



# . LA - POINTE

MONOGRAPHIES MAQ 02

From February 26<sup>th</sup> to April 7<sup>th</sup> 2013  
at Cambridge Galleries

# MAGNÉ ET ASSOCIÉS (1992 - 2012)

By MARIE-PAULE  
MACDONALD

DIALOGUES WITH  
THE TRANSFORMATIVE CITY

This monographic initiative is the second in a series in which the Maison de l'architecture du Québec will offer in-depth analyses of influential Quebec architects' work of the last two decades, and situate these architects for better comprehension in the international context.

Last century, science fiction writer William Gibson quipped, “the future is already here, it’s just unevenly distributed”. It is tempting to add, not only the future, the past and present are already here too, in a temporal mix that makes the contemporary city such an exhilaratingly dynamic mash-up. In designing, that is, anticipating the future, the architecture of Lapointe Magne et associés recognizes the layered complexity and multiple temporalities of place. If urban context is about discontinuities in time, a liveable city is all about connectedness and continuity in space.

This ambitious monographic architectural exhibition demonstrates the prodigious, phenomenal mobilizing of knowledge involved in creating architecture. A glimpse of the extent of the practice of Lapointe Magne et associés can be seen in an array of constructed building types set into a matrix.

The observer may delve deeper into documentation of a series of five fairly recent edifices that display flexible approaches to fit into city context. Lightboxes flash views of the work and a video presentation shows the observer the spatial movement through spaces created by Lapointe Magne et associés, as well as highlighting collaborations with artists whose sculptural work has been incorporated into the built form.

While cities accumulate, assemble and juxtapose, the architecture of Lapointe Magne et associés demonstrates an irreconcilable hybrid of innovation and tradition that characterizes architectural and urban design. Architectural



ITHQ © Michel Brunelle

creation involves generating new form, requiring synthesis of disparate information and divergent thinking, even as it incorporates existing elements of its local environment, while holding on to classic ideals about the public realm, professionalism, collective values, social and cultural capital. Buildings must be orderly and structured, orienting toward axes, reference points, infrastructural nodes and urban structuring elements so as to optimize and make effective use of all possible spatial advantages. After construction is completed and the buildings occupied, enters a phase of reception of architecture. The design enters into public familiarity, slips into daily use, usually accompanied by distraction. This exhibition, a material and temporal index of what is has just-past, refocuses, anticipates reception and reaction, and invites participation and dialogue.

Marie-Paule Macdonald, invited curator

For their contribution to the exhibition, many thanks to :

CARLYLE – CÉRAGRÈS – DESSAU – GERPRO CONSTRUCTION – GROUPE TEQ – LUXTEC – MAGIL CONSTRUCTION  
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## PROFILES OF THE EXHIBITORS

### LAPOINTE MAGNE AND ASSOCIATES (HISTORIC)

A rare example of longevity in the québécois context, the original firm founded in 1955 regrouped Vincent Rother, Charles Elliott Trudeau and John Bland. For 25 years the various incarnations of the firm gravitated around John Bland, then director of the McGill School of Architecture. The construction of the Ottawa City Hall is a significant achievement of the firm from that period. As a partner for 40 years from 1960 to 2000, Roy Emile LeMoynes was equally an important figure in the history of the firm, teaching with Adrian Sheppard the professional practice course at McGill University.

With a 3rd prize in the 1984 Montreal Contemporary Art Museum competition, Michel Lapointe and Robert Magne played a key role in the transition of the firm, culminating with the construction of the McCord Museum extension in 1992. According to architectural critic David Theodore, the project proved to be a benchmark not only for the firm, but for the Quebec architectural community at large.

In the years 1992 to 2012, the projects were elaborated by Michel Lapointe, Robert Magne, Frédéric Dubé and Benoit Forcier and various collaborators who worked with the firm over the 20 year period. The present day entity of **Lapointe Magne and associates** was formalized in 2001. Working principally in the public sector, the firm presently regroups approximately 15 architects and technicians.

