

CHATEAU RAMEZAY TAKES A CREATIVE APPROACH
TO ITS ANNIVERSARY: 24 ARTWORKS ON DISPLAY

One subject, two dozen artists

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SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Let the party begin.

Château Ramezay is marking its 300th anniversary with a year-long series of exhibitions commemorating the rich history of both the building and the century-old museum.

"Instead of one special exhibition about the anniversary, we decided on five," said communications and development co-ordinator Martine Couillard. "We wanted to present different aspects of the history of the museum to highlight what the Château Ramezay is today and what it was in the past."

First up is *Across Time Through Artistic Eyes*. The museum commissioned two dozen Quebec artists to create their view of Château Ramezay.

It's something of a departure in the château's temporary exhibition space, usually reserved for historical artifacts. But the space lends itself nicely to the minimalist gallery atmosphere.

Artist Françoise Pascal took her inspiration for the project from Montreal-born poet Émile Nelligan. Pascal created a still life complete with the rich mahogany panels of the château's Nantes Room, an array of flowers, stacked books, poems, and an image of Nelligan himself reflected in an ornate mirror.

Couillard explains that at the end of the 19th century, the Nantes Room, one of the largest rooms in the château at the time, was often host to the Literary School of Montreal, an association where local poets and writers gathered for readings and lectures.

"Nelligan actually read *La Romance du vin*, one of his most famous poems, for the first time right here at the Château Ramezay," Couillard said.

Visitors can browse the accompanying catalogue, which combines a historical account of Château Ramezay with thoughtful insights and wonderful sentiments on each of the artists represented in the exhibit.

Artist Sébastien Maltais was inspired by another visitor to the château, Benjamin Franklin.

"I imagined Benjamin Franklin attempting to persuade French-Canadians to join his rebellion," Maltais says in the catalogue.

Artist Mathieu Boucher, who was given



COURTESY OF CHATEAU RAMEZAY

Fantasme d'un Château is the work of Jean-Guy Desrosiers.

access to hundreds of archived photographs, says one photo in particular caught his eye – a majestic locomotive that "symbolizes the passage of time" – and inspired his contribution to the exhibit.

The Château Ramezay ... Across Time Through Artistic Eyes continues until March 27. The two dozen works displayed in the exhibition will be avail-

able for purchase at a fundraising auction on March 30.

The Château Ramezay Museum is at 280 Notre Dame St. E. in Old Montreal. Seasonal hours are Tuesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission costs \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$5 for students, \$4 for age 5 to 17. For more information, call (514) 861-3708 or visit www.chateauramezay.qc.ca.