

## **BEN MARC DIENDÉRÉ, NEW CHAIR OF THE CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL**

**Montreal, September 1, 2021** – Watershed moment for the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM)— today, **Ben Marc Diendéré** becomes its 11th chair. He is the first Black person to hold this position and one of the few people of colour at the top of an organization of this size in Canada.

A communications specialist with vast managerial experience, Mr. Diendéré is known for his expertise in business and philanthropic circles as well as his commitment to the cultural community. Currently Chief Public Affairs and Communications Officer at VIA Rail Canada, he began working in Montréal with the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles du Québec (SODEC) and has held senior management positions in major organizations such as Sollio Cooperative Group (La Coop fédérée), Quebecor and Partenariat international.

“The Conseil des arts de Montréal is at the forefront of developing the city’s arts scene. I very much welcome this appointment, which demonstrates the Conseil’s commitment to diversity and innovation. The arts are part of Montréal’s identity and contribute to its vitality. During this period of recovery, we will continue to be there to support our artists. I look forward to continuing our work with the CAM under Mr. Diendéré’s leadership and wish him an excellent mandate,” said Montréal Mayor Ms. **Valérie Plante**.

“While cultural communities have faced particular hardship during the pandemic, the CAM has continued to support the arts community by celebrating and supporting inspiring initiatives that gave us hope. Whether through dance, circus arts, visual arts or digital arts, CAM has contributed to the well-being of the people of Montréal in these difficult times. We would like to acknowledge this and reiterate our support for the CAM,” said Ms. **Magda Popeanu**, Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee and Head of Culture and Diversity for the City of Montréal.

“Even as a child in Burkina Faso, my life revolved around culture and the arts, and I was never far from a cultural centre,” said Mr. Diendéré. “Today, I’m committed to revitalizing and strengthening our arts communities—the lifeblood of Montréal—as well as promoting diversity and inclusion, supporting sustainable development initiatives and bringing business and culture closer together.”

The new chair is no stranger to the Conseil des arts de Montréal—he sat on its Board of Directors from 2012 to 2019 and chaired its Communications Committee. Heavily involved in the community, he participated in major fundraising campaigns (Théâtre du Rideau Vert and Théâtre du Nouveau Monde) and served as honorary president of Vues d’Afrique (2018) and Nuit de l’Excellence (2019). He also sits on the boards of directors of Université de Montréal, where he chairs the Development Committee,

Little Brothers and Groupe 3737, a hub of innovation and entrepreneurial diversity. He also co-founded Excellence Québec, an initiative to increase inclusion and representation on boards of directors.

Mr. Diendéré succeeds Mr. **Jan-Fryderyk Pleszczynski**, whom the artistic community can warmly thank for the invaluable work done during his tenure. Under the leadership of Mr. Pleszczynski, the Conseil saw a 58% increase in budget contributions from the Montréal Agglomeration Council, rising from \$12.95 million in 2014 to \$20.4 million in 2021. In addition, fundamental work on the Conseil's governance and organizational structure was undertaken to ensure greater equity, parity, and cultural and generational diversity.

The Board of Directors of the Conseil des arts de Montréal consists of 21 volunteer members, each appointed for a three-year term and approved by the Agglomeration Council of the Island of Montréal. The Conseil secretariat is administered by the Executive Director, Nathalie Maillé. The list of other Board members is available on [the Conseil's website](#).

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**Source:**

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