#### **Michel Lapointe (1948), associate architect**

As a young graduate (Université de Montréal, 1974), Michel Lapointe was part of the architectural planning team for the 1976 Montreal Olympics for CAIM, a subsidiary of Bland LeMoynes Shine Lacroix, which he joined following the games. Involved in industrial heritage preservation groups, he has developed projects principally in the urban insertion and heritage sectors.



Centre sportif de Gatineau © Michel Brunelle

#### **Robert Magne (1951), associate architect**

Franco-manitoban and McGill graduate (University of Manitoba, 1972, McGill University, 1976), Robert Magne also studied architecture in Marseille and subsequently worked in France and Germany. Joining LeMoynes and associates as a designer in 1976, he associated with Roy E. LeMoynes and Michel Lapointe in 1987.

#### **Frédéric Dubé (1962), associate architect**

Recipient of the A.F.Dunlop travelling scholarship from McGill University for overall academic achievement in 1986, Frédéric Dubé was also awarded the Canada Council Barcelona studio award in 1990. In parallel to his professional activities, he is involved in architectural education as a teacher or invited critic at various universities (Montréal, McGill, UQAM and Waterloo). He was principal coordinator of the present exhibition.

#### **Benoit Forcier (1965), associate architect**

Bachelors of Architecture from Carleton University, Ottawa, in 1990, Benoit Forcier joined the firm three years later and became an associate in 2003. He also studied in China on a foreign study program and subsequently worked in Japan. As an accredited LEED professional, he oversees the sustainable development of the office projects.

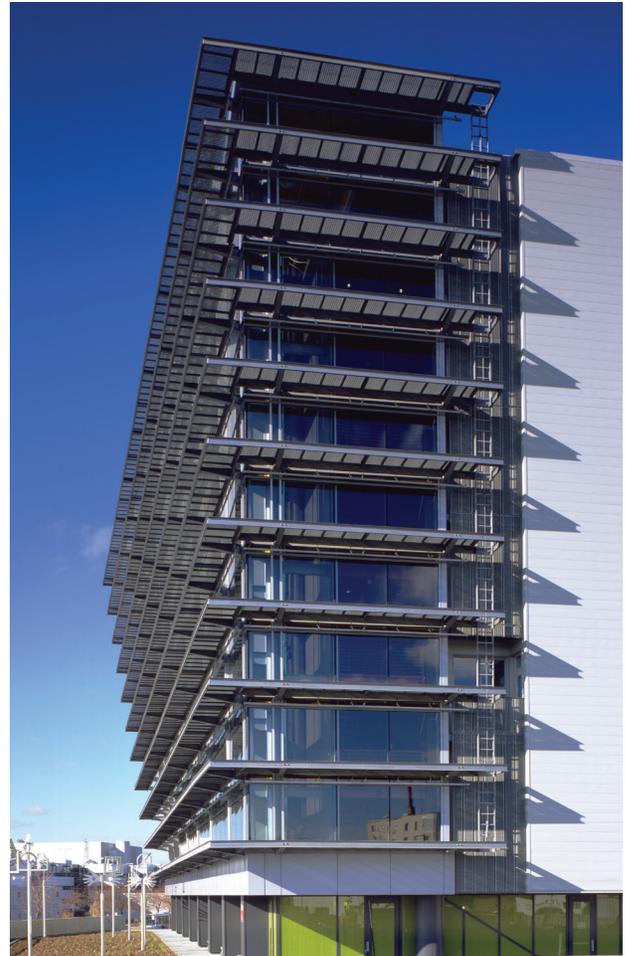
**MARIE-PAULE MACDONALD, invited curator**

Order of Architects of Québec. She studied in London, Paris and Nova Scotia, obtaining a professional degree in architecture from Dalhousie University and a postprofessional degree in urbanism from the Institut français d'urbanisme. Having worked in practice in Vancouver, Montreal and New York, she is currently Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario.

