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Press Release

For immediate release

IN THE SHADOW OF EVANGELINE: ARTIST RESIDENCY ON CONTEMPORARY ACADIAN IDENTITY

MONCTON, September 8 2011 – Galerie d'art Louise et Reuben-Cohen will host a two week residency bringing together three artists to look at Acadie and its history. All of Acadian heritage, the artists are **Maryse Arseneault** and **Jean-Denis Boudreau** of Moncton, and **Stefan St-Laurent**, based in Ottawa. The residency will be open to the public and offer a privileged look into the creative process on Wednesdays September 21 and 28, between 3 PM and 7 PM.

Since 1997 and at the initiative of its director, Luc Charette, Galerie d'art Louise et Reuben-Cohen has supported the production of major works by Acadian artists through the *In the Shadow of Evangeline* residency. Born out of the imagination of W.H. Longfellow, Evangeline is a mythical figure that nonetheless greatly influenced Acadian culture's self-awareness. The *Evangeline* project explores the relationship between contemporary identity and the Acadian cultural and historical image. Through the artistic process, the project aims to revisit history and explore a broader Acadian definition.

As a starting point for her project, **Maryse Arseneault** denounces the favoring of Acadian history and culture over that of the aboriginal peoples of the Maritimes. The artist questions the nationalist agenda that, for the good of the cause, disregarded the presence and cultural contribution of the first occupants of the «Acadian» territory. Arseneault uses the eight-pointed star motif, often used in the making of quilts, that were also used in traditional aboriginal decoration.

During the residency, **Jean-Denis Boudreau** will attempt the fabrication of a distress-signaling machine in Morse code in order to transmit the internationally recognized «SOS». Inspired by the story of Evangeline who, in Longfellow's tale, crosses great distances in search of her beloved, Gabriel, this project plays on the multiplication of long-distance communication devices. Blending ancient aboriginal means of communication with the artist's interest in lo-fi technology, Boudreau will conceive and built a smoke-signal communication device.

In his new series of work *Ne Me Quitte Pas*, **Stefan St-Laurent** explores the cultural and familial bonds that have tied Acadian and Mi'kmaq people on the east coast, a history that is rarely acknowledged or even celebrated today. Moving images of red Mi'kmaq beadwork will be projected over a male form adorning traditional Acadian clothing, appearing like blood running through the body. He will also intervene in the Acadian Museum of the Université de Moncton with video projection on the opening night, and will collaborate with Plains Cree/Wolastoqiyik carver and artist Ned Bear (Ekpahaq First Nation, NB) to produce a sculptural work out of wooden clogs. This series of work aims to show the intense beauty born out of intercultural collaboration and exchange, past and present.

The end of the residency will be marked by public events as part of Culture Days. **Showcasing the work produced during the residency, the exhibition opening will be held on Friday, September 30, at 5 PM.** On Saturday, October 1, at 1 PM, the guest artists will participate in a discussion focused on how Acadian identity relates to their work and to contemporary art. The exhibition *In the Shadow of Evangeline* will be on show September 30 to October 30 2011. Galerie d'art Louise et Reuben-Cohen is located in the Clément-Cormier building on the Université de Moncton campus. ***This project is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.***

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Source, interviews and informations:

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