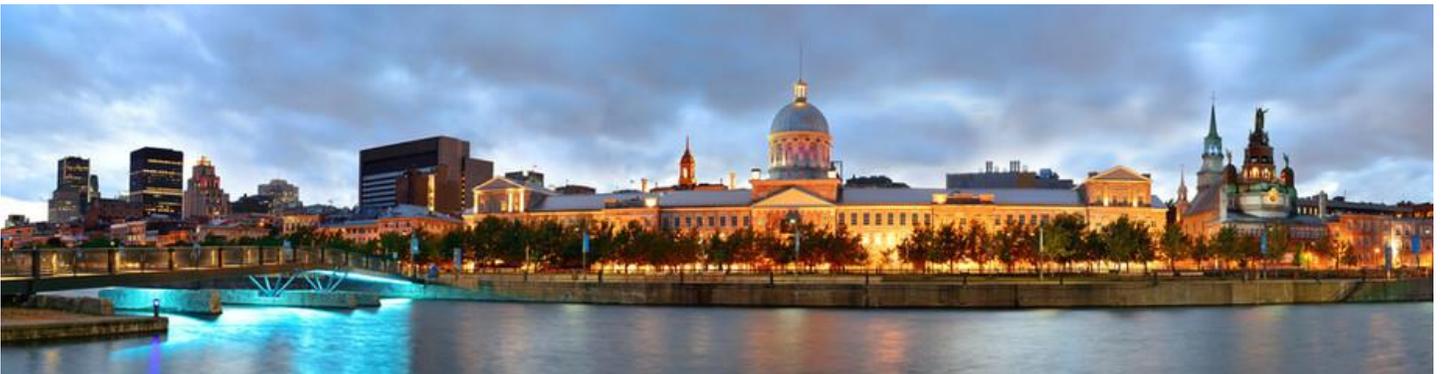




# International Police Association Region 7 - Montréal Walking Tour of Old Montreal



## Introduction

IPA Region 7 welcomes you to Montreal, we have created this guide in MP3 audio format to help guide you in your visit to Old Montreal. We have compiled and selected this information and created this 2-hour walking tour, which does not include stops or visits. You can download it from our website at [ipamontreal.com](http://ipamontreal.com) or simply print these pages also available on our website.

If you are coming from outside of Old Montreal, take the metro to the Place d'Armes station, which is located in the Palais des Congrès, head towards the St-Urbain Street exit and turn right, walk 2 blocks up the small hill towards Old Montreal. You will find yourself in a central outdoor square called Place d'Armes. You can also arrive in the Old Montreal by the Champ-de-Mars Metro station and start your visit at point 6.



## 1 - Place d'Armes

The architecture of the buildings surrounding this square is representative of the growth of Montreal: the 17th century Sulpician residence, the 19th-century Bank of Montreal and Notre-Dame Basilica and the 20th-century Art Deco Alfred building.

The centerpiece of the square is a monument dedicated to the city's founder, Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve (1612-1676). The five statues mark the spot where the colonists defeated the Iroquois warriors in bloody hand-to-hand combat, with Sieur de Maisonneuve himself engaged in combat with the Iroquois chief.

De Maisonneuve won and lived here for another 23 years. The inscription on the monument reads ( translated into English): t you are the buckwheat seed that will grow, multiply and spread throughout the land.

The sculptures at the base of the monument depict other important citizens of early Montreal: Charles Lemoyne, a farmer; Jeanne Mance, a woman who founded the city's first hospital; Raphael-Lambert Closse, a soldier and the mayor of Ville-Marie; and an unnamed Iroquois brave. Closse is shown with his dog, Pilote, whose bark had already warned the early settlers of an impending Iroquois attack.