Her text 'After Branding' appeared in *Curating Architecture in the City*, published by Routledge, London, in 2009. Her article 'Pop-up Cities' appeared in the magazine *ETC.* in 2009. *Artexte* published her article, 'Radical Environments of the 21st Century' in *Supplément*, in 2008. *Arts Centre Optica* published her text, 'Voids and residues' in *La Demeure* in 2008. *Art Metropole* (Toronto) published her book, *rockspaces*, in 2000.

**ODILE HÉNAULT, invited critic**

Odile Hénault is known across Canada as a critical writer on architecture. She founded *Section a* (1983-1986), a polemical magazine dedicated to architectural and urban issues, and served as president of the *Ordre des architectes du Québec* (1994 -1995). Currently one of *Canadian Architect's* main collaborators, she is viewed as a pioneer of Québec's current competition program.



École nationale de cirque © Michel Brunelle

**DAVID THEODORE, invited critic**

David Theodore, Trudeau Scholar and SSHRC Fellow, is a doctoral candidate in the History of Architecture, Medicine, and Science at Harvard University. He recently taught in McGill and Concordia universities. An active design journalist and critic, he is a correspondent for *Canadian Architect* and at *Azure*, and a contributor to *The Phaidon Atlas of 21st-Century World Architecture*.

## **Centre Bell (ex-Molson), 1993-1996**

The Centre Bell shares a block on a sloping site with a formidable architectural presence, Windsor station, defined by its rugged limestone walls. The Romanesque revival, heritage-designated edifice is a significant legacy. It was designed by New York-based architect Bruce Price in 1887-9. Price was architect of the Banff Springs Hotel in Alberta and the Château Frontenac in Quebec City. Montreal architect Edward Maxwell designed an entry wing built on the north-western elevation added between 1900 and 1906.

The old Montreal Forum on Sainte-Catherine Street was a genuine magnet for street life and was intertwined with the local nightlife community. The current site, set back a block south of René-Lévesque Boulevard, is a more anonymous location, merged into the corporate character of the immediate surroundings. However, the crucial issue was designing to fit into transport infrastructure and maintaining the civic cosmopolitan character of the arena. There was concern at the time about a possibility that the new facility might, for economic reasons, follow an American model and locate in the suburbs. This eventuality seems to have been forestalled in a master plan by Daniel Arbour & Associés, set in place prior to when the architects were engaged. Daniel Arbour & Associés also were the landscape design consultants. While there may have been some discussion, if not controversy, regarding the heritage status of the under-used Windsor station, the value of positioning the Centre Bell at a nexus of rail and metro system not only made sense, the designers were able to knit the building securely into the infrastructural transport web. The building funnels crowds into the city on a daily basis. Its visibility from the Ville-Marie Expressway as the highway dips underground lends it a particular gateway role.

There was a significant challenge in situating such a significant programmatic presence in the city. The conception of hockey arena layered onto an entertainment venue so as to continuously attract large-scale crowds resulted in a veritable programmatic machine driven by the fast-paced game of hockey in a National Hockey League (NHL) rink. Servicing, which has to deal with large, potentially unstable crowds, is especially risky. In addition, the designers had to measure up to the legendary Forum. Ultimately, discussions about the building led to the searing realization that a deal would have to be struck to satisfy the elite private and public interests in that control the hockey business.

The 134 corporate boxes provide select viewing opportunities for business leaders and important edge for scheme, but are largely invisible to the thousands of fans who flock religiously to the arena. With the increase in seating to 21,400 from the 18,000 in the Forum came a decision to use a steeper rake than was the usual in an NHL-type arena. This tighter fit may have had the desired effect of increasing intensity and focus, as sports commentators have stated that compared to other arenas, the Centre Bell has the best atmosphere. It rates consistently as the best stadium experience.

