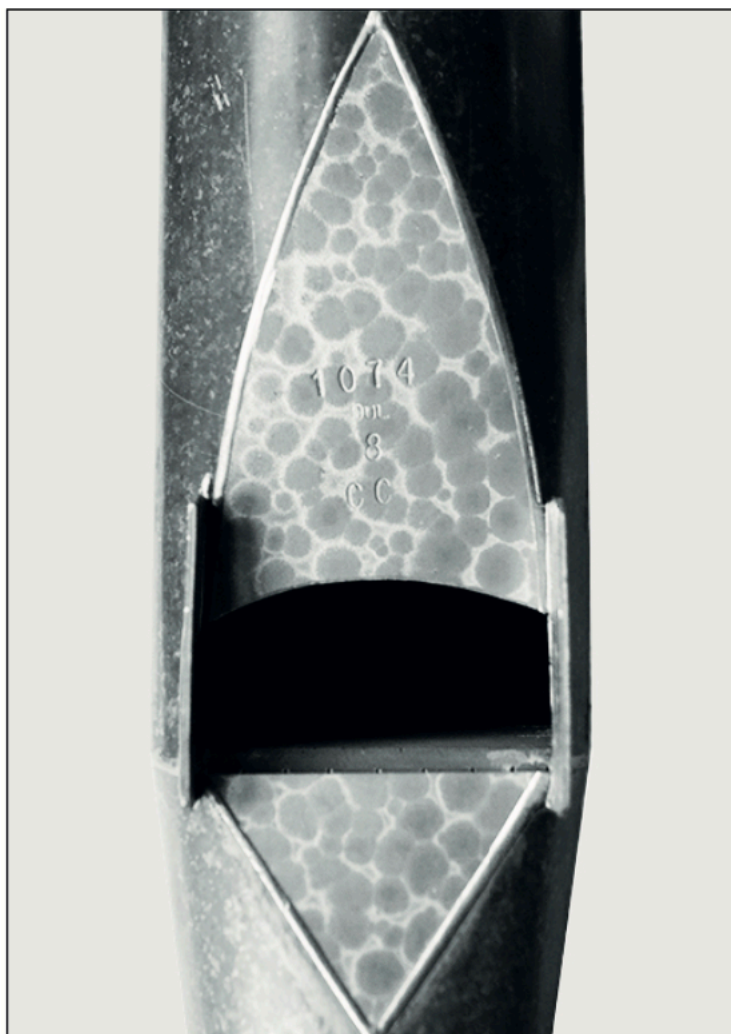


MAGGY HAMEL-METSOS



Simile Aria

20.03.2025 — 18.05.2025

Fonderie Darling
745 Place du Sable-Gris
MTL (QC) H3C 1R8
fonderiedarling.org

Opening hours
Wednesday: 12pm-7pm
Thursday : 12pm-10pm
Fri.-Sun. : 12pm-7pm



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A long cry rises, and stills. A period of silence is broken again by the rumbling of a motor, filling the space like air inflates into lungs. The machine inhales deeply and empties its mechanical breath into pipes that branch out to feed the organ's dismembered interior, sounding it into action. A long cry rises, and stills. Each of our breaths lives and dies so we might live. Breathing organizes gestures, animates movement, and sometimes, splinters into a cry under the strain of compressed emotion for which breath is the last great escape.

Maggy Hamel-Metsos concerns herself in this exhibition with the inner workings of witness, those that operate the insatiable desire to see our most vital feelings expelled outside of ourselves. The investigation takes shape as a riddle, composed of found fragments and collected into a melodramatic spectacle of tragic inflection. The organ, salvaged by the artist, is sustained by a series of industrial air compressors that breathe into it their long sighing breaths. Facing it, opera singers scream, children cry. Their images, void of color, are held captive in photographs whose placement in the space is calibrated exactly so that at the moment of the sun's climax its rays steal through the window, reflect in a mirror, and by way of magnifying glass concentrate on each photograph, which then catches fire and vanishes, a heap of ashes its only trace. Each day they will be replaced with new photographs, which will ignite in turn, save on those darker days when clouds cloaking the sun's reach briefly spare them their impending combustion.

The sun, blinding the impudent gaze turned towards him, is that which we cannot look at but without which it would be impossible to see at all. The few seconds of a glance towards him suffice to sear irremediably our retina. So we regard him indirectly, by the intermediary of the light he projects across the world and in which the world reveals itself. Maggy Hamel-Metsos occupies this space between what can and cannot be seen, between utterance and the unsayable. The Italian writer Primo Levi observed that, of the most tragic horrors, the true witness is the one who, dead or petrified, can never bear its witness. Just so these singers and little children, their frozen faces charged with feeling, who, having seen the sun, will never bear witness to the blazing embrace that carried them away.

In Greek tragedies the sun denotes the border

between life and death. As Antigone sings her own funeral oration, she takes a last look at the sun before exiting the stage to her death. Ajax, before taking his own life, asks him to carry news of his fall across the Aegean Sea. Hellenist Edith Hall tells us that in a tragedy the sun's role is tied essentially to the drama experienced by its characters. Its tragic function derives partly from the classical belief that pain intensifies in the light of day, but most directly from the position of the sun at its summit, making it the universal witness to suffering. This tragic spirit, accentuating misfortune by illuminating it, has never really left the stage. It runs through the history of theater and the lyric arts, from antiquity to stars of the modern age – Maria Callas, Marilyn Monroe, Dalida, Whitney Houston and so many others – who, having lived in the scorching glare of the spotlight, stripped of any shaded respite, shadowed away themselves.

The musical term *simile aria* designates a sung melody establishing a comparison between the singer's circumstance and some larger, usually natural, phenomenon, one that both overwhelms and exceeds her, represented by the music itself. The intimate is then absorbed into the cosmic order of the world, which in turn is absorbed into music's abstraction. And so drama blurs into total eurythmy, exhausting breath, stifling the image, reconstituting pain as symphony. As in opera, our lives too can be summed up as a set of sounds measured out by the cadence of our breath. "We're born screaming, and that's how the sun gets in our guts."¹

Renaud Gadoury

¹Quote from the artist.

**RÉDITS DE L'EXPOSITIONS /
EXHIBITION CREDITS**

**SIMILE ARIA
Maggy Hamel-Metsos
20.03 – 18.05.2025**

**Commissaire /
Curator
Renaud Gadoury**

**Responsable technique /
Technical Manager
Kara Skylling**

**Technicien /
Technician
Frédéric Chabot**

**Assistante d'atelier /
Studio assistant
Léonie Régol-Péloquin**

**Design et Modélisation 3D /
3D modeling and design
Alexandre Bouffard**

**Assistance pour l'installation solaire /
Assistance with solar installation
Asa Perlman**

**Impression /
Printing
PhotoSynthèse**

**Fabrication et installation /
Fabrication & iinstallation
APD**

**Gréeur /
Rigger
Robert Tita**

**Électricien /
Electrician
Univers Électrique Inc.**

**Consultant mécanique /
Mechanical consultant
Emrys Boschy**

**Arrangement des accords /
Chord arrangements
Maria Gajraj**

**Librettiste /
Librettist
Justin Leduc-Frenette**

**Notation musicale /
Musical notation
Gavin Fraser**

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