

Beat: Travel

ESPACE POUR LA VIE ANNOUNCES THE GRAND OPENING OF THE MONTRÉAL INSECTARIUM

A COMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS!

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USPA NEWS - Espace pour la vie and Ville de Montréal were happy to unveil, on April 5, the remarkable metamorphosis of the Montréal Insectarium and to announce its grand opening on April 13. In its new configuration, the museum invites young and old alike to see the world from the perspective of insects and to immerse themselves in their fascinating universe in order to change the way they look at these living beings.

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- A completely renewed museological approach

The Insectarium is the first museum in North America where it will be possible to observe so many species of insects—living (some of them roaming freely) and naturalized—in a single location. It invites future visitors to enjoy extraordinary encounters with insects. The museum team has completely rethought its approach in order to offer an immersive and educational experience aimed at transforming the relationship that humans have with insects and to trigger in them an appreciation of insects, which is consciously referred to as "entomophilia"* at the Insectarium.

* The definition of the word entomophilia refers to "the mode of pollination of plants through insects". In the context of the new Insectarium, its architecture and museology inspired by biophilia, we give this term a new meaning to express the idea of entomophilia in the sense of love, respect and appreciation of insects.

- A multi-sensory experience

Through an intimate, multi-sensory one-way circuit, humans are invited to visit insects and gradually rethink their relationship with these amazing living beings. The approach is meant to be progressive, and it is only after becoming familiar with certain aspects of the insect world that visitors will find themselves in the presence of living insects.

As you enter the Alcoves —inspired by the habitat of insects—, you see the world as if you were an insect yourself. All your senses are on the alert: vibrations in the floor allow you to perceive sounds like insects; projected ultraviolet effects mimic an insect's vision, while the configuration of the space encourages you to move around like an insect, either by slipping through cracks or dangling on vertical rods.

After this first eye-opening experience, it's time for a tête-à-tête with insects in an intimate atmosphere, where they can be observed, even contemplated, at leisure in immersive vivariums. Then, after beholding the collection of naturalized insects presented like nowhere else inside the majestic Dome, a setting that praises their beauty and diversity, you emerge from this underground environment in a space that looks like a giant greenhouse bathed in natural light, the Great Vivarium. Among the hundred species that you will get to see, including butterflies flying freely all year round, some have never been presented before!

- Experience-driven architecture

This unique project is the result of a bold architectural gesture where the museology and the visitor experience informed the architecture, and not the other way around. To rethink the museum, the architects drew inspiration from the various insect habitats—nests, chambers, galleries, vegetation and soil. The design of the new building also applies the principles of biophilia to ensure a harmonious integration with the immediate environment of the Jardin botanique, and to minimize its visual impact for the

good of nature.

The architectural concept for the Métamorphose project, which received an award of excellence from Canadian Architect magazine in December 2018, was the result of an international architectural competition won by the consortium of five architecture and engineering firms: Kuehn Malvezzi, Pelletier De Fontenay, Jodoin Lamarre Pratte architectes, Dupras Ledoux and NCK. The new Insectarium is aiming for LEED Gold certification, and its Great Vivarium becomes the first curtain-wall greenhouse to receive this recognition in Quebec.

- A mobile application to find out more

As a complement to the visit, the Espace pour la vie mobile application (Insectarium module) provides a wealth of information on the naturalized and living species on display at the museum. The application is very easy to use and literally follows visitors as they make their way along, providing quick access to more information. Tablets will be available in the various rooms of the museum for those who do not have smart devices and who would like to use the app.

- Quotes

"My dearest wish is that the metamorphosis of the Insectarium will also bring about a metamorphosis in the public's relationship with insects," said Maxim Larrivée, director of the Insectarium. "Still too often ignored and underestimated, insects are essential to the balance of our ecosystems. A profound change in the role and importance of insects in our societies is needed."

"The transformation of the Insectarium is another important milestone in our development at Espace pour la vie," said Julie Jodoin, interim director of Espace pour la vie. "The mission of the new Insectarium, in line with the Montréal 2030 vision, gives us the opportunity to scale up the movement for the preservation of biodiversity."

"The innovative approach of the new Insectarium is unique in North America and will make it a must-see destination in the city. Being immersed in the world of insects is one of the best ways to illustrate the major role they play in the protection of our biodiversity and ecosystems. We are very proud to offer a new and stimulating experience that will contribute to raising public awareness today and for future generations," said Montréal Mayor and president of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal, Valérie Plante.

Source: Espace pour la vie

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