The building exterior, composed of planes of masonry and metal cladding, contains a singularly structured interior, positioned on a sloping site and firmly plugged into the existing context. Its volumes are detailed in such a way that it reads as less imposing on the northern face accessed by most of the crowds, although they stream in from everywhere at peaks of arrival and departure. The approach takes an opposite tack to a unitary structure, such as an arena. For example, the Allianz Arena, an open-air soccer stadium in Munich by Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron, uses its visibility on an open site to generate what appears to be its iconic referent, a giant contoured pillow, illuminated in a variety of monochromes symbolic of team colours. In the case of the Centre Bell, the lesser visibility on any skyline as well as the architectural significance of the Bruce Price architecture were perhaps factors leading to a building elevation that uses a mid-toned brick planar camouflage tactic to adapt to the differing characters of each aspect of the block. On the northern side access point, it seems like a reduced volume, its elevation massaged by a mix of receding materialities, while on the southern side are more imposing canyon walls. The elevational planes break the volumes and massing into segments receding upwards.

The Centre Bell remains one of the larger hockey arenas and one of the busier and more successful, perhaps even the most successful, North American concert and event venues. Few claims can be made for acoustics beyond excellent volume. It is not possible to overstate the cultural significance

of the hockey home, as recent excited discussion and press around the possibility of the return of prodigal NHL teams from money-losing American cities can attest. If the Centre Bell did not satisfy the rabid fan base, it would not resist modification. The particular affinity of Montreal for hockey led to solid decisions regarding the hockey stadium. Some southern American cities suffer from issues such as a flatter profile in the seating in order to better serve television cameras, or poor ice quality resulting from the adaptability built into the building by specialist sports architects.

In the original proposal, a planned 15-storey tower was proposed for northwest corner, but it remains unbuilt. This place has become a forecourt for hockey art, a sports aesthetics that is a genre apart. The public space is populated with figurative sculptures of dynamic hockey players in vigorous motion, and adorned with logos of the Canadiens and a panoply of commemorative decal patterns set into the paving. The popular aesthetics of hockey is widely understood, while somehow remaining distinct from any other cultural discourse. The potential of the forecourt as a public space of arrival contrasts with the internal courtyard connecting with Windsor Station, furnished with a large glazed surface onto which it was proposed to show event projections, though this has not yet been realized. This space has remained underused, but holds potential for future public events.

### **Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec. requalification, 2002–2004**

The urban context is a flagship site on Saint-Denis Street, completing the formal frame around Saint-Louis Square on the east side. The original building for the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ) was built in 1975, and provided significant facilities including a rooftop gym, but was generally deemed to be visually decrepit. The project demonstrates many of the flaws of architecture of the 1960s and '70s. The 1970s development consolidated the properties on the block to move to a modernist scale, filling the block with building, and using the block pattern to define a new scale of architecture : two underground storeys of parking, a four-storey podium using the existing urban block as a template for the podium floor plate, and then a seven-storey tower set right in the middle of the podium. As detailed, the original elevation was oblivious to framing capacity of the façade with respect to the square. The renovation was able to recalibrate to recognize the significant and prominent site as an axis for Saint-Louis

Square – originally a reservoir – and framing the square on the east side with a frontally oriented glass face. The site is connected to the metro on its east side, the site with visual access to one of the city's most Brutalist cityscapes, as Berri Street expands to become a wide thoroughfare and the area below Sherbrooke Street was excavated to create a bridge over Berri.

In addition to retaining the metro entrance on three faces of the east end of the block, the building has an interesting hybrid program for training in the food and hospitality industry. It features a training hotel and restaurant. The tower contains 42 guest rooms, expressed and legible on the north and south tower faces as double rows of balconies, creating sample hotel floors for hotel simulation. Program elements that were refurbished as part of the makeover of the school of hospitality also include special demonstration kitchens, a refrigerated workshop for catering courses, food chemistry laboratories, sensory analysis labs, workshops for pastry chefs and chocolatiers, a sommelier room, an 80-seat auditorium and a multimedia documentation centre. Visitors can patronize a training restaurant, located at sidewalk level and designed by architect Luc Laporte, and sample a gastronomic menu. The view into lobbies has animated the sidewalk from the shelter of the arcade, which runs almost continuously around to the metro. Over all the public facilities are more visible and inviting with the new curtain wall.

