



## **BECOMING A VOLUNTEER AT THE MMAQ**

### **Martin Lominy, Supervisor of educational and clientele services**

Museums are institutions which are often misunderstood. Many people believe that they are luxurious places where we work peacefully, cleaning artefacts and studying artwork. However, the reality is somewhat different... and much more interesting. We offer our volunteers an experience which reflects our institution.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is first of all to be part of a dynamic team which creates a lively working environment. So many times I heard: "You work in a museum, that's the life!" Even though working in a museum is a privilege, it's far from being relaxing. Behind the tranquility of the exhibitions and the guided visits of the MMAQ lies a dynamic team working relentlessly to exceed expectations and develop contents and activities from which the public can profit throughout the year.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is to actively participate in the field of culture, one of great importance. While the larger museums benefit from sufficient human resources, the smaller institutions function with smaller groups of employees that must double their efforts to achieve their goals. This is the case for the MMAQ whose financial restraints limit the possibilities of hiring staff. Therefore, the museum counts on a team of devoted volunteers to provide essential support in various domains.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is to discover French Canadian crafts and traditions. The museum's collection, which contains almost 9 000 art and craft objects from Quebec, continues its acquisition process to include contemporary art objects that bridge the gap between the past and present. The museum also benefits from new collections that enrich the exhibition programs. Consequently, the numerous tasks often exceed the capacities of the permanent staff who offer the opportunity to volunteers to work in conservation.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is to use ones talents and creativity towards a patrimonial mission. Since the foundation of the museum in 1977, the mission of the MMAQ is to promote Quebec's cultural heritage through the arts and traditional crafts of the past and present. The museum works to document several centuries of French Canadian history and pay homage to its masters and craftsmen. In order to achieve its mission, the museum encourages the collaboration of different disciplines and is constantly open to new ideas.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is to acquire a diverse work experience in the field of museology. In a small museum, tasks are often carried out in collaboration with the other members of the team. It isn't rare at the MMAQ for the conservation staff to participate in the creation of an education project or for the education staff to participate in the upkeep of the collections. It's an advantage to be able to work in collaboration as staff is limited but it is also a privilege to participate in different tasks and discover different aspects of the museum.

Becoming a volunteer at the MMAQ is to develop ones communication skills and professional network. A museum is an ideal place to meet people with similar interests. The numerous temporary exhibitions of the MMAQ give us the opportunity to meet craftsmen and artists from various fields and unite members of diverse communities. The exhibition openings are the perfect occasion to discover new art practices and increase ones contacts in a relatively restricted domain.

All of this would not be possible without the collaboration of volunteers who share our passion. Whether it's the installation of temporary exhibitions, the animation of educative programs or the organization of special events, we value each contribution. The MMAQ particularly benefits from the talents and ideas from immigrant volunteers as well as students which lead the future development of museology.