

For immediate release

Inauguration of the temporary exhibit *Du grenier au musée*

Québec, June 14, 2018 – Today inaugurated the Monastère des Augustines’s brand-new and temporary exhibit, *Du grenier au musée*.

Following the announcement of the classification of artifacts, old books and archival fonds of the Hôpital général de Québec’s monastery as of historical significance, Le Monastère des Augustines has opened its doors for this very first temporary exhibit. The exhibit sheds light on the rich heritage of the Hôpital général de Québec’s monastery, one of the oldest buildings in North America located north of Mexico that has preserved its original functions. Built in 1620, the Hôpital general and monastery were places to welcome the sick and needy, and offered long-term care facilities. They both bore witness to major events that shaped the history of Québec City and the province of Québec. The archives and relics provide in-depth insight into the social, economic, political, military and religious heritage that evolved over many eras. For example, some major artifacts, which are still in excellent condition, show the traces of a boarding school for young girls from 1725 to 1868. Others offer details about how the Hôpital general and its monastery were transformed into a military hospital during the Seven Years’ War and American Revolution of 1775 to 1776. The collection also features relics from the fires that destroyed part of Québec City’s working class neighbourhoods during the 19th century.

“*Du grenier au musée highlights much more than the history of the Hôpital general and its monastery. The exhibit also underscores the past of an exceptional religious community as well as an important part of the history of both Québec and New France,*” explained Isabelle Duchesneau, Executive Director at Le Monastère des Augustines.

A better understanding of museology

Through historical relics, *Du grenier au musée* offers a compelling view into the lives and work of the Augustinian Sisters—from the time they first set foot in Québec City for the very first time and up to today’s professionals who are dedicated to persevering a national legacy. These professionals, with backgrounds in a wide variety of fields, all have one common goal: to take care of and share these heritage assets. *Du grenier au musée* will allow visitors to discover the many facets of preserving and displaying heritage assets. How were relics and archives preserved to this very day? Why did they become important heritage artifacts? What steps does Le Monastère des Augustines take to preserve them?

Heritagisation by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

The *Du grenier au musée* exhibit includes archival fonds, the collection of old books and numerous artifacts from the Augustines du monastère de l’Hôpital général de Québec, which all have been classified as heritage assets by the Government of Québec due their historical value and documentary heritage. While these objects may no longer serve their primary use, they are nevertheless recognized for their tremendous heritage value in Québec society. This designation, announced in April 2018 by the Ministère

de la Culture et des Communications, plays an integral part of the 325th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of the Augustinian Sisters at the Hôpital général.

« Cette exposition sera l'occasion pour les visiteurs d'aller au-delà des objets et de réaliser l'ampleur du courage et du dévouement de toute une communauté. Ces femmes admirables venues soigner les malades dans des conditions rudimentaires ont jeté les bases de notre système hospitalier. Les Augustines ont su traiter avec beaucoup de soin un trésor patrimonial d'une valeur inestimable », souligne Marie Montpetit, ministre de la Culture et des Communications et ministre responsable de la Protection et de la Promotion de la langue française.

The collections, old books and archival fonds that the Augustinians entrusted to the Fiducie du patrimoine culturel des Augustines are extraordinary and clearly show the many functions of the Hôpital general and the important milestones in the history of both the religious community and Québec City.

Preserving the Augustinians' heritage

One of the missions of the Fiducie du patrimoine culturel des Augustines and Le Monastère des Augustines is to preserve the heritage of the Augustinian Sisters' twelve monasteries and share their histories for generations to come. This mission is based on a crucial understanding of the monasteries' heritage that must be last over time. Without context, people lose interest in archives and artifacts. It is therefore of paramount importance to document collections and archives to the best of our knowledge.

About Le Monastère des Augustines

Le Monastère des Augustines occupies the ancient wings of the former Hôtel-Dieu de Québec monastery (1639), North America's first hospital north of Mexico. Situated in the heart of Old Quebec City, Le Monastère has been completely restored and renovated, and offers a unique experience along with several ways to connect with the Augustinian heritage, in a secular environment: experiential accommodation, a museum, archive centre, a program of activities around holistic health and culture, a restaurant, a boutique, specialized treatments and services and event rooms.

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For more information, interviews can be conducted with Andréanne Cantin, Museum Manager at Le Musée du Monastère des Augustines.

Images are available upon request.

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