During the Great Depression, Mayor Camilien Houde commissioned public work projects in Montreal, including more than 20 vespasiennes: public toilets that the residents had built. One of these toilets was completed under Place d'Armes in 1934 and designed in the Art Deco style at a cost of \$51,2550. The entire underground structure was 270 square meters. Two granite entrances let in natural light. The bathrooms were built with glass block windows, relatively rare in the 1930s. By 1947, they had become dilapidated and dirty and were closed in 1980 for reasons of morality and cleanliness.

## 2 - Basilique Notre-Dame & Vieux Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice



Start by facing the basilica, on the right is the oldest building in town, surrounded by equally old stone walls. You almost feel as if you have traveled back in time. This seminary was built by Sulpician priests who arrived in Ville-Marie in 1657, 15 years after the colony was founded by the Sulpicians, who were part of an order founded in Paris in 1641. As missionaries and educators, they trained some of the clergy, a role they still perform today, as well as the parish ministry and other pastoral functions. The seminary is not open to the public.

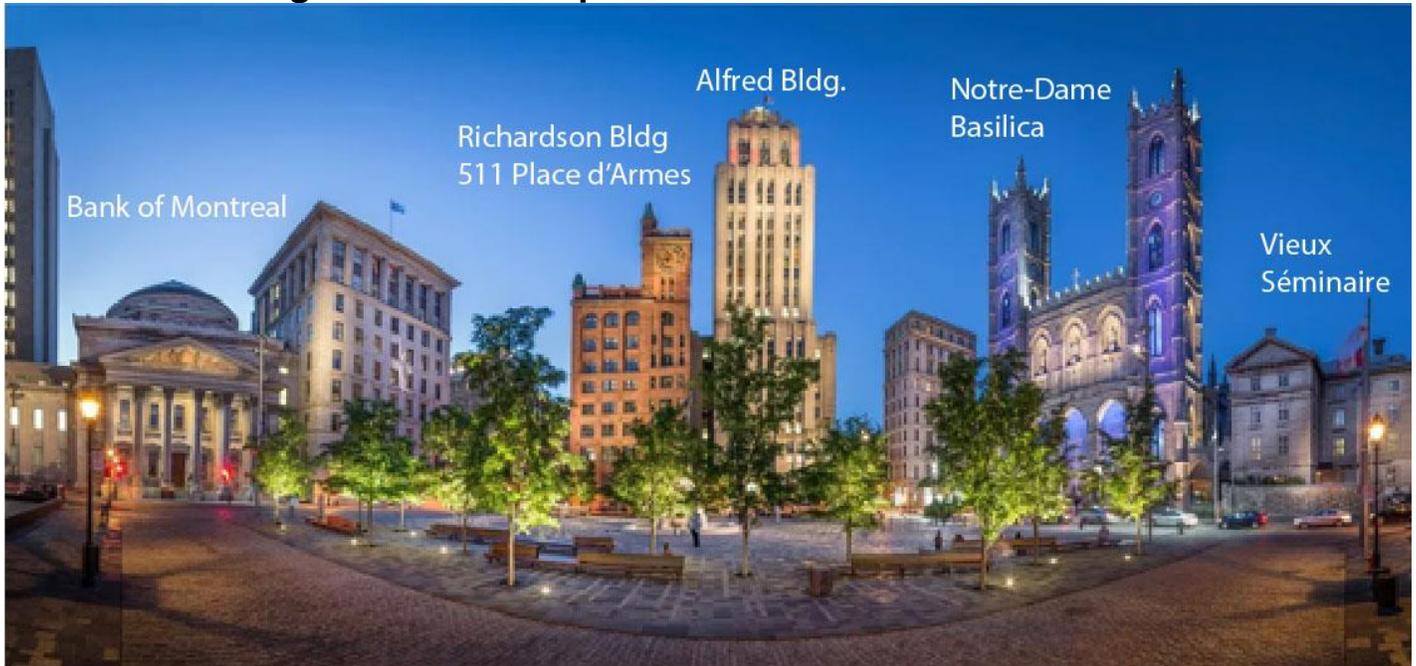
The basilica, a jewel of Quebec's religious heritage, was built by the Sulpicians from 1824 to 1829, to serve as a parish church. This brilliantly realized church was designed by James O'Donnell, an Irish Protestant living in New York. Transformed by his experience, he converted to Roman Catholicism and is the only person buried here. The main altar is made of a hand-carved basswood tree. Behind it is the Sacred Heart Chapel (1982), a favorite place for weddings (Quebec Singer Celine Dion married René Angélil here in 1994).

