



**CLAUDE A.
SIMARD**

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PAINTING HAPPINESS Artist Claude A. Simard's timeless legacy

Quebec City, June 2nd, 2017 – Proud to pay tribute to the talent of Claude A. Simard, the City of Quebec is hosting a retrospective exhibition devoted to the artist, who, in addition to becoming a prominent figure in the world of visual arts, placed Quebec in the international spotlight. His body of work—as both an artist and graphic designer—is a testament to his timeless artistic legacy. A true colour artisan, Claude A. Simard immerses us in a world that we never want to leave. Some 50 years ago, while strolling through Holland's tulip fields, he discovered the wealth of intensities of colour that would considerably influence his artistic path. An exhibition is truly a gift, a path to discover the seasons through the eyes of this artist, who always sought beauty. Bringing together for the first time more than 50 works of the artist's personal corpus and from various collectors, the exhibition runs until September 3, 2017, at the Centre d'interprétation historique de Sainte-Foy in Quebec City.

A timeless legacy

As passionate as he was dedicated to art and beauty, Claude A. Simard made his mark in many fields.

First and foremost, there is Claude A. Simard, **the painter**, who coloured our lives with his vibrant works, art that today still conveys joy, peace and serenity. The artist himself once said: "I do this every day, speak of love in images." In 2015, art critic and historian Nicole Allard wrote about Claude A. Simard:

"Summarizing Claude A. Simard's career and works is impossible [...] Known mainly for his rural and urban landscapes, as well as for his paintings of flowers and lush gardens, the painter has left behind a substantial body of work, which began in 1969. [...] His bold, undulating lines, derived from his graphic designer training, are ever-lasting in the contours and details of his floral explorations undertaken in the 1980s. This keen gardener managed to renew his theme of choice over the years. 'Bursts of life', 'sanctuaries of beauty', as he called them, his gardens on canvas, sketched as far as Holland, are inseparable from his work. Claude A. Simard remains a must."

There is also Claude A. Simard, **the graphic artist and communicator**, who developed the brand image of many companies, including Maison Simons' iconic green leaf. "With his talent, Claude A. Simard shaped Simons' future," the company was quoted as saying in *Parcours* magazine in January 2016.

And finally, we have Claude A. Simard, **the teacher**, who made it his duty to communicate his passion for beauty with younger generations. At the time of the artist's passing in September 2014, three decades of saddened students, some of which went on to become major players in Canada's leading advertising and communications agencies, paid homage to their fallen teacher. "Lively and honest, he believed in us and, most importantly, made us believe in ourselves. He had the precious talent of stimulating creation with the right words and leading by example," they said. In October 1997, Marie-Claude Ducas wrote in *Le Devoir*: "Simard can boast of having trained a large number of Quebec's admen." Claude A. Simard was a full professor of visual arts at Université Laval from 1984 to 2001.

This is an excellent example that Claude A. Simard's body of work transcends time. The artist once said: "For a long time, I thought that 'home' meant a house, a garden where large trees and flowers grow. A unique, inimitable, irreplaceable place [...] But over the years, I've come to learn during my travels to make my 'home' wherever I go [...] My home is where I can draw to my heart's desire." To enter the retrospective exhibition of Claude A. Simard is to return to the essence of all things, to find the familiar light that leads us home.

National and international recognition

Known for his important contribution to visual arts and design, Mr. Simard was received by the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1981, at the age of 38. The admiration for his work is also evident by the collectors and buyers who show an undeniable attachment to his works, so much so that they're hesitant to part with their "treasure" for an entire year. It's no surprise that the value of Claude A. Simard's works jumped 40% following his death in 2014.

Since the artist's passing, Huguette M. Simard has made it her mission to create opportunities for the public, fans and art collectors to view his works. Above all, her wish is for Claude A. Simard's life work to live on.

A balm for the soul

The exhibition brings together more than 50 paintings borrowed from various Canadian collectors and Huguette M. Simard, the artist's widow. Also featured are sculptures, watercolours, graphic design creations and sketchbooks. Divided into 10 areas, the exhibition delves into various aspects of Claude A. Simard's life, such as his many trips to Holland, Provence and Paris, and the key themes that were close to his heart: floral gardens, landscapes, still lifes, skaters, and geese.

Claude A. Simard leaves behind a corpus of more than 5,000 works, not to mention graphic design creations, sketchbooks and sculptures. The artist, a frank and humble man, believed that "art is more important than the artist himself will ever be."

Painting happiness

The origin of the exhibition's title comes from a quotation from sociologist Jacques De Guise, to whom the artist had asked to write the preface of his book *Inspiration*: "Even more so than beauty, Claude A. Simard succeeded in painting happiness and delight." That says it all about the painter, who immerses us with each of his works into a world filled with ubiquitous joy. This almost therapeutic pursuit of happiness, an approach unique to the artist, is a balm for the soul. As Mr. Simard used to say, we're telling our own story. And that's exactly what the artist did with great eloquence and sensitivity: he was telling us his story.

A multidisciplinary artist

Claude A. Simard studied at the Ontario College of Arts in Toronto from 1962 to 1967. Head of advertising for Maison Simons and founder of Groupe Kommunikart, Simard then carved himself an important niche in the art market and his works were shown in prestigious galleries in Quebec City, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton. He designed eight stamps for Canada Post, including two Christmas stamps (1983 and 1987) and one commemorative stamp, Blue Poppy, issued in 1997. The first retrospective exhibition of his works was held in 1991 at Villa Bagatelle in Quebec City, which was then presented by the City of Paris at Château de Bagatelle. Both events were well received. Since his passing in September 2014, numerous art collectors and lovers have attributed to Claude A. Simard the ability to sublimate reality.

Claude A. Simard's retrospective exhibition is part of the summer program of the Capitale-Nationale region. A must-see until September 3, 2017, at the Centre d'interprétation historique de Sainte-Foy in Quebec City (2825 chemin Sainte-Foy). Admission is free. To learn more, visit www.claudeasimard.com/en and <http://www.maisonsdupatrimoine.com/>.

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Source: Huguette M. Simard

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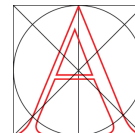
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