

THE PALAIS-ROYAL GARDEN



Les

By Quebec sculptor Michel GOULET
in complicity with François MASSUT

confidants



The ten sets of chairs, *causeuses*, placed in the Palais-Royal garden make reference to the traditional chairs installed in Parisian gardens of the last century.

Artist Michel Goulet has chosen, in complicity with François Massut, to bring back these chairs in a new configuration, giving them the title of *Les confidents* (*The Confidants*).

Places for meeting, for conversation and sharing, these chairs are similar in every way to those nearby except that each one has a fragment of poetry and the name of the celebrated poet, which is cut out of the horizontal band of the chair back.

An everyday object is placed on a small tablet attached to the two chairs to identify and distinguish *Les confidents* and to personalize the dreamer's time while seated here listening to a poem.

Thus, by connecting one's earphones to the central box, one can listen to the poetic texts of modern and contemporary poets, spoken in complete privacy to each person who sits in one of these twenty poem-chairs.

Twice a year, more poets with poems, from all over, will add their voices to create a symphony of thoughtful, original words to be heard in the Palais-Royal garden.

Michel Goulet's work will remain permanently in the garden.

To people who will read and listen to the poems engraved and recorded in Michel Goulet's work Les confidents, and who never read or listen to contemporary poetry, nor any poetry what so ever: allow me to give you some advice, with regard to poetry, never believe anything you are told.

Whether it is to be this thing or that. For instance, that the poets of today no longer use rhyme, that they are incapable of writing sonnets, that they never speak about war or the price of bread, that they do not know how to sing any more, that they are unaware of rock or reggae, that they only address specialists armed with diplomas, that they have no sense of humour and so on. Poetry today is so diverse that, for each of these assertions, one will find a poem that contradicts this.

So, do not believe anything: decide for yourself, think about the pieces.

As you read and listen to the poets that we present to you in these chair-poems, only two qualities are necessary: to be curious and attentive.

One cannot appreciate all the poets just as one cannot like everyone but it would be most surprising if nobody finds a few poems here, a few verses that they retain, that move them, intrigue them, amuse them and perhaps even disturb them.

Jean-Pierre SIMÉON
Artistic Director of
Printemps des Poètes

MICHEL GOULET

Michel Goulet is a sculptor who lives and works in Montreal, Quebec. Recognized for his significant contribution to public art in Canada and abroad, he has created, during thirty years, more than forty permanent art works, five of them in Europe. In 1988, he represented Canada at the Venice Biennale, considered the most important international contemporary art event and in 1990, he received the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas, the highest distinction that the Quebec Government awards to a visual artist. The Canada Council for the Arts and the Ministère des affaires culturelles du Québec have supported him with grants to create his works and for travel. In 2008, the Canada Council for the Arts presented him with the Governor General's Award in recognition of his exceptional career and in 2009, he was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. Recently, the University of Sherbrooke awarded him an honorary doctorate.

In describing his approach to art, he has written the following: "I have always drawn inspiration from already existing objects rather than inventing them, choosing anecdotal motifs rather than erudite constructions, accumulating iconic images rather than inventing the absolute: making it so that art and life are the same thing, that we no longer really know if it is art or part of everyday life. I work above all with the idea of an encounter, an exchange, the everyday world and with the recognition of who we are when facing the other. I need this affinity with the object that we share, with this object that is not art but that becomes the material for my sculpture. I also need this small object, of no real value, to be delicate and give strength to everything that surrounds it. In the end, I need this object to be not a simple representation but a thing in itself."

FRANÇOIS MASSUT

François Massut was born and grew up in the Ardennes, more precisely, near Charleville-Mézières, the birthplace of Arthur Rimbaud. He lives in Paris. With the collective Poésie is not dead that he founded, he attempts to vaporize, percolate and pollinate the poem in public space via various mediums such as installations, performances, road-trips of action poetry with the Rimbaudmobile and so on. His objective is for an uninformed and unprepared audience to encounter poetry, "in a situation of risk and purity, funambulist and present, in spite of everything!"



Sculptor Michel Goulet.


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For more information, particularly for the list of poets that you hear when you connect your earphones:

> www.monuments-nationaux.fr/Actualites/Les-confidants-Michel-Goulet

> www.lesconfidants.org

>  Facebook page: « Les confidants »

***The Confidants* is one of the Palais-Royal garden's permanent works and opened on the occasion of Printemps des Poètes on March 2016.**