The chapel's altar, composed of 32 bronze panels by Montreal artist Charles Daudelin, represents birth, life and death. Some 4,000 people can attend mass at a time, and the bell, one of the largest in North America, weighs 12 tons.

There is a small museum next to the chapel. Come back at night for a romantic view of the city, when more than two dozen buildings in the area, including this one, are illuminated. During the Christmas season, three white angels hang from the entrance with ethereal blue lighting.

A must-see attraction within the Basilica is called Aura, a unique immersive experience in the heart of the Basilica, designed by the renowned Moment Factory team.

### 3 - Other buildings around the square



The Bank of Montreal, New York Life and the Alfred Buildings

Across the square in front of Notre-Dame Basilica, at 119 Saint-Jacques, is the Bank of Montreal, with its dome and colonnades. It is the oldest bank building in Montreal, dating from 1847. From 1901 to 1905, American architect Stanford White expanded the original building, and in this expanded space he created a vast hall with green marble columns topped with gold capitals. In addition to being lavishly appointed inside and out, the bank also houses a small, original banking museum, which illustrates early operations. It is located just off the main lobby on the left. The public is welcome to stop by and take a look, and admission is free.

When you exit the bank, look to your left, the Richardson Romanesque red stone building, with a stunning wrought iron door and clock tower, is located at 511 Place d'Armes. It is also known as the Bank of Quebec building. At eight stories, it became Montreal's first skyscraper in 1888, and was equipped with a technological marvel - an elevator. The clock on the façade dates from 1701, and its gears are made almost entirely of wood. Next door, on the right, is the Alfred Building. If this building looks familiar, there's a reason: built in 1931, it bears a clear resemblance to the Empire State Building in New York, also completed that year. The original tenant of the building was Alfred and Co. Ltd, a New York-based financial firm with other offices in New York, London, and Paris.

#### 4 - Vieux Palais de Justice (Old Courthouse)



Facing the basilica, turn left onto Notre Dame Street until you reach the Old Courthouse. The main part of this structure was built in 1856. The third floor and dome were added in 1891, and the difference between the original structure and the addition can be easily discerned by looking closely. A second municipal courthouse, designed by Ernest-Cormier, was built in 1925 and stands across the street with a long colonnade. Since 1971, all legal matters are handled in a third courthouse, the glass building located one block away at 1 Notre-Dame Street East. The statue next to the old courthouse, called Hommage to Marguerite Bourgeoys, depicts a teacher and a nun and is the work of sculptor Jules LaSalle.

#### 5 - Place Vauquelin



This small public square, located just past the courthouse, with its fountain and view of the Champ-de-Mars Park, was created in 1858. The statue is of Jean Vauquelin (1728-1772), commander of the French fleet in New France. Vauquelin looks across Notre-Dame Street at his counterpart, the English admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805). Both statues are symbols of the French and British duality of Montreal. At the corner of the street is a small but very useful tourist information office.

#### 6 - Hôtel de Ville (City Hall)



Built between 1872 and 1878 in the flourishing style of the French Second Empire, the building is particularly enhanced when lit at night. In 1922, it narrowly survived a disastrous fire. Only the exterior walls remained, and after extensive reconstruction and the addition of a floor, it reopened in 1926. Take a minute to look inside at the generous use of French marble, the Art Deco lamps and the bronze and glass chandelier. The sculptures at the entrance are "The Woman with the Bucket" and "The Sower", both by Quebec sculptor Alfred Laliberté. As you exit the City Hall, across Notre Dame Street, you will see a small terraced park with neat rows of trees. The statue inside the park pays tribute to Montreal's controversial mayor, Jean Drapeau (1916-1999).

