

Press release

For immediate release



## **Molior presents *New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable***

### **A unique and captivating virtual reality exhibition on tour across Quebec**

On tour in Val-d'Or, Chicoutimi, Gatineau, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, and Carleton-sur-Mer

**Montreal, November 18, 2024** - Molior, an organization specialized in the production of exhibitions and artistic projects, is proud to announce the Quebec tour of its virtual reality exhibition, ***New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable***. This poetic experience under the theme of nature's fragility will be hosted in six Quebec cities—Val-d'Or, Chicoutimi, Gatineau, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, and Carleton-sur-Mer—from December 2024 to March 2026, thanks to an exceptional collaboration with six province-wide exhibition presenters (VOArt, centre Bang, Daïmôn, Productions Recto-Verso, Sporobole and Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague).

Currently presented in Marseille as part of CHRONIQUES - Biennale des Imaginaires Numériques, ***New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable*** is a unique invitation to interact, to marvel, and to think differently about our impact on and connections with nature.

"After more than 20 years of presenting artists primarily on the international scene, we at Molior are delighted to organize this first exhibition tour across Quebec. *New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable*, which we produced entirely in virtual reality, is the first exhibition of its kind. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Quebec public to discover the works of world-renowned Quebecois artists in the visual and digital arts." [Aurélie Besson, General and Artistic Director of Molior]

### **THE NEW SURROUNDINGS: APPROACHING THE UNTOUCHABLE EXHIBITION**

Produced in 2023 by Molior, *New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable*, curated by Nathalie Bachand, brings together seven prominent artists from Quebec: Baron Lanteigne,

Caroline Gagné, François Quévillon, Olivia McGilchrist, the duo Laurent Lévesque and Olivier Henley, and Sabrina Ratté. Molior produced three of the six virtual reality works specially for the occasion.

After being fitted out with their VR headset, visitors make their way through a surreal world, where six distinct portals appear around them. They are invited to enter each portal, in the order of their choice, to discover the six works of the exhibition.

Through the prism of digital technology, the exhibition offers a poetic perspective on the fragility of nature. Depicting it in an entirely dematerialized form, it highlights the deterioration processes nature is being subjected to, and invites viewers to reflect on the challenges of its conservation.

*“With the works of New Surroundings, the artists offer us contact points with worlds that transcend reality and materiality—thus opening up multiple perspectives on our ecosystems and inviting us to revisit our habitual ways of interacting with the natural environment.”* Nathalie Bachand, curator.

Following its successful run in Montreal, where it was fully booked in just two weeks, *New Surroundings: Approaching the Untouchable* is also being shown in Marseille until January 29, 2025 as part of a Quebec showcase presented in collaboration with CHRONIQUES - Biennale des Imaginaires Numériques, a major event in the field of digital arts in France.

## **QUEBEC TOUR DATES AND VENUES**

- Centre d’Exposition de Val-d’Or (VOArt) in Val-d’Or: December 7, 2024 to January 26, 2025
- centre Bang in Chicoutimi: February 21 to April 27, 2025
- Daïmôn in Gatineau: May 23 to June 27, 2025
- Productions Recto-Verso in Quebec City: August 30 to September 21, 2025
- Sporobole in Sherbrooke: September 27 to November 21, 2025
- Le Centre d’artistes Vaste et Vague in Carleton-sur-Mer: January 10 to February 27, 2026

In addition to the virtual experience, several installations and video works by the same artists will be on display in some of the presentation venues. Exact details will be announced for each location.

## **THE EXHIBITION ARTISTS**

### **Baron Lanteigne**

Baron Lanteigne, an artist from Quebec City whose works are shown worldwide, is proposing *Ascension*. The work invites visitors to explore a digital landscape in which an ascending and descending liquid refracts light, thus creating an immersive experience. Through the manipulation of a data flow between connected devices, this moving substance embodies

omni-connection, all the while questioning our perception of space and nature. The installation ***Cinématographie de la matière virtuelle*** (2023), consisting of an arrangement of screens acting as portals that reveal light refraction effects that distort the generative visual environment, is presented in the exhibition space and explores the same topic.

### **Caroline Gagné**

An interdisciplinary artist with a sustained engagement in her artistic community, Caroline Gagné created her very first VR work to explore the presence of humans in their environment. *Autofading\_Se disparaître* immerses the viewer in a point cloud generated forest in which the surroundings change in response to their movements and attention level. A decrease in movements induces a corresponding increase in sound and visual details, whereas an overly agitated human presence triggers a storm that gradually erases the landscape's elements.

***Sans titre (artefacts)*** (2020 - 2023) is a material extension of the virtual reality work *Autofading\_Se disparaître*, by way of a synthetic rock as a central element—which is also at the heart of the VR work. The installation makes it possible to hear a sound composition linked to a video sequence—excerpted from the virtual work—displayed via the screen of a cell phone, which can be seen nearby.

### **François Quévillon**

Having explored phenomenon of the world and perception through various technological set-ups for over twenty years, François Quévillon presents *Érosions 2*, a work that invites viewers to discover the Saint Lawrence River and Gulf of St. Lawrence shorelines. The artist here makes use of VR's disorienting and disembodiment effects. Through visual and audio deformations evoking geomorphological transformation processes, the work amplifies the sensation of immateriality and instability inherent in natural spaces. Inspired by the cosmos and geology, ***Météores*** (2017 - 2018) is a body of video works that probes space-time and the complexity of matter, both physical and digital. Each scene is a world onto itself, with its own atmosphere wherein the laws of physics are reinvented.

### **Olivia McGilchrist**

Created by the white French-Jamaican artist Olivia McGilchrist, *Virtual ISLANDs* explores the relationship between virtual immersion and physical submersion through audiovisual interpretations of the ebb and flow of water, symbolizing the fluidity of the artist's hybrid identities. Viewers are invited to navigate through an aquatic scene in which the choreographed movements of the artist Keely Whitelaw—rendered as a particle effect—interact with a wave that washes over the virtual space and submerges it. The video works ***From Many Sides*** (2016) and ***MYRa: a gift for Rym*** (2019) sift through layers of inherited histories and foreground the complex relationship between the Caribbean landscape and water as an element—from geographical dependency to environmental precariousness.

### **Laurent Lévesque and Olivier Henley**

Since 2017, Laurent Lévesque and Olivier Henley have been working as a duo to develop *The Conservatory: Other Horizon*. The work invites the public to explore a digital forest made up of plants taken from first-person shooter video games created between 1998 and 2017.

Accompanied by a repertory of 270 virtual species, the work highlights the fragility of this digital world, echoing the vulnerability of natural ecosystems in the face of environmental disasters. Laurent Lévesque created two works presented in the gallery's physical space. **Le conservatoire: Bouquet pour Maxime** (2017 - 2023) is a print that displays a floral assemblage of plants that were collected from video games. **Self 1** (2023) is a mirror on which a grey and white checkerboard pattern is engraved, referring to the “digital void,” which is usually associated with Photoshop software. The work notably explores the digital world’s impact on our self-perception and identity.

### **Sabrina Ratté**

With *Floralia*, the internationally renowned Montreal-based artist Sabrina Ratté is continuing her exploration of the “materiality” of the digital through the creation of a virtual sublime that calls our relationship to reality into question. Drawing inspiration from Donna Haraway, Greg Egan, Ursula Le Guin and Bruno Latour, the work evokes an ecosystem in which technology and nature intertwine, blurring the boundaries between the past, present, and future. **Lieux de mémoire** (2023) is an installation made up of projections and small screens that brings together sketches and video sequences from the production of the virtual reality work *Floralia*, thus tracing a common thread between the virtual and real spaces.

### **Credits**

The virtual reality exhibition was produced by Molior with support from the Canada Council for the Arts. The exhibition tour is made possible thanks to funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.

### **ABOUT MOLIOR**

Molior is an organization specialized in the production of exhibitions and artistic projects that make use of technology as a means of creation, expression and action.

Since its foundation in 2001, Molior has presented many innovative projects in Canada as well as on the international scene with numerous presentation partners: in China, Brazil, Peru, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Switzerland, and France, thus presenting the work of over 170 Quebec and international artists and curators.

For further information visit: <https://molior.ca/>

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