

Pretending for real



The Plouffe Family

CULTURAL MEDIATION DOCUMENT

PREPARED BY THE COMMUNITY ART LABORATORY (ARTLAB) OF
THE FOREMAN ART GALLERY



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What is the project?



Who are the artists?

The Plouffe Family consists of Guillaume Boudrias-Plouffe, Émilie Levert, and their children Emeline, Léo, and Zéphir Plouffe.

Together, they create public sculptures throughout Quebec—works designed for specific locations, such as libraries, schoolyards, and parks.

What is their process?

La Famille Plouffe creates site-specific works. As a result, visiting the site is a very important step. The family conducts interviews with local residents, learns about the history of the place, as well as the surrounding landscape and architecture.

The family then creates sketches, followed by a model of the artwork. This model is generally 1/20th the actual size of the proposed artwork. They then present their model to a jury, and if it is accepted, the artwork is produced at full scale to be installed on-site.



What does the exhibition propose?

At the Foreman Art Gallery, **La Famille Plouffe** transforms its creative process into a work of art in its own right. The group presents a myriad of prototypes, models, samples, and documentation—some of which were selected by a jury, others not. Thanks to the minimal constraints of exhibiting models in a gallery space, La Famille Plouffe can imagine and reinvent public projects. The exhibition's context allows them, in particular, to play with the size of objects and blur the line between the real and the fake, thereby presenting works that do not yet exist. The exhibition serves as a fictional archive of these projects.



Visite commentée

During the guided tour, students will be introduced to the concepts of collaborative art, public art, and the artistic process.

They will discover how La Famille Plouffe collaborates not only among themselves, but also with residents of the communities where they exhibit, as well as with the artisans they hire for certain projects. They will learn how La Famille Plouffe's works are created, from the initial sketch to the model, including the selection of the site, the choice of materials, and the installation of the full-scale artwork. They will also discover projects that were not selected by the juries, and will understand that while some projects do not reach the end of the process, they can still be appreciated as works in their own right.



Creative workshop

The "Playful Refuge" workshop invites participants to create their own public art installation and envision it for a specific site. How could you enhance our public spaces? Is the artwork functional, a playground, or simply an aesthetic addition to a location? What benefits will your artwork bring to the community?

Depending on the age group, the workshop may take the form of drawing or sculpture.

Lexicon

Model

A model is a scaled-down representation of a project prior to its final construction. In this case, the model is three-dimensional. The Plouffe family receives the dimensions of the building where the artwork will be installed and often reproduces it on a 1:20 or 1:50 scale to determine the size and shape of the final artwork.

Collaborative art

Collaborative art involves creating works that require the participation of several people, whether for sketching, construction, or assembly. Here, the family works together to brainstorm ideas, then collaborates with the local community to learn more about a particular place. They even enlist the help of specialized artisans for certain projects, such as bronze casting.

Site-specific art

“Site-specific art” refers to a work designed and created for a specific location. Even before creating the work, the artist already knows where it will be displayed and designs it with the constraints of the space and landscape in mind.

Public artwork

Public art refers to works located in places accessible to everyone, such as parks, streets, or public buildings. These works are often intended to culturally enrich public spaces and integrate art into everyday life. In Quebec, 1% of the budget for public buildings (schools, hospitals, government buildings) is allocated to the creation of public artworks.

Artist biography

Within La Famille Plouffe, we have embarked on a collaborative creative journey ever since each member entered the lives of the others. We deliberately embrace this shared identity to recognize and honor everyone's contribution, thereby challenging the myth of the solitary artistic genius. It was during a family stay in 2016 at Maisons Daura, an international artist residency in Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, France, that we decided to formalize this change.