## 7- Château Ramezay



Across the street from City Hall, just to the left, was the residence of the city's French governors for four decades, beginning with Claude de Ramezay, before being taken over and used for the same purpose by the British. In 1775, an army of American rebels invaded and held Montreal, using the house as their headquarters. Benjamin Franklin was sent to try to persuade the Montrealers to join the American revolt against British rule, and he stayed in this castle. He was unsuccessful in convincing Quebec's leaders to join the radical cause. Today, the house displays furniture, oil paintings, costumes and other objects related to the economic and social activities of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. Exit the castle and turn left, east, along Rue Notre-Dame. In the distance, you will see the Molson beer factory. At Bonsecours Street, turn right. At the bottom of the street, on the left, is a house with a low brown roof and an attached stone building at the corner. This is the Maison Calvet.

## 8 Maison Pierre du Calvet (Maison Calvet)



Built in the 18th century and lavishly restored between 1964 and 1966, this house was inhabited by a wealthy family in its early years. Pierre du Calvet, believed to be the original owner, was a French Huguenot who supported the American Revolution. He met Benjamin Franklin there in 1775 and was imprisoned from 1780 to 1783 for providing money to the Americans. With its distinctive pitched roof designed to discourage snow accumulation and raised end walls that serve as firewalls, the building is constructed of Montreal gray stone. It is now a restaurant and hostelry with an entrance at number 405 (unfortunately, it is now permanently closed).

## 9 - Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours



Across the street from Maison Calvet is the Church of the Sailors, as many sailors used to make a pilgrimage here to give thanks for being saved at sea. This chapel was founded by Marguerite Bourgeoys, a nun and teacher who was canonized in 1982. Excavations have uncovered the foundations of her 1675 original church, although the building has been much altered, and the present facade was built in the late 18th century. A museum tells the story of Bourgeoys' life and integrates the archaeological site. Climb the tower for a view of the harbor and the old city. Head west on St. Paul Street or left out of the chapel. Just past the sailors' church is an imposing building with a colonnaded façade and silver dome, the Marché Bonsecours.

## 10- Marché Bonsecours (Marché Bonsecours)



Completed in 1847, the building served first as the Parliament of the United Province of Canada, then as City Hall, Central Market, Music Hall, and finally as the headquarters of the City's Housing and Planning Department. It was restored in 1992 for the city's 350th anniversary celebrations to host temporary exhibitions and musical performances. It is still used for exhibitions, but is more of a shopping mall, with an eclectic selection of local art stores, clothing boutiques and sidewalk cafés. When the Bonsecours Market was built, the dome was visible from all over the city and served as a landmark for sailors arriving in the port. Today, it is lit up at night.

Continue down St. Paul Street.

## 11 - Hôtel Rasco



An Italian, Francisco Rasco, came to Canada to manage a hotel for the Molson family (a famous beer brewer) and then became successful with his own hotel there. The Rasco, which had 150 rooms, was the Ritz-Carlton of its day. It hosted Charles Dickens and his wife in 1842, when the author was staging his plays in a theater across the street. The hotel lives on in legend, if not in fact, as it is devoid of most of its original architectural details and no longer welcomes guests. Between 1960 and 1981, the space sat empty, but the city took it over and restored it in 1982. It has housed a succession of restaurants on the first floor. The current occupant is L'Autre Version restaurant, whose interior courtyard and outdoor dining space are hidden gems ([www.restoversion.com](http://www.restoversion.com)).

Continue west on rue Saint Paul, turning right when you reach Place Jacques-Cartier.

