



**Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything**

The Jewish Museum

April 12 – September 8, 2019

An exhibition organized and circulated by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

**Exhibition Checklist**

	<p>KARA BLAKE <i>The Offerings</i>, 2017 Five-channel video installation, black-and-white and color with sound, 35 min., looped</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal Courtesy of the artist</p> <p><i>The Offerings</i> forms an immersive environment in which Cohen's singular voice envelops participants and engages them in an intimate conversation. Sourced from decades of archival material, the images construct a composite portrait of the artist as he muses on a variety of subjects ranging from his personal writing practice to universal themes of love, humility, and spirituality.</p>
	<p>CANDICE BREITZ <i>I'm Your Man (A Portrait of Leonard Cohen)</i>, 2017 Shot at Phi Centre, Montreal, May – June 2017 Nineteen-channel video installation, color with sound, 40 min., 43 sec., looped Featured on eighteen monitors and one single-screen projection</p> <p>Commissioned and produced by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, with the support of the Goethe-Institut Montréal Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal</p> <p><i>I'm Your Man (A Portrait of Leonard Cohen)</i> brings together a community of ardent Cohen fans to pay tribute to the late legend. Each of the 18 participants was offered the opportunity to perform and record his own version of Cohen's comeback album <i>I'm Your Man</i> (1988) in a professional recording studio. At Breitz's invitation, the album's backing vocals were reinterpreted by the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir, an all-male choir representing the congregation in Montreal, Canada, that Cohen belonged to all his life.</p>

JANET CARDIFF & GEORGE BURES MILLER

*The Poetry Machine*, 2017

Interactive audio/mixed-media installation including organ, speakers, carpet, computer, and electronics

All poetry written and performed by Leonard Cohen from *Book of Longing*, published in 2006 by McClelland and Stewart

Dedicated to Leonard Cohen, 1934–2016

Special thanks to Robert Kory and the Leonard Cohen Family Trust



Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy of the artists; Luring Augustine, New York; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; and Koyanagi Gallery, Tokyo

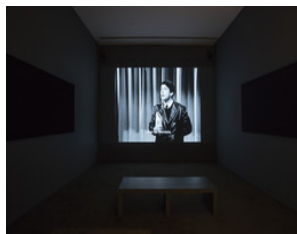
A vintage Wurlitzer organ from the 1950s stands in the middle of the gallery. Sitting on top of it and around the room are various old speakers and a gramophone horn. When a key is pressed on the organ, you hear Leonard Cohen's beautiful, gravelly voice reading a poem from *Book of Longing*. Each key contains a different poem from the book and can be played one at a time or all at once. If you press one key and then another, the action creates different linkages between Cohen's verses, almost like creating new poems from his words. Uncanny juxtapositions can take place. If you press many at once, a wonderful cacophony of Cohen's voice surrounds you.

CHRISTOPHE CHASSOL

*Cuba in Cohen*, 2017

Single-screen video installation, black-and-white with sound, 15 min., 19 sec., looped, with annotated musical scores

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy of the artist



In this video, Chassol remixes, sets to melody, and harmonizes an excerpt of Cohen reciting his 1964 poem "The Only Tourist in Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward," using a clip from the National Film Board of Canada's 1965 documentary film *Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Mr. Leonard Cohen*. During his residency at Xavier Veilhan's "Studio Venezia" at the French pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale, Chassol scored the poem and invited several singers to reinterpret this newly melodized work. The artist created what he calls an "ultrascore" by applying speech-harmonizing techniques to the excerpt of Cohen's poetry reading. Isolating and synchronizing each syllable spoken by the poet, Chassol forms melodic arrangements, which are then harmonized with bass lines and drumbeats.

DAILY TOUS LES JOURS

*I Heard There Was a Secret Chord*, after the 2017 work of the same title, 2018

Participatory audio installation, including an octagonal wooden structure, microphones, speakers, transducers, and digital display

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the National Film Board of Canada, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts

Courtesy of Daily tous les jours



*Heard There Was a Secret Chord* is a participatory humming experience that reveals an invisible vibration uniting people around the world currently listening to Cohen's *Hallelujah*. The work is an exploration of the metaphysical connection between people on a common wavelength. At the Jewish Museum, real-time online listener data is transformed into a virtual choir of humming voices. The number of voices played back in the gallery corresponds to the current online listener count, which is visible on the hanging numerical display. Participants in the exhibition are free to sit or lie down on the octagonal structure, and by humming along with the choir into the microphones, low-frequency vibrations are generated, closing the circuit of collective resonance with their bodies. The project comprises this participatory audio installation and a website. The website, [asecretchord.com](http://asecretchord.com), operates as a one-song radio channel allowing people anywhere to tune into the same perpetually fluctuating choir of humming *Hallelujah* voices and to connect to the universal Cohen magic.

LEONARD COHEN

*Self-Portraits, 2003–2016, 2017*

Projection of two hundred and twenty drawings documenting Leonard Cohen's self-portraits

Edited by Alexandre Perreault



Produced by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Courtesy of and © Leonard Cohen Family Trust.

TACITA DEAN

*Ear on a Worm*, 2017


Single-screen film installation, 16-mm film, color with sound, 3 min., 33 sec., looped



Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy of the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York and Paris; and Frith Street Gallery, London

*Ear on a Worm* is a film projected high up on the wall. The title plays on the German expression *Ohrwurm* (earworm), which refers to a song or a catchy piece of music that continually repeats in one's head after it is no longer playing. Earworms can be triggered aurally as well as associatively. The film shows a house finch sitting on a wire for three minutes and twenty-eight seconds before flying off.

	<p><b>KOTA EZAWA</b>  <i>Cohen 21, 2017</i>  Single-screen video installation, digital animation, black-and-white with sound, 2 min., 30 sec., looped</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal</p> <p>In this cinematic work, Kota Ezawa reanimates the opening minutes of the National Film Board of Canada's 1965 documentary film <i>Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Mr. Leonard Cohen</i>. This re-created black-and-white scene portrays Cohen at age 30 on a visit to his hometown of Montreal, where he came "to renew his neurotic affiliations." Ezawa has created a derivative work, painstakingly animated frame by frame and overlaid with semitransparent geometric forms inspired by Hans Richter's 1921 abstract silent film <i>Rhythm 21</i>.</p>
	<p><b>GEORGE FOK</b>  <i>Passing Through, 2017</i>  Multichannel video installation, black-and-white and color with sound, 56 min., 15 sec., looped</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  Courtesy of the artist</p> <p><i>Passing Through</i> celebrates Cohen's singular voice, his music, his charismatic persona, and his inimitable stage presence. Drawing on a vast archive of audiovisual material, Fok pays tribute to Cohen's monumental five-decade-long career as a singer/songwriter and performer. Visitors experience an extraordinary time-travel journey through a collage of collective memories, musical moments, and emotions that have enchanted generations of fans around the world.</p>
	<p><b>ARI FOLMAN</b>  <i>Depression Chamber, 2017</i>  Interactive computer-animated video installation, live camera, Kinect sensor, black-and-white and color with sound, 5 min., 10 sec., including resting platform. Architectural environment: 131,1 x 98.4 x 131.1 in. (333 x 250 x 333 cm)</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, with the support of the Swiss Foundation for Arts and Culture Pro Helvetia and the Consulate General of Israel in Montreal  Courtesy of the artist</p> <p><i>Depression Chamber</i> allows one visitor at a time into a darkened room, where they are to be plunged into an otherworldly experience, a theme that can be traced throughout Cohen's body of work. After the visitor lies down, Cohen's "Famous Blue Raincoat" plays while the song's lyrics are projected on the walls, slowly morphing into letters and icons that symbolize Cohen's multifaceted thematic universe.</p>

	<p><b>JON RAFMAN</b>  <i>Legendary Reality</i>, 2017  Six-seat sculptural theater installation, featuring video projection, color with stereo sound, 15 min., 45 sec., looped</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  Courtesy of the artist, Sprueth Magers, Los Angeles, and Galerie Antoine Ertaskiran, Montréal</p> <p><i>Legendary Reality</i> is a science-fiction essay film that portrays the recollections of a solitary narrator imprisoned in his own mind. Using a nonlinear structure that weaves together dreams and memory, Jon Rafman creates a stream-of-consciousness meditation on art, identity, and time that draws on the work of Leonard Cohen. The film intercuts digitally processed found photos and 3D landscapes sourced from video games to tell the enigmatic voyage of one man's soul.</p>
	<p><b>TARYN SIMON</b>  <i>The New York Times</i>, Friday, November 11, 2016  <i>The New York Times</i> newspaper (dated November 11, 2016) in glass display cabinet, 22 x 22 1/4 x 3/8 in.; 22 3/4 x 12 3/4 x 24 5/8 in. (display cabinet)</p> <p>Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  Courtesy of the artist</p> <p>Leonard Cohen died on Monday, November 7, 2016, one day before Donald Trump was elected the forty-fifth president of the United States. <i>The New York Times</i> published his obituary on the front page of the newspaper on Friday, November 11, 2016, below a photograph and article describing the first face-to-face meeting between Barack Obama and then-president-elect Trump. Other front-page items include "The Market Rises With Trump," "Russia and Trump's Allies," "Climate Policy Faces Reversal By New Leader," and "The Women Who Helped Trump to Victory . . . . and Those With Dreams That Were Crushed." Visible on the paper's underside is a full-page advertisement for Bernie Sanders's book <i>Our Revolution</i>.</p>

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Listening to Leonard*, 2017

Multimedia audio environment with sound recordings of Leonard Cohen compositions  
Light design by Jocelyn Labonté

Commissioned and produced by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Master recordings courtesy the artists

In celebration of Leonard Cohen as a songwriter and recording artist and in recognition of his vast catalogue of music produced over the past half-century, the exhibition includes *Listening to Leonard*, a room where visitors can hear eighteen recorded covers of Cohen songs produced, arranged, and performed by international musicians and vocalists. In listening order: Feist, "Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye"; Half Moon Run, "Suzanne"; Aurora, "The Partisan"; Douglas Dare, "Dance Me to the End of Love"; Mélanie De Biasio, "There for You"; Brad Barr, "Tower of Song"; Leif Vollebakk, "Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye"; Dear Criminals, "Anthem"; Ariane Moffatt with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, "Famous Blue Raincoat"; Moby, "Suzanne"; Julia Holter, "Take This Waltz"; Socalled, "I'm Your Man"; Chilly Gonzales and Jarvis Cocker with Kaiser Quartett, "Paper Thin Hotel"; The National with Sufjan Stevens, Ragnar Kjartansson, and Richard Reed Parry, "Memories"; Basia Bulat, "Dance Me to the End of Love"; Little Scream, "I Can't Forget"; Li'l Andy and Joe Grass, "Democracy"; and Lou Doillon, "Famous Blue Raincoat."

