try to light the candles and it wouldn't work!

Another thing that was really fun was when we went on staff outings.

KH: *Yes, that was always enjoyable!*

GC: We went to the Quebec Art Company plays, we went snowshoeing, we went to restaurants. We did a variety of activities! A particularly enjoyable time was

when we went on July 4th to an American army ship for a celebration. Again, that was very much team building. It was great to have another vibe and relax.

Then there were our Christmas parties, where we played games. Or Trivia Night [at Quebec High School]. We had our team t-shirts and called ourselves the Barrynettes once.

KH: *There are a number of us on staff who are actually very competitive!*

GC: [Laughter] Yes! And there was the Saint Patrick's Day parade. I would take out my green pants every year. It was always fun!

But my favourite memories of the Morrin Centre are from when we were all there and we made time to be together, for lunch or tea. Or when we had staff meetings and were all in a circle in the big office. Yes, we went through the agenda, Rosemarie would take notes, and it was structured, but there was also a little bit of goofiness. That was nice because that was how we connected.

KH: *What is your favourite room or object at the Morrin Centre?*

GC: Obviously, for me it is the Library. How could it not be your favourite room when you work there? But I have two favourite objects. One is the clock. I have an attachment to the clock because I spent so much time winding it, and trying to round up somebody to help me wind it. Then I had to teach people how to wind it and *remind* people to wind it. There was a lot of winding involved! Hanging your head over the railing to wind it—it's one of my fond memories. Sometimes when you wind the clock and there are people in the library, they are amazed and take pictures. I don't

know how many people have pictures of me with my head over the railing! The clock brings back fond memories [laughter].

The second object is the desk in my office. It's an 1886 desk. Rosemarie wrote an article about it in *Society Pages*.

KH: *Yes, the Eastlake desk.*

GC: I love that desk! It was first Elizabeth's [Perreault, former director of communications and development]. After Elizabeth left and the pandemic hit, I was alone in the office, so I took possession of that desk. I absolutely love that desk. It had character, and when sitting at it, I had a view outside. The only downside to the desk was its position in the office [it faces the window opposite the door]. Someone could surprise me since I had my back to the door!



Gail Cameron (right) winding the clock in 2021 with Géraldine Franchomme, our Museum and Exhibits Coordinator.

KH: *It's a fascinating piece of furniture too since it has many hidden compartments!*

GC: Yes, it has its quirks. For example, you had to open the middle drawer to access the file drawers on the side. And then, those file drawers were like cabinets. You had to know the tricks to be able to use it properly.

KH: *We always ask retired/retiring staff members, what do you think of the rumour that there is a Morrin Centre ghost?*

GC: Contrary to others, I don't have any weird feelings anywhere in the building, regardless of how many times I've been in the prison or in the basement. Back in the day, I used to go down into the basement



with Maxime (Chouinard, former museologist at the Morrin Centre). I never had that feeling—but I don't want to know if there really is a ghost!

My brother is the total opposite; he's a believer, I am not. You know how they say, if ghosts do exist, people who are more open and receptive to them will experience something. I am not, so I didn't have any feelings of a "ghost" at the Morrin Centre. Although we have a running joke that "Bernard" (the name the Morrin staff have jokingly given to the "ghost") is in the building, it is an old building and things happen. For instance, the elevator will go up when there is nobody there. There are noises, but again, it's an old building. I don't attribute it to an actual "Bernard," but it was always a good running gag to say that Bernard did something or that Bernard took it. When there was a cable or a charger missing, it was easy to blame the nonexistent Bernard.

KH: *Or bookends in the Library that always go missing. Thanks, Bernard!*

GC: [Laughter] Definitely!

KH: *What is it about your time at the Morrin Centre that you most appreciate?*

GC: There is so much! To begin with, I love the building. I love Old Quebec—it has character. I love the team. It is culturally rich, and a place where you can

go and have all sorts of enriching experiences, whether it be personal or cultural. It is always booming with life. And I love being a part of that—meeting all sorts of interesting people and attending different events.

