

Ying Gao, 2009 recipient of the Phyllis Lambert Design Montréal Grant

Montréal, May 27, 2009 – The Mayor of Montréal, Gérald Tremblay, has awarded the Phyllis Lambert Design Montréal Grant to university professor and fashion designer Ying Gao. Created in honour of Phyllis Lambert, Founding Director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), the \$10,000 grant will enable Ying Gao to design “modulatable” garments, whose construction will be directly inspired by transformations in the urban environments of Berlin and Nagoya, both of which share UNESCO City of Design status with Montréal. In addition, the Ville de Montréal will contribute \$5,000 to assist the recipient in promoting and disseminating her project.

“In awarding the Phyllis Lambert Design Montréal Grant, the Ville de Montréal seeks to spark exchanges between members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network,” Mayor Tremblay said, adding that Ying Gao is a worthy ambassador for Montréal. “This grant allows us to encourage designers whose approaches have a community aspect that is enriching for our city. In turn, it helps raise the profile of talented young creators in Montréal and abroad.”

The jury members were unanimous in acknowledging the relevance of the link between the research project and the chosen cities (Berlin and Nagoya), and in their enthusiasm for picking this candidate. “Ying Gao has a decidedly avant-garde approach to fashion design, linking it to transformations taking place in cities. Moreover, her research encompasses several fields: fashion, textile technology, architecture, urban planning, interactivity and multimedia,” explained Benoit Dupuis, Partner Architect in the firm ACDF and spokesperson for the jury. Ying Gao has had a remarkable career thus far, having presented her projects in well-known venues in Montréal, Switzerland and Belgium, which demonstrates her desire to disseminate and share knowledge.

The jury consisted of Giovanna Borasi, Curator of Contemporary Architecture at the CCA; Benoit Dupuis, Partner Architect with ACDF; Angela Grauerholz, Director of the UQÀM Design Centre; Marie-Josée Lacroix, Director of Design Montréal; and Mario Masson, Division Chief with the Ville de Montréal’s Department of Large Parks and Nature in the City.

Creating “modulatable” garments

Ying Gao’s project proposal is for a study trip involving a reflection on the function of apparel. Her original and rigorous creative approach challenges the notion of garments as we know them. Her work investigates the modular nature of clothing and its construction by observing transformations in urban spaces. The conceptual and esthetic framework of her designs will draw inspiration from the cities of Berlin and Nagoya, especially their impressive mass-transit systems. Ying Gao will be developing her project in collaboration with two Berlin-based designers as well as the Japanese industrial firm Amaike Textile Industry, inventor of the world’s lightest fabric.

The production phase of the project will extend over the next eight months. Ying Gao will present the outcomes of her research in Montréal by means of exhibitions, conferences, publications and teaching, and will also give presentations in Berlin during Fashion Week and Nagoya (Nagoya Design Do! Competition) in 2010.

2009 Recipient: Ying Gao, university professor and fashion designer

Ying Gao is Director of the *Exercices de style* design laboratory and a professor at UQÀM's Graduate School of Fashion as well as its School of Design. In 2002 and 2003, she completed a double project that included two clothing collections, "Pékin" and "Accidents de parcours," inspired by the traditional *hutong* architecture of Beijing as well as the city's newer urbanization. Returning to Montréal in September 2003, Ying Gao tackled the projects "Cardigan météorologue" (2005) and "Indice de l'indifférence" (2006), in which she investigated the relationships between individuals, their cities and their climatic and social environments. Ying Gao created two new projects, "Walking City" and "Living Pod," in 2007 and 2008. These involved two types of interactive garments, one inflatable and the other light-sensitive, developed as a tribute to the British architectural collective Archigram.

About the Phyllis Lambert Design Montréal Grant

The Phyllis Lambert Design Montréal Grant, awarded annually by the Ville de Montréal, aims to underscore the work of Montréal designers with fewer than 10 years' professional practice who demonstrate exceptional quality in studies and work as well as a marked interest in the city. It also contributes to the development of emerging professionals with regard to design issues related to the city, and fosters international exchanges within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The grant is named in honour of Phyllis Lambert, 2008 recipient of the Canadian Urban Institute's Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award, a Great Montrealer, and a staunch defender of emerging designers. In so doing, the City underscores her contribution to Montréal's international reputation as well as the decisive influence she has had on the quality of its urban planning, architecture, heritage and design.

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 Volume 2
 514 845-1188

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