

EMBRACE
THE
EXTRA
ORDINARY





© ALAIN LAFOREST

Attrape-moi, Flip Fabrique, 2014



© BOYCE CINDY

“ TOHU is the success of a mobilizing gamble, both for the local and international circus universe and the Saint-Michel community.”

– Daniel Lamarre
president and CEO
of Cirque du Soleil

TOHU: NURTURING THE IMAGINARY THROUGH THE EXTRAORDINARY

Erected in 2004, at the heart of Cité des arts du cirque in the Saint-Michel neighbourhood, TOHU is unique in its kind. Alongside key players of the circus world, it is home to the only circular hall in North America. Its activities combine cultural dissemination as well as circus and visual arts creations. Environmental protection and community involvement are integral parts of its mission. As such, its LEED Gold certified architecture and its socio-professional integration programs mirror its commitment.

Privileged access to Frédéric-Back Park, the greatest environmental rehabilitation project ever undertaken by the City of Montréal, TOHU works at building a strong relationship with Saint-Michel residents through free activities.

Thanks to its dynamism and the impact of its actions, TOHU helps position Montréal as the international capital of circus arts. Cultural leader in sustainable development, it contributes to the vitality of the Québécois circus throughout the world, as well as foreign companies in Montréal. Its popular MONTRÉAL COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE Festival has become an indispensable international hub for circus artists.

Created in 2010, MONTRÉAL COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE is born from the common vision and collective imaginary of Montréal's circus arts pillars. TOHU, Cirque Éloize, Les 7 Doigts, Cirque du Soleil, the National Circus School and En Piste all had the ambitious goal of creating an international circus arts festival. TOHU, driving force of the project, shares its expertise and resources to create an annual summer event that values creative talents and contributes to the dissemination of the multiple forms and ways of performing circus arts.

TOHU-BOHU

The ferment of ideas and movements, the chaos, sign of a revival, the hustle and bustle of the big city. TOHU draws upon it in the search for balance, moving territories, in joyful moods, where complementary elements interact.

TOHU HAS MADE THE EXCEPTION
ITS RULE AROUND ONE VALUE:
MAKING EACH EVENT, SHOW AND
EXHIBITION AN INVITATION TO
EMBRACE THE EXTRAORDINARY!
ITS CREDO: ACHIEVEMENTS,
FLAMBOYANT ARTISTIC FEATS,
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS AND
ENCOUNTERS.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS:

- + The phenomenal BOOM of the Québécois contemporary circus on worldwide stages.
- + The increasