

Bill Vincent retrospective at the Maison Hamel-Bruneau

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Ontario-born artist Bill Vincent has lived and worked in Quebec City since 1975. Highly accomplished as a woodcut printmaker and painter, he has at least 15 works of public art on display throughout the province, and many more in public collections around the world, including the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., Universidad de los Americas in Puebla, Mexico, and the Royal Museum of Antwerp in Belgium.

In celebration of his four-decade career and in recognition of his many contributions to the artistic landscape of Quebec, Quebec City organized a retrospective of his work at the historic Maison Hamel-Bruneau. Entitled *Enracinements (Groundings)*, the retrospective reviews Vincent's artistic output from 1972 to the present, from his early woodcut prints through contemporary multimedia paintings and sculpture to

the public art projects that dot the Quebec landscape.

Meticulously curated by art historian Nicole Allard and art director Danièle Lessard (who also happens to be Vincent's wife and frequent collaborator), the exhibition traces Vincent's evolution from a self-taught print-maker on both wood and linoleum to a painter perpetually searching for new ways of artistic expression. Having mastered the ancient art of wood engraving, Vincent embarked in 1987 on a seven-year period devoted solely to painting. In the early 1990s, he returned to his print-making roots but now he experiments with various media which render his work current, complex, and challenging. Recycled wood is burned and gouged with a chainsaw; the traditional media of paper, pencil and acrylic paint are juxtaposed with oxidized copper, tar, digital print, steel and neon tube.

In the book accompanying the exhibition, Nicole Allard

writes: "Bill Vincent's art is closely connected to nature, matter and life, exploring their transient states and inevitable finality." Describing him as "unclassifiable" and "travelling constantly ... between print-making and painting," Allard praises his humanist spirit and "almost scientific curiosity that embraces literature, philosophy, art history, architecture, archaeology, botany and biology." Vincent's work is informed as much by his rural childhood in the idyllic village of Dorchester, just outside London, Ontario, as it is by the urban landscapes of his Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighbourhood in Quebec City, with plant life and simple everyday rituals serving as inspiration. Life and death, ephemerality and permanence, rootedness and rootlessness are all recurring themes in his work.

The Bill Vincent retrospective is now showing at Maison Hamel-Bruneau, 2608, chemin Saint-Louis, until December 14, Wednesday

to Sunday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

The exhibition catalogue featuring photographs of Vincent's work will be available for sale at Maison Hamel-Bruneau until December 14th. The beautiful and expertly edited 130-page bilingual compendium, priced at only \$5, is written by the art historian and exposition curator Nicole Allard.

All 10 of Quebec City's heritage houses are presenting art exhibits this year. Here is a list of some of them:

Until October 12: *Céramique, créer avec le feu* at Villa Bagatelle

Until October 31: *La Saint-Charles, une muse étonnante* at Maison Dorion-Coulombe

October 29 to December 21: *Entre ciel et terre* at Villa Bagatelle

Until December 14: *Les familles souches de Sainte-Foy* at the Centre d'interprétation historique de Sainte-Foy

Until December 14: *Le fléché, bien plus qu'une*



Photo by Kasia Borkowska

A guest at the vernissage admiring Bill Vincent's 2014 work entitled, after Nietzsche, "...Wenn du nicht erst Asche!" ("...first become ashes!"). Acrylic and wax on carved and burnt wood

ceinture! Exhibit about the finger-weaving technique typical of Quebec, at Maison des Jésuites de Sillery

There are also three permanent exhibitions: *La rivière Saint-Charles, son histoire et ses écosystèmes*

at Maison Dorion-Coulombe; *Léon Provancher: Nature passionnée, feu sacré* at Maison Léon-Provancher; and *Beauport en un tour de main: à la rencontre des gens de métier qui l'ont façonné* at Maison Girardin.