## 12 - Place Jacques-Cartier



Opened as a market in 1804, this square is the most attractive in Old Montreal, although it is obviously touristy. The square's cobblestone cross streets, gentle slope, and old buildings set the mood, while the outdoor cafes, street entertainers, roving artists, and assorted vendors invite you to linger in the warm weather. The presence of Ben & Jerry's ice cream shop doesn't hurt either. Horse-drawn carriages used to leave from the lower and upper ends of the square to circle Old Montreal, they have now been banned since 2019.

Walk slowly uphill, observing the old buildings that frame the square (plaques describe some of them in French and English). All these houses were well suited to the rigors of life in the young, raw colony. Their steeply pitched roofs stole the heavy winter snows, rather than collapsing under the burden, and the small double-sash windows let in light while keeping out the winter breeze. When closed, the windows were almost as effective as the heavy stone walls in deflecting hostile arrows or the antics of trappers fresh from nearby taverns. At the north end of the square is a monument to Horatio Nelson, hero of Trafalgar, erected in 1809. This monument preceded the much larger London version by several years. After years of vandalism, presumably by Quebec separatists, the statue had to be temporarily removed for restoration. The original Nelson is now back in place atop the column.

From Place Jacques Cartier, you will find a small street that, a long time ago, more than 210 years ago, was an intimate passage that we know so well today, Saint-Amable Street, then called Viger Lane. Saint-Amable Street is a charming cobblestone pathway barely 5 meters wide, lit by a handful of turn-of-the-century street lamps. At the time, Montrealers affectionately referred to it as "l'allée des artistes", as it was the gathering point for painters and artisans, who have now settled in the lower part of Place Jacques-Cartier.



Most of the old buildings in and around the sloped plaza house restaurants and cafes. For a drink or snack in the warmer months, try to find a spot at Nelson Garden near the bottom of the hill. It's extremely popular with tourists, and for good reason. The tiered backyard often hosts jazz concerts, while the tables on the patio overlook the activity in the square.

Return to St. Paul Street and continue west. Take time to window shop in the many art galleries that have sprung up alongside the street's noisy souvenir stores. If time permits, have a drink in one of the bars along the way. The street numbers will decrease as you approach St-Laurent Boulevard, the north-south artery that divides Montreal into east and west. The numbers will start to increase again as you move towards St. Paul Street West.

#### **14 - Rue Cours Le Royer**



The conversion of old buildings was a way to put the architectural heritage of the neighborhood at the service of housing. One of the pioneering projects, Cours Le Royer, was carried out from 1976 to 1982 and was a great success. It involved the redevelopment of five former storage warehouses to create over 200 apartments. The conversions of Cours St. Pierre, the C.P.R. telegraph building, and the Lyman building radically changed the neighborhood's housing stock. Over the next few decades, many other buildings were revitalized, and new ones were built. The Faubourg Québec area to the east of Old Montreal and the Faubourg des Récollets area to the west offered development potential that the historic district could not. As a result, the area's population has grown. In 2016, nearly 3,500 people lived in Old Montreal (7,000 if you include these two neighborhoods to its east and west). The Old Montreal Residents Association was created in 1993 to protect the quality of life in the neighborhood.

## 15 - Théâtre Centaur



Montreal's main English-language theater is a former stock exchange building. The Beaux-Arts architecture is interesting in that the two entrances are on either side of the façade, rather than in the center. American architect George Post, also responsible for the design of the New York Stock Exchange, designed this building, erected in 1903. It served its original purpose until 1965, when it was refurbished as a theater with two stages. Return via St-François-Xavier Street to St-Paul Street.

## 16 - Pointe-à-Callière et la Vieille Douane



The Old Customs House was erected from 1836 to 1838, and was doubled in size when an extension on the south side was added in 1882; walk around the other side of the building to see how different the addition is. This end of the building faces Place Royale, the first public square in the 17th century settlement of Ville-Marie. This is where Europeans and Amerindians came to trade. Continue on St. Paul Street to St. Francis Xavier Street.

