



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS

Statement by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

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### MONTREAL'S MUSEUMS

**Hon. Diane Bellemare:** Honourable senators, I want to take the opportunity of our imminent break for summer 2015 and invite you all to Montreal so that you can have the chance to visit our museums and to at least see these must-see exhibitions.

[Translation]

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is currently hosting an exhibition called "Metamorphoses: In Rodin's Studio" until October 18, 2015. The exhibition is produced and circulated by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in collaboration with the Musée Rodin, in Paris, and features 300 of Rodin's works, including his greatest masterpieces. This is a first for Canada and the first time a number of Rodin's sculptures are being presented in North America.

I also invite you to visit the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, which is steps away from the Museum of Fine Arts. There you can admire the work of an internationally renowned Canadian artist that some describe as the Rodin of the 21st century. He is Quebec sculptor David Altmejd.

One of his bronze sculptures stands on permanent display in front of the Bourgie Pavilion at the Museum of Fine Arts. It is a 14-foot angel returning injured from who knows where — perhaps from some battle — whose posture reflects the fragility of humankind. That is my interpretation of this work, which has moved many, from what I have seen.

The Musée d'art contemporain has put on a retrospective of the works of this young artist who turns 41 on July 2. The retrospective was first presented at the Musée d'art moderne de Paris, last October, and at Mudam, in Luxembourg. The Montreal exhibition also presents previously unshown works.

Who is David Altmejd? He is a modern Quebecer, rather shy, who takes on the grandeur of his active imagination. He was born in Montreal to a Jewish Polish immigrant father, Victor Altmejd, who chose francophone Montreal in 1969, and a mother who couldn't be more of a Quebecer, Danièle Laberge, whose Quebec ancestors go back to the 17th century. David Altmejd studied art at UQAM and completed his master's degree at Columbia University in New York. He currently lives and works in New York City. He still speaks English with a slight Quebec accent.

He represented Canada at the 52nd Venice Biennial in 2007. He was the youngest Canadian artist invited to exhibit at the pavilion. He won the prestigious Sobey Award in 2009. He participated in the 8th International Istanbul Biennial in 2003, the Whitney Biennial in New York in 2004, and the Musée d'art contemporain's first Triennial in 2008. His works appear in numerous collections in Canada, the United States, France, Luxembourg, Belgium and elsewhere. In 2015, he was made a Companion of the Ordre des arts et des lettres du Québec.

I want to conclude by saying that David Altmejd is a great artist as well as a modest human being. I have known him for a long time because he is my husband's son and half-brother to my two sons.

I encourage you to go check out his work and take the opportunity to admire the work of another Montreal artist, Jon Rafman, at the same museum.

Thank you, dear colleagues.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

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