

TRAM's been making TMR more culturally aware for a decade

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Ten years is a long time for any organization to be around. But in the case of the Table ronde sur l'art de Mont-Royal (TRAM), it's been 10 years of encouraging visual art in all its forms, while contributing to higher aesthetic values in Town of Mount Royal.

TRAM was the brainchild of former town resident Marie-Louise Simon, who was a librarian at the Reginald J. P. Dawson Library. "She wanted to have something cultural in TMR," says Jocelyne Lambert, who served as TRAM's first president. "Her focus was to make TMR a town with some culture."

"She was very focused on the arts and she just loved TMR. She felt there was a lack of culture here. Everything here is still very oriented to sports, sports and more sports. She suggested bringing together artists from the community and having an art association."

According to Lambert, the original idea encompassed not only painting, but also music, theatre and other general arts. While Simon no longer lives in the town, Lambert acknowledges it was she who "planted the seed," thus enabling TRAM to raise the level of cultural awareness, while allowing the organization to grow.

Among arts and culture groups present in municipalities across the Montreal region, TRAM stands out as fairly unique. While a number of towns and cities promote the arts through an organization or venue that is under direct municipal sponsorship, TRAM has the distinction of being independent and supported almost entirely by citizens.



Photo: Peinture réalisée à l'aquarelle par Mme Monique Desjardins

Peinture réalisée à l'aquarelle par Mme Monique Desjardins. Cette magnifique peinture fut récipiendaire du premier prix du jury lors du vernissage annuel de TRAM en 2007. Cette peinture fut également utilisée comme emblème pour le salon TRAM 2008.

When TRAM started out, it had fewer than a dozen members, but today the figure stands at around 75. "We had a significant number of new members last year," says Lori Segall Burnett, the group's current president, adding that new membership is bringing in an even wider variety of artistic media.

"I would say it's very significant that an organization that got started with just a few people still has many of its original members," she says. "We have served the community very well. We've held to our original mission, which was to promote

art and a dynamic artistic life in TMR. We've developed a lot, we've grown a lot. People have come and gone, but I think we've really always held to our original purpose."

Over the past decade, TRAM has held countless exhibitions of its members' work in diverse venues. The group is very well known for the art salon it stages each fall at town hall, the workshops it sponsors at the recreation centre, and its valuable contributions to the town's "culture days" program.

The Reginald J. P. Dawson Library is helping mark TRAM's 10th year by sponsoring two group exhibitions. As part of the first, from April 6 to 29, the works of six TRAM photographers are on display at the library. In the second show, from May 28 to June 23, the works of more than a dozen painters will be exhibited.

Résumé:

Une décennie c'est long dans la vie d'un organisme communautaire. Mais dans le cas de la Table ronde sur l'art de Mont-Royal (TRAM), ça représente dix ans d'encouragement envers les arts visuels sous toutes ses formes, tout en contribuant à développer une sensibilité artistique à Ville Mont-Royal.

La TRAM était l'idée originale d'une résidente, Marie-Louise Simon, qui était bibliothécaire à l'époque à la bibliothèque Reginald J. P. Dawson. « Elle voulait avoir quelque chose de culturel dans la ville, » dit Jocelyne Lambert, qui fut la première présidente. « Elle voulait se dédier à ce que Ville Mont-Royal devienne une ville possédant de la culture. »

Selon Mme Lambert, l'idée au début prévoyait un organisme englobant non seulement la peinture, mais aussi la musique, le théâtre, et d'autres arts. Malgré le fait que Mme Simon n'est plus résidente de la ville, Mme Lambert reconnaît que c'était elle qui « planta la graine, » permettant ainsi que le niveau de sensibilisation à la culture puisse être élevé, tout en permettant la croissance de l'organisme.