The elevation demonstrated the volumetric qualities of the architecture by recladding, also referred to as overcladding, since the previous exterior layer was removed, new insulation added, then a new glass curtain wall layer accessible by a service space between the old and new layers. The result is a four-storey podium and seven-storey mini-tower with an elegant glass curtain wall that uses a series of embellishments and articulations of the new glass wall. There is a playful use of strong colour in the chartreuse-coloured vertical glass panels on the accordion-pleated west-facing wall. The panels allow colour to appear, depending on the viewing angle, seen from Saint-Denis Street. Monumentally scaled letters of silkscreened glass on the west elevation of the podium identify and brand the building. Overall, the judicious use of accordion-pleated glazed wall on the west elevation lends a

composed presence to the major façade. The glazing was conceived as a double-glazed wall differentiated on each elevation, an interesting take on the transformation of a building that was essentially monolithic and undifferentiated in elevation in its original incarnation. On the west side the double-skin façade traps the winter air and warms it before feeding it into the mechanical air intake system of the commercial kitchens.

Once a famously dreary-looking lump of a building, it seems the ITHQ was just an ugly duckling. Perhaps its architecture was not so bad after all, just poorly dressed. Now that it is sleekly glamorous, the design approach of the original building is intriguing – the four-storey podium was a period effort to be contextual, and one wonders about interior planning logic for the large floor plate the size of a block. The design strategy of the podium tower combination has become a common contemporary urban compositional formula for condo developments. Simply erase existing ownership patterns of small lots, and add a podium-and-tower formula to any block, with the inevitable underground parking area and its access-ramp bulk and slope. A recent proliferation of sliver towers in high-rise housing has suggested a lot of podium ends up as underused area. As a result of the renovation of ITHQ, the outcome is all the more interesting as a demonstration of a dialogue with the city. The architectural design approach of the envelope has finally caught up to the richness of the urbanism of the location – the city square, the urban block and the small repetitive façade system.

### **École nationale de cirque / National Circus School** **2002–2004 (phase 1) 2009–2011 (phase 2)**

The suburban context of Cité des arts du cirque site in Montreal's Saint-Michel district, is itself a fairy tale story: the improbable but welcome transformation of the former Miron quarry dump into a cultural hub for circus arts. With the relocation of the hugely successful Cirque du Soleil to the site in Saint-Michel and the vast transformation of a landscape from landfill site to cultural pole, a significant component was the National Circus School, whose building designed by Lapointe Magne et associés was chosen by a national competition held in 2001 and documented and chronicled in the Université de Montréal Canadian Competitions Catalogue<sup>2</sup>.

With the elevated expressway known as Metropolitan Boulevard slicing through the Saint-Michel district seeming

to call for a landmark structure, LMA's competition entry was the only one to go for a vertical scheme, piling one tall gymnasium on top of another. An ingenious precedent for a stacked gymnasium project from the 1980s is the Pompeia leisure centre in São Paulo, Brazil, by architect Lina Bo Bardi. The successful bid by LMA originally proposed three gyms arranged vertically and connecting in a hive. As the design developed, the program merged into two major vertically stacked gyms.

The extensive circus program includes a complete array of spaces for circus arts teaching, including three large-scale studios, a palestra, two multifunctional dance studios, a physical training room, practice cubicles, a laboratory for the design and fabrication of accessories, a wardrobe area, classrooms, a computer laboratory, a documentation centre, offices, an entrance hall, service rooms and parking. As an educational building, the facility is unusual in many ways. It has relatively few students, since each student requires a considerable amount of space in which to practise acrobatics, etc. A must-see element is the upper interior library. It takes advantage of library and upper gym adjacency, and a student working at a table can literally see an acrobat training on a trapeze swing in and out of view as the upper portion of the gym is juxtaposed with interior windows allowing views over the gymnasium.