Since then, we have participated in, among other events, the 35th Baie-Saint-Paul International Symposium on Contemporary Art (2017), the 2nd Triennale Banlieue! at the Maison des Arts in Laval (2018), the 9th National Biennial of Contemporary Sculpture at the POP Museum in Trois-Rivières (2020), the residency event SEULS et ENSEMBLE, créer du lien in the îles-de-la-Madeleine with Ad Mare (2021), at Racontages at the Centre d'art Jacques-et-Michel Auger in Victoriaville (2021), at the Orange event in Saint-Hyacinthe (2025), and a creative residency for Faire terroir: Géorécit with Vville art actuel in La Pocatière (2025). We have also presented solo exhibitions with Action Art Actuel in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (2017), Vaste et Vague in Carleton-sur-Mer (2018), Langage Plus in Alma (2019), and the Maison de la culture Marie-Uguay (2022). Next, a series of exhibitions in close collaboration with Atelier le Fil d'Ariane within the network of Montreal's Maisons de la Culture: Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie (2022), L'entrepôt [Lachine] (2022), and Mercier (2023).

Since 2015, we have had the privilege of being invited to participate in more than fifty public art competitions as part of municipal or provincial public art policies. Just over twenty public artworks—both permanent and temporary—have been created through these competitions, invitations, personal initiatives, and open calls for submissions. We are currently preparing the installation of several other permanent public artworks and several model presentations. Our creative journey in public art has taken us to a variety of settings: from elementary, specialized, and high schools to senior housing and alternative living spaces, as well as public libraries, parks, a bike path, hospitals, arenas, a convention center, museums, an exhibition center, daycare centers, and more.

Based on our philosophical stance, we propose that everything previously accomplished in the name of Guillaume Boudrias-Plouffe was, in fact, accomplished by the Plouffe Family. In the same vein, Guillaume has in the past represented the family in projects in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, as well as in France, Ivory Coast, and Italy. The same applies to all the awards, grants, and scholarships received at the time in his own name, for example: the Relève Award from Culture Montérégie, the Joseph S. Stauffer Award from the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as grants from the Longueuil Arts Council, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and the Canada Council for the Arts. As recently as 2022, the family received the CALQ's Artist of the Year Award in Montérégie, although for administrative reasons it was Guillaume who submitted the application. Guillaume de La Famille Plouffe is also a member of the board of directors of 3e impérial, a contemporary art experimental center (chairman), and previously served on the board of the Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec.

Curator's biography

Gentiane Bélanger, who holds a Ph.D. in art history from UQÀM (2020), has served as director and curator of the Foreman Art Gallery at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke since June 2015. Her research interests lie at the intersection of contemporary art, ecology, and materialist philosophies. More specifically, her doctoral thesis explores the importance of material culture in the actualization of ecological discourse in contemporary art. She serves on the board of directors of the Sporobole contemporary art center as well as on the scientific committee of the Grantham Foundation for Art and the Environment, and she regularly contributes to various specialized journals, including C Magazine, *esse*, *Espace*, *ETC*, and *Plastik art & science* (Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne).

Camila Vásquez is an interdisciplinary artist of Chilean origin. She lives and works in rural Quebec, in the Estrie region, on the ancestral lands of the W8banaki Nation, the Ndakina. She has been active in the arts since 2005 as an artist, teacher, curator, mediator, and cultural worker. Her artistic practice is rooted in everyday life and unfolds through long-term projects that challenge the boundaries separating art from other spheres of life, as well as dominant conceptions of social space and knowledge. Her work has been presented in various art centers, galleries, and events in Argentina, Chile, Spain, and Quebec, as well as independently or in more informal settings. She is currently the coordinator of the Community Art Lab at Bishop's University's Foreman Art Gallery. Among her influences are the thought and pedagogy of David Tomas, Sylvie Tourangeau's approach to the performative as a way of life, the infiltrating art rooted in the reality of the 3e impérial and the artists who gravitate around it, as well as avant-garde artistic movements interested in the links between art and life.

What is a curator?

An exhibition curator is responsible for the design, organization, and execution of an exhibition. They work with artists to arrange a collection of works into a coherent narrative.



Additional activity

Imagine a public artwork for your schoolyard, drawing inspiration from the creative process behind the Plouffe family.

Preparation

First, think about your school's architecture: what is it made of (brick, concrete, wood)? What shape is it? Are there windows, or even a wall?

Now, think about the landscape of the schoolyard: are there trees, playground equipment, or picnic tables? Is there a spot where you could see a work of art?

Based on the materials, architecture, or landscape of your school, design a piece of public art that could enhance the environment.

You can use the lines below to take notes on the environment.



Creation

Design Space

