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L'avenir (looking forward) examines how contemporary artists give form to the question of “what is to come?” Shifting between assessment and anticipation, clearly grounded in the “now,” and informed by echoes of the past, the exhibition looks towards the future and strives to unveil a range of possibilities and rekindle some that may have been prematurely extinguished. Through a broad range of works and media, including film and video, sculpture, photography, painting, installation, performance and new media, L'avenir (looking forward) promises viewers powerful experiences: moments for contemplation, invitations to wonderment and occasions for exchange. Some works issue a call to action while others grant us the opportunity to glimpse the extent of our own power, to imagine new worlds and new ways of being in the world.

Exhibition highlights include the North American premiere of Shirin Neshat's latest film and a recent installation by Thomas Hirschhorn. New projects by Krzysztof Wodiczko, who received the Hiroshima Prize in 1998 for his contribution as an artist to world peace, and Isabelle Hayeur, a digital image artist recognized for her large-sized photographic montages, videos and site-specific installations, are being co-produced for BNLMTL 2014 with Quartier des Spectacles Partnership. Environmental topics such as global warming, the Arctic, biodiversity and water rights figure prominently in the exhibition and connect the work of a number of artists in BNLMTL 2014, including Ursula Biemann and Klara Hobza. BNLMTL 2014 will also provide the opportunity to discover the works of Montréal artists, such as the Arctic Perspective Initiative collective, the Second Life sci-fi aboriginal narratives of Skawennati, and the playful economic speculations of Richard Ibhgy and Marilou Lemmens.

“Biennales are gateways to international contemporary art networks. However, in order to create real opportunities for artists, they have to develop a sophisticated, strategic approach. This involves thoughtful curatorship, editorial input, production support, lively exchanges with other artists and the attention of curators and critics,” says Fortin. “As Executive and Artistic Director of BNLMTL 2014, I am very proud of the exhibition that Gregory, Peggy, Lesley and Mark have put together. It's a truly compelling group of artists. This is an exhibition I'd want to see because it defies expectations, and that means that these curators have done their research and created something truly unique for Montréal.”

“Working from different histories, artistic traditions, cultural contexts and mobility, the artists of BNLMTL 2014 inevitably propose vastly different futures,” says co-curator Gregory Burke. “Many works address geopolitical concerns, insinuate ethical questions and hint at economic alternatives. Others point to the ‘what is to come’ of art, that is, how effective is it and what will it become?”

The participating artists and artist collectives are: Abbas Akhavan (Toronto); Adaptive Actions (Jean-Maxime Dufresne and Jean-François Prost) (Montréal); Edgar Arceneaux (Los Angeles); Arctic Perspective Initiative (Matthew Biederman and Marko Peljhan) (Montréal and Nove Gorica, Slovenia); Nicolas Baier (Montréal); Taysir Batniji (Paris); Amanda Beech (Los Angeles); Ursula Biemann (Zurich); Raymond Boisjoly (Vancouver); Andrea Bowers (Los Angeles); Matthew Buckingham (New York); Mikko Canini (Toronto); Simon Denny (Berlin); Dave Dymant (Toronto); Charles Gaines (Los Angeles); Ryan Gander (London); Goldin+Senneby (Stockholm); Babak Golkar (Vancouver); Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (Paris and Rio de Janeiro); Nicolas Grenier (Montréal and Los Angeles); Isabelle Hayeur (Rawdon, QC); Thomas Hirschhorn (Paris); Klara Hobza (Berlin); Richard Ibhgy and Marilou Lemmens (Montréal and Durham-Sud, QC); Simone Jones and Lance Winn (Toronto and Wilmington, DE); Emmanuelle Léonard (Montréal); Ann Lislegaard (Copenhagen and New York); Basim Magdy (Cairo and Basel, Switzerland); Lynne Marsh (Berlin, London and Montréal); John Massey (Toronto); Jillian Mayer (South Florida); Shirin Neshat (New York); Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen (Stockholm and Montréal); Susan Norrie (Sydney); Melik Ohanian (Paris and New York); Li Ran (Beijing); Kelly Richardson (Whitley Bay, England); Kevin Schmidt (Berlin and Vancouver); Skawennati (Montréal); Steele & Tomczak (Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak) (Toronto); Hito Steyerl (Berlin); Oleg Tcherny (Paris and Venice); Althea Thauberger (Vancouver); David Tomas (Montréal); Suzanne Treister (London); Étienne Tremblay-Tardif (Montréal); Susan Turcot (Whitstable, England and Kamouraska, QC); Anton Vidokle and Pelin Tan (New York, Berlin, Istanbul and Mardin, Turkey); Hajra Waheed (Montréal); Lawrence Weiner (New York and Amsterdam); and Krzysztof Wodiczko (New York and Cambridge, MA).

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## New Vision, New Direction

BNLMTL 2014 marks a radical shift in a bold direction for La Biennale de Montréal. It is the first step in the vigorous repositioning of BNLMTL as a landmark event on the international cultural calendar. BNLMTL 2014 is presented by La Biennale de Montréal and co-produced with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Building on this strategic multi-year, co-production partnership with the Musée d'art contemporain, and engaged in innovative collaborations with over 15 local, national and international institutions, BNLMTL 2014 is an event of unprecedented artistic ambition and scale in Canada. It is expected that its 2016 edition will further confirm BNLMTL's value and position it as North America's foremost international biennale, and by 2018, BNLMTL will play an influential role in the international network of biennales. BNLMTL 2014 is presented by La Biennale de Montréal and co-produced with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

## La Biennale de Montréal

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## Related images

1. Ursula Biemann, still from Deep Weather, 2013, HD video, 8:58 minutes, English, Colour, Stereo, courtesy of the artist
2. Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens, Supply and Demand for Immortality, 2011, vinyl, 15 x 9.5 m, 10th Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, courtesy of the artist
3. Klara Hobza, still from Diving Through Europe, Part: 3 Europort, 2013, video, colour, sound, 2:03 minutes, courtesy of the artist and Soy Capitán., Berlin
4. Babak Golkar, Ground for Standing and Understanding, 2012, installation view at Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, persian carpet, wood, acrylic, lacquer paint, variable dimensions. Fadi Jameel Collection; courtesy of the artist and The Third Line, Dubai, photo: Scott Massey
5. Andrea Bowers, still from #sweetjane, 2014, single-channel HD video and mural installation, 33:48 minutes, colour, sound, courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects
6. Babak Golkar, Ground for Standing and Understanding, 2012, installation view at Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, persian carpet, wood, acrylic, lacquer paint, variable dimensions. Fadi Jameel Collection; courtesy of the artist and The Third Line, Dubai, photo: Scott Massey

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