While there is a hybrid structure of concrete at the base, the upper levels include large areas of exposed steel in gymnasium areas, fire-protected by intumescent paint. The north wall features a luminous cladding, Canadian-produced Solera, above vision glass units at floor level for diffuse daylight. The product known as Solera allows glare-free daylight with cool, even illumination, while performing well in terms of energy efficiency. Bands of horizontal fins define the west elevation, and the torqued, negatively sloped curtain wall, with close spacing of metal sun-shading devices, lend a sense of twisting, torsion motion, something like a frozen vortex, to the highly visible silhouette. The building uses a gently skewed and finned form as a landscape reference point, its 42.2-metre height exceeding the local limit of 23 metres. Its iconic form reads somewhat like a rectilinear funnel, recognizable and with good visibility from the elevated expressway.

### **Centre sportif de Gatineau, 2008–2010**

The context is a prominent corner site in suburban Gatineau, open to fields to the west and near the Ottawa River, with the Maison de la Culture across the street and the Cégep de l'Outaouais next door. The openness afforded the opportunity to provide a topographic approach, and anchor an animated form in the landscape. The designers named “la traverse” the ramp that expresses circulation and extends into the landscape in a dynamic diagonal, manipulating the ground plane. The vigorous form and angle of ramp works the vertical plane between two main volumes of pool and gymnasium. A sports and culture building, like Montreal's Complexe sportif Claude-Robillard, it aims to provide a competitive sports training environment.

The fifty-metre pool and voluminous gymnasium contain high bleachers for viewing audiences. Glazed interior walls also allow some poolside views.

The building uses dynamic volumes and vivid orange and ochre colours, unusual in the suburban landscape. Strong assertive volumes include a projecting box, on the pool side next to “la traverse”. The building uses the transparency of glazed ends on the north and south elevations, and fewer openings on the east and west.

Each side is highly differentiated: dark metal cladding punctured by round windows like bubbles, clear or tinted in turquoise and pale green on pool wing, while the gymnasium volume features horizontal strip fenestration tinted in an intense green, and a pale white metal panel cladding. The fully developed architecture of the sports centre makes the neighbouring buildings look almost prefab in contrast, as they appear to be representative of a basic 1970s-to-1980s design sensibility of conception and execution.

The sustainability measures are ambitious and competitive, with the building and site achieving LEED Silver status. An array of 92 geothermal wells should supply eighty per cent of the heating and air conditioning. There is an accessible and visible planted roof terrace centred over the ‘la traverse’. The landscape, by NIP Paysage, has been coordinated with the building design to optimize sustainability and water management goals. Large scuppers on the west-east elevations direct rainwater onto a micro landscape of rounded stones, portrayed as eventually becoming a treed, even forested zone, with storm water retention basins. An additional aim is to conserve thirty per cent of potable water. Playful paving patterns reach out to sidewalk on grade. The dynamic angle of the long ramp leads to upper floor

along south face and the series of mounds. The public art component of the landscape is a set of sculptures by artist Francine Larivée and consisting of five triangular COR-TEN steel sculptures anchored in the landscape of mounds on the south side. The mounds are part of a sustainability strategy to keep excavated material on-site. The traversing flow of passage will connect eventually to a proposed transit station.

### **Salaberry-de-Valleyfield Courthouse / extension, 2009–2012 (under construction)**

The construction of an extension of the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield Courthouse, which began in 2011, constitutes a significant addition to the town. The site plan reorganizes the local urban context by closing a section of Montcalm Street so as to present an inviting façade towards the Salaberry park. The new edifice attaches to the original courthouse, a heritage structure with a stone façade dating from 1901. In fact, the project integrates three buildings : the original building (1901), an annex of 1975 of which only the structure was kept, and an important new extension. The challenge, here, was to accomplish all those voluminous transformations without compromising the domestic scale of the park. The new building features a large, transparent glazed entrance foyer positioned at a dynamic angle to the original courthouse. A plane of grey brick designates the new entrance. The courthouse extension contains significant programmatic elements such as ten new hearing rooms, two mediation rooms and offices.