KH: *What is one of your most memorable experiences or events at the Morrin Centre?*

GC: My favourite has to be the Imagination Writers' Festival. Imagination is a lot of work, but it is also a highlight of the year. One of my favourite aspects was having the opportunity and privilege to drive the authors around. I would often be one of the drivers, so I would pick up the authors at the airport and bring them to their hotel or help them back and forth from the Morrin Centre. Even though this would make me miss some of the talks—often many!—I found that I had the privilege of having one-on-one time with these authors. Sometimes I was the first person to introduce them to Quebec City, and on the drive from the airport, I would say this is this, and that is that. They would ask different questions about the city. I was the goodwill ambassador for the Morrin, and I LOVED doing that! Obviously there were sometimes when we had snowstorms and no winter tires on the rental car and trouble with the parking... But all in all, it was really good.

I have one funny story: there was an author who I picked up at the airport in the evening, and they had lost her luggage. So she had no luggage and her

presentation was early the next day. On our way back into town, we wanted to stop at a store, but most stores were already closed. I remember taking her to a souvenir shop on St. Jean Street. She bought herself a large moose t-shirt to wear as a nightgown so that she wouldn't wrinkle the clothes she was wearing for her presentation the next day. Another author was really nice to me—I drove her back and forth to the Morrin Centre and to one of the schools. She gave me a pair of earrings as a souvenir when she left. That was a really big privilege. Also, Imagination happens after the audit! The festival was work, but I felt that “the audit is over, so now I can have fun!”

And obviously the Lit. Feast is a superb event, so I have many fond memories of it. Especially when Louise Penny spoke.

KH: *You must have really enjoyed that since you're such a Louise Penny fan! I've heard such good things about that evening.*

GC: It was absolutely fabulous. Another one of my favourite activities at the Morrin Centre was when Elizabeth and I would choose the décor for the Lit. Feast. Months in advance, we would go pick out the table settings: the tablecloths, the centerpieces. It was a privilege to be able to do that and draw on our artsy side. We would make the table settings and arrange the flowers. Another memorable annual activity was putting up the Christmas decorations with Manon [Fortin, the Centre's former Rentals Coordinator]. These varied activities added spice to the job.

KH: *What is your funniest memory from the Morrin Centre?*

GC: Certainly there have been many times where Rosemarie and I would have fits of giggles in the big office. Sometimes I just couldn't look at her because I would lose it. Back in the day, my desk was in the main office. It is hard to choose one moment since there were so many times that we had giggle fits. I would laugh, and they would go, “Oh no, we've broken Gail!”

KH: *I remember that. I haven't heard that phrase in a long time. It was once you started laughing...*

How has the Morrin Centre changed over the years?

GC: One of the big changes, was the addition of the Education Coordinator, the Rental Coordinator, the Museum Coordinator. Those are all great additions to the Centre. Part of our *raison d'être* is to educate and promote and preserve the history of the building. We have so many varied events for all ages throughout the year. Obviously, it's gotten busier and better over the years.

KH: *As an avid reader, you borrow many books from the Library. Who are your favourite authors?*

GC: Obviously, I can't get away from Louise Penny. I've read every single one of her novels. I love them; I confess, I'm a fan.

There are two other authors that I really enjoy who I also met at Imagination. One was Claire Cameron. Obviously, I had to meet her because of our shared last name. The book that she presented that year was *The Bear*. It was almost enough to put me off camping for the rest of my days, but I got over it! I liked the book though. Another author that I enjoy is Emma Donoghue. She came and presented her book *Room* at Imagination, but I also read her novel *Akin* and did a book review for *Society Pages* on it. Somehow the authors that I got to meet at Morrin Centre events stand out more.

KH: *Yes, you must have more of a personal connection with them.*

GC: Yes, like with Claire Cameron. I bought her book and had her sign it, “from one Cameron to another.” That was nice.

KH: *There is an interesting story (involving a costume) you shared with me a few years ago that ties in with the Morrin Centre. Perhaps you would be willing to share the story with readers?*

GC: Ah yes! We were having a birthday party for my niece, and they asked everybody to make a surprise video to wish her a happy birthday. I came up with the idea of renting a Minnie Mouse costume. We



made a short video of me getting into the car, and driving from the South Shore, crossing the bridge as mini mouse. I got out at the Chateau Frontenac, amid tourists! Then I walked around as Minnie Mouse and went to the Clarendon hotel and danced in from of it, back and forth. And I went to the steps of the Morrin Centre and held up a sign saying, "Happy Birthday," but in French. Then I took off the head. The idea was that my niece wouldn't have any idea who was in the costume until then! Then I ended up missing the birthday party because I was working at Imagination that day. But I heard that they were all trying to guess, "Who is in the costume? They are coming from the South Shore, so it must be a friend from away..." That's a fun story. She appreciated it! After I did that, I wrote to Elizabeth to tell her that there was a rodent spotted at the Morrin Centre. She wrote, "Oh no! Where was it?" And then I sent her the picture of me as Minnie Mouse.

KH: *That's a great story!*

GC: Another final funny story is the famous spaghetti supper...

KH: *I've heard before, "Don't ask Gail about the spaghetti supper!" Do I dare ask what happened?*

GC: I was part of a team that went to the Cancer Walk for Life every year. Our team had a fundraiser where we did a spaghetti supper for 200+ people. This was our big fundraiser. Someone then had the bright idea that we should do a spaghetti supper for Volunteer Appreciation Night at the Morrin Centre. I warned them, since we're a smaller team, "It's really lot of work." But we decided to do it. So I ended up going to get a semi-sponsorship for the sauce. I pre-cooked all the spaghetti at the Morrin Centre and then stored it. We had to figure out how many people were coming to the event and how much spaghetti to make. In the end, we had enough spaghetti to feed an army! But I had to cook it all in advance, and then it was complicated to serve it since we had to get it from the kitchen all the way up to College Hall. We said, "Never again, never again."



The infamous spaghetti supper, with Gail Cameron (left) and Rosemarie Fischer (right)

KH: You're known for having a number of talents: painting, baking, and so forth. Now that you're retired, can you share some of your plans with us?

GC: I promised myself when I retired that I would challenge myself to learn how to paint with watercolours. So I'm learning that and enjoying it. And since the New Year, I've given myself the challenge to paint at least half an hour every day. Other than that, I'm spending as much time as I can with family. I do a lot of babysitting. I also do a lot of sewing, but I'm not a knitter. I make things for the grandbabies and do all sorts of crafty things, especially for my granddaughter Amelia since she's older. Also I go on nice walks in the fresh air; Renaud and I try to take a walk every day. We would like to travel more now that it is possible again. We are thinking of some sort of trip, probably in the fall. We like to travel mostly the end of September, beginning of October.

KH: It's a nice time because it's not too hot. Do you have any potential places on the travel list?

GC: Yes, and there are fewer tourists during those months. We would possibly like to go back to France, and maybe Italy. But we're also talking about Greece.

KH: Is there anything else that you would like to add in closing?

GC: I would like to thank all my Morrin family, past and present, for having enriched my time there! You made it all worthwhile! I'm looking forward to seeing you again soon!



Meet Our New Tour Guide: Alice Levesque-Carreau



Greetings all! I'm Alice and this is my second summer working as a tour guide at the Morrin Centre. I am currently studying at the University of Prince Edward Island as an English major, with a minor in biology. I enjoy reading in my spare time, and I'm a huge fan of fantasy and science fiction novels. I also listen to music often and I'm open to any genre, from '50s jazz to '70s rock and roll to classical orchestral music to movie scores and Broadway music. *Hey Ocean!* and *Bears in Trees* are some of my favourite bands.

I am originally from Quebec City and had visited the Morrin Centre a few years ago when my Secondary I English class went on the Centre's *Life of a Convict* tour. I had completely forgotten about this place until last summer, when I got a job working as a tour guide. I absolutely loved it, so I chose to come back this summer.

I especially enjoy meeting new people during my tours—those who live right here in the city or those who come from afar, such as all the way from Australia! I love sharing Quebec's history with others, since the combination of the English and French communities is unique and fascinating. This job also gets bonus points from me for simply being in a beautiful and aesthetically pleasing space. ■

The Wind and Flow of Time: The Exhibit “The History of a Costume”

by Caroline Kerjean

I recently finished a wonderful book titled *The Abundance of Less: Lessons in Simple Living from Rural Japan*. The author paints the portrait of a number of artists, poets, and other lovers of simple beauty by traveling to their countryside homes and chatting with them. It is a rich, meditative collection of stories, one in which I found a beautiful quotation: “It’s important to me to be someone who has time. There’s a term we have in Japanese, *furyu*: the characters are ‘wind’ and ‘flow.’ Someone with *furyu* has time to write haiku or can appreciate flowers... Those people who don’t have *furyu* are not full people.”

This man’s words really resonated with me. I feel as if he had addressed them to me, personally. Mostly, I suppose, because they describe in surprisingly perfect terms that state of mind of the artist, or more specifically, of the artist with a contemplative mindset. And once one begins to think deeply on the world and oneself, it is difficult not to feel that something is very much out of joint. For me and, I suspect, for a great many others, this “out-of-joint” feeling seems rooted in a lack of belonging and meaning, which I came to understand derives in good part from the contemporary world’s fragmented sense of time itself.

I have long felt that our modern sense of time is somehow stuck in the present, somehow “spinning its wheels.” Chancing upon the slim essay *The Scent of Time* by South Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han, I discovered a book that seems to address this very topic in an original, deeply meaningful way. In his essay, Han seeks to explore the philosophical and cultural ramifications of our disjointed sense of time, and he

arrives at a fundamental insight about the modern world: “Truth itself is a temporal phenomenon. It is a reflection of the lasting, eternal present. The tearing away of time, the shrinking and fleeting present, makes it void.”

Inspired by Han’s words, by the depth and breadth of this essay, I prepared an exhibition that seeks to explore, mainly through the contemplative practice of needlecrafts, some of the ideas in *The Scent of Time*.

Titled *L’histoire d’un costume* (*History of a Costume*), the exhibition on display at the Société d’art et d’histoire de Beauport poses the question: What if contemplative practice and the contemplative life, however they may be lived and experienced, were the secret to reframing and ultimately regaining, reclaiming our sense of time? What if a renewed connection to the past were key to reclaiming it? What if we dared to rewild our spirits by exploring the landscape of the past on its own terms? What if out of this encounter the landscape of our own dreams were fully revealed to us?



Caroline Kerjean, *The Courtesan*, 2022

Mixed media “Pandora” doll

Photo credit: Nicolas Hallet

Shining a light onto past lives, past narratives, is really only shining an honest light onto oneself. And what we learn thanks to this heightened sensation of the past and of our own place in the world, is a form of spiritual encounter unto itself. For I believe we are, all of us, “old souls.” All of us, in some way or another, seek to break away from the prison of a changeless present, of an impervious self. This “breaking away” means consciously choosing to lean forward into the “wind” and “flow,” into the river of time. It is choosing to soulfully embrace the art of contemplation. It is choosing to become “full people.”



Caroline Kerjean, *Veiled Woman* (after Diego Velazquez), 2022

Art cushion (organic cotton coverslip with manuscript motifs of Laclos's novel *Dangerous Liaisons*) adorned with oil portrait, velvet and braid trimmings

Photo credit: Nicolas Hallet

Caroline Kerjean is a Quebec City-based writer and visual artist. She fell in love with art and culture at a young age and, after a life-changing experience restoring two medieval castles in the beautiful Alsace region, enrolled in art history at the University of Paris. After returning to Canada, she worked in the museum sector while pursuing her writing career. Kerjean's writing experience includes novels, essays, poetry and fanfiction. *A Bloody Song* is her first published work and, drawing inspiration from the Old Masters, she is currently creating a series of paintings that further explore some of the themes in this essay. It's no coincidence that this rich and meaningful dialogue between past and present evokes the weaving of a tapestry, an artform the author holds dear.

She can be found online at athreadofhistory.com or carolinekerjean.com. A selection of her artwork is available at the boutique *Divina Natura*, 48 Côte de la Fabrique in Old Quebec.

L'histoire d'un costume

Art exhibit by Caroline Kerjean at Maison Girardin, 600 avenue Royale, Vieux-Beauport, from June 3 to September 3, 2023.

Tuesdays to Sundays
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free entrance.



As we are working on a new permanent exhibit, the artifacts in the A6 Cell Block in the Morrin Centre prison are now going back to their owners!

Please note that the A6 Cell Block will be closed on June 19, and then again for at least three weeks starting on June 26.



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G1R 4H3

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