Pointe-à-Callière, is a first-rate museum, filled with artifacts unearthed during more than a decade of excavations at the site where the settlement of Ville-Marie was founded in 1642. An underground connection also incorporates the old customs house you just passed. A fort stood here in 1645. Thirty years later, a castle was built on the site for Louis-Hector de Callière, the governor of New France, for whom the museum and the triangular square on which it stands are named. At the time, the Saint-Pierre River separated this piece of land from the mainland. It was transformed into a canal in the

19th century and then filled in. The museum store is located in the Maison du Marin building at 165 Place d'Youville.

### **17 - Obélisque**



Heading west from Pointe-à-Callière, near St-François-Xavier Street, stands an obelisk commemorating the founding of Ville-Marie on May 18, 1642, the obelisk was erected on this site in 1893 by the Société historique de Montréal. It bears the names of the city's first pioneers, including French officer Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, who landed in Montreal in 1642, and his compatriot Jeanne Mance, who founded North America's first hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal. Continuing west from the obelisk for two blocks to 296-316 Place d'Youville, you will find the Youville Stables on the left.

### **18 - Écuries d'Youville (Youville Stables)**



Despite its name, the rooms in this gated complex, built in 1825 on land owned by the Grey Nuns, were used primarily as warehouses, rather than stables (the current stables next door were wooden and long gone). Like much of the waterfront area, the U-shaped Youville building was dilapidated and forgotten until the 1960s, when a group of enterprising businessmen purchased and renovated it. Today, the compound contains offices and a steakhouse, Gibby's, 298 Place d'Youville ( tel 514/282-1837), which is an institution, though not as hip as Moishes among locals. If the doors are open, walk through the passage to the restaurant door to see the courtyard. Continue another block west to the front door of the brick building on your right, 335 Place d'Youville and the Montreal History Center.

### **19 - Centre d'Histoire de Montréal (Centre d'Histoire de Montréal)**



Built in 1903 as Montreal's central fire station, this building now houses exhibits on life in Montreal, past and present. Visitors learn about Native American traditions, early exploration, and the evolution of industry, architecture and professions in the city from 1535 to the present. Walk down St. Peter Street toward the water. In the middle of the block, on the right at number 138, is the former Grey Nuns Hospital.

## 20 - Hôpital des Sœurs grises



The hospital was founded in 1693 by the Charon brothers to serve the city's poor and homeless. Bankrupt in 1747, it was taken over by Marguerite d'Youville, founder in 1737 of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, commonly known as the Grey Nuns. The building was enlarged several times, but in 1871, the nuns moved out and some parts were demolished to extend St-Pierre Street and make way for commercial buildings. A century later, the Grey Nuns returned to live in their original house. From the sidewalk, visitors can see a cool contemporary sculpture of bronze bands with inscriptions covering the walls of the remaining chapel. The text of the sculpture comes from a letter signed by Louis XIV in 1694, incorporating the hospital. There are three exhibition rooms open to the public, by appointment only (tel. 514/842-9411). Continue down St-Pierre Street and cross the main street, de la Commune Street, and turn left for 1.6 kilometers along the Port of Montreal and all its attractions. If you have enough time, instead of turning left on de la Commune, turn right to McGill and head north, right to see stops 23 to 25. You can then finish your visit by walking back to the Old Port (site 22).

## 21 - Écluses du Vieux-Port - Canal de Lachine



A link between the city and nature, the Lachine Canal is located in the southwest section of Montreal. Its 13.5 kilometer urban route, between the Old Port and Lake Saint-Louis, is a waterway punctuated by five locks. Along its banks, a linear, green urban park is lined with remnants of the canal's industrial heyday. Throughout the year, a varied program of activities makes this historic site a place to discover with family and friends. The one-hour walk can take you to the Atwater Farmers' Market in Montreal. From there, you can walk several blocks up Atwater Street and take the Lionel Groulx Metro back to Old Montreal.



## 22 - Vieux-Port (Old Port)



Montreal's historic commercial wharves have been renamed into a waterfront park that, in good weather, is frequented by cyclists, in-line skaters, joggers, walkers and couples. Across the water is the 158-unit Habitat 67 modular housing project, built by renowned architect Moshe Safdie for the 1967 World's Fair, which Montreal called Expo 67. Safdie's vision was to show what affordable community housing could be. Today, it is an upscale apartment complex that is not open to the public. River surfers have been known to "hit the waves" in a little-known spot just behind this building.

Walk to your right. The triangular building you see is the entrance to the Locks Garden, a canal-side path where the first locks of the St. Lawrence River are located. From here, you have several options: if the weather is nice, consider entering the Garden of the Locks to walk along the path that runs along the Lachine Canal. In less than an hour, you'll arrive at Montreal's colorful Atwater Market, which is located on Cours le Royer, 400 meters down the trail. If you walk the other way, you will cross the most animated part of the riverfront park and return to Place Jacques-Cartier.

To get to the metro, walk north along McGill Street to the Square-Victoria metro station, whose staircase is marked by an authentic Art Nouveau portal designed by Hector Guimard for the Paris metro.

Or return to the side streets parallel to St. Paul Street, where you'll find more stores and one of the highest concentrations of art galleries in Canada.

## 23- Le Centre de commerce mondial



Opened in 1992 and occupying a large block in Old Montreal, the World Trade Centre Montreal is made up of historic buildings that have been completely renovated and then linked together by a spectacular glass walkway where it is pleasant to stroll in any season.

A true indoor village, this chic and versatile complex features a large shopping mall with more than 20 boutiques, restaurants, cafés, and service points. A section of the Berlin Wall is even on display. You entered the Centre from McGill Street, now exit through the back of the building onto ST-Pierre Street and turn left to Jean-Paul Riopelle Park and its fountain called La Joute.

## 24- La Joute – Riopelle

Jean-Paul Riopelle was a Canadian Abstract Expressionist and sculptor best known for **his non-representational landscape paintings**. Riopelle squeezed paint straight from the tube and applied it liberally with a palette knife to craft his mosaic-like works. He had one of the longest and most important international careers of the sixteen signatories of the *Refus Global*, the 1948 manifesto



His set of bronze sculptures includes a central fountain surrounded by several free-standing abstract animal and human figures inside and outside the fountain basin. The fountain operates in a kinetic sequence that lasts approximately 32 minutes. It begins a few minutes before the half hour, every hour from 7 to 11 p.m. during the summer. The sequence begins when the fountain jet expands to form a dome above the sculptures. Then, at the back end of the park, the grates on the ground begin to fog up. The 12 grates fog up one after the other in sequence, taking about 90 seconds to go from one to the other until they reach the fountain. After about 18 minutes, the machines inside the fountain begin to produce a particularly dense cloud. The fountain jet then turns into a drip. At the appointed time, nozzles arranged in a ring around the central sculpture in the basin shoot jets of natural gas into the water; these are ignited by flame sources installed in the canopies of some of the sculptures, producing a spectacular ring of flames. The flame lasts about seven minutes. The fountain itself stops. The misting

stops, and then the fire is "extinguished" by the fountain which has restarted. The misting sequence, without the fire in the fountain, occurs every hour throughout the day.

## 25- Montreal Convention Centre - Lipstick Forest



One of the most remarkable visual aspects of the Palais des congrès de Montréal is its striking multicolored glass façade, which includes 332 colored glass panels and 58 clear glass panels. During the day, these panels form a magnificent kaleidoscope, while at night, they look like something out of a blue impressionist painting. The Palais des Congrès is part of the new wave of Montreal's world-renowned architectural symbols, like the Olympic Stadium and the Biosphere on Île Sainte-Hélène. It has been featured in many prestigious magazines and travel guides:

Located inside the Palais des Congrès and created by Quebec landscape architect Claude Cormier, the Lipstick Forest consists of 52 pink trees made of concrete located inside the Palais near the Place Riopelle Hall. This surreal installation is a nod to nature living in harmony with the city center.