

MARIE-ANASTASIE

Earthly Stars

A Peek at the MAJ Collection

In Québec, non-representation was not strictly synonymous with a progressive critique against academic art and the omniscience of Catholicism.

Marie-Anastasia (Laura Tourangeau, 1909–1989), who produced her first abstract works in the 1950s, singlehandedly deconstructed this preconception. The abstract language she developed over nearly forty years became a vehicle, not exclusive to the anticlerical avant-garde, for addressing the most diverse, even the most fantastic, manifestations of existence.

Marie-Anastasia and the founder of the Musée d'art de Joliette (MAJ), Father Wilfrid Corbeil, have many traits in common. Besides having lived in a religious community, in her case the Sisters of Holy Cross, they each enjoyed art trips across Europe, hers leading her to Paris and Brussels between 1966 and 1969. Both taught art while remaining involved in their respective communities of faith. In Montréal, Marie-Anastasia worked at Collège Basile-Moreau in Ville-Saint-Laurent (1954 to 1963), and gave art lessons at her Montréal studio on rue Saint-Denis (1975 to 1985). They also left behind impressive bodies of work. During her first solo exhibition, Marie-Anastasia presented no fewer than fifty pieces.

Father Corbeil and Marie-Anastasia believed in renewing the concept of religious art to focus on representing the essential through simplified forms. For Marie-Anastasia, art primarily consisted of expression through colour. Line became a supporting element in her efforts to render light and achieve chromatic balance.

Unlike Father Corbeil who inaugurated a museum, Marie-Anastasie supported artists by opening a gallery in the Plateau Mont-Royal neighbourhood. It became a true meeting point while also providing her with a studio and a place to live. Although she mostly painted, she was multi-talented and a prolific printmaker, as evidenced in this body of nearly twenty lithographs from between 1966 and 1988, which the MAJ acquired this year. Feminist, sculptor, and publisher, she also designed stained glass—a role almost exclusively held by men—of which few examples remain today.

Many called her *la femme étoile*— the star woman—after a book of the same name she published. The works on view here form an earthly firmament, a melding of her observations and reflections on the natural and mystical phenomena of Heaven and Earth. Presented concurrently with *Corbeil Project*, this exhibition draws comparisons with Father Corbeil’s career, but Marie-Anastasie’s work deserves attention for its own sake. Too often validated and associated with the renowned artists she studied under, who shall remain nameless here, Marie-Anastasie’s work is certainly due for a closer examination. Let us heed the call.

Julie Alary Lavallée, Collections Curator

SOEUR MARIE-ANASTASIE (LAURA TOURANGEAU)

Mont-Laurier (Québec), 1909 - Ville Saint-Laurent (Québec), 1989

1. *L'oeil spatial*, 1984

[The Spatial Eye]

Lithography, 25 x 25 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross
2023.018

2. *Planeur des moissons*, 1978

[Harvest Glider]

Lithography, 12.2 x 20 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross
2023.026

3. *Le jury*, 1981

[The Jury]

Lithography, 60.5 x 44.6 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross
2023.019

4. *Pré-tendu*, 1977

[Pre-tension]

Lithography, 7.1 x 9.2 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross
2023.016

5. *Les bourgeons*, 1974

[The Buds]

Lithography, 30.5 x 19 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.028

6. *Le chant de l'été*, 1966

[Summer's Song]

Lithography, 25 x 25 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.022

Marie-Anastasie's artworks from the 1960s demonstrate how easily she moved between figuration and abstraction. They show her interest in exploring the boundaries of representation via simplified and irregular coloured shapes. Her landscapes, a recurring genre throughout her career, are depicted in a pared-down style, and her interpretations of nature and its seasonal transformations are expressed through the power of colour and its tonalities.

7. *Énergie dirigeante*, 1988

[Guiding Energy]

Ink on paper, 40.5 x 25.4 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.035

8. *Triste prélude*, 1979

[Sad Prelude]

Lithography, 27.7 x 20 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.024

9. *L'orchestre*, 1968

[The Orchestra]

Lithography, 29.8 x 21.7 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.029

10. *Apocalypse*, 1976

Lithography, 24 x 17 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.013

11. *L'enfant des glaces*, 1976

[The Ice Child]

Lithography, 10.5 x 7.5 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.014

12. *Dégel*, 1973

[Thaw]

Lithography, 34.6 x 19.8 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.027

13. *Porte flambeau*, 1985

[Torch-bearer]

Lithography, 25.3 x 24.9cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.034

Her lithographs of the 1970s draw on different registers, including the Old and New Testament. Some feature symbols such as fire and light, and have titles that evoke certain mystical stories. Marie-Anastasia was also inspired

by her observations of the sky, astronomy, and the micro cellular world. Through a range of marks and materials, she dealt with subjects that allowed her to experiment with colour gradations. Some are anchored to the Earth as schematic landscapes that illustrate natural phenomena like the spring thaw, glimmering light, and the appearance of tree buds.

14. *Module*, 1977

[Module]

Lithography, 20 x 19.7 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.025

15. *La Terre Promise*, 1986

[The Promised Land]

Lithography, 25 x 25 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.033

16. *Le coup-de-main*, 1981

[Helping Hand]

Lithography, 59.3 x 44.7 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.020

17. *Citadelle lunaire*, 1979

[Lunar Citadel]

Lithography, 44.2 x 29.5 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.032

18. *Rayonnement*, 1975

[Radiance]

Lithography, 17.4 x 9.9 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.017

19. *Il y a quelqu'un*, 1978

[Someone is There]

Lithography, 7 x 10.2 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.015

20. *Sans titre*, 1973

[Untitled]

Lithography, 17.1 x 14.5 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.021

21. *Le colombier*, 1978

[The Dovecote]

Lithography, 35 x 27.7 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.030

22. *Le colombier*, 1978

[The Dovecote]

Lithography, 35 x 27.7 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.031

23. *A tire d'ails*, 1978

[In Flight]

Ink on paper, 10 x 10 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.036

24. *Amour couronné*, 1971

[Crowned Love]

Lithography, 21.3 x 13.5 cm

Gift of the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross

2023.037

During the 1980s, several of her works explored the organization of secularism under human control. In them, the economy is portrayed as a new religion and system of power, with the bank serving as its church. Biblical and spiritual references are nearly always present. Inspired by the heavens and the unknown, some pieces are mysterious. The lithographs from this period were mainly produced using four colours, a sign of her tremendous printmaking skills.

3rd floor in the hallway

Espace 3^e étage



14 à 24

7 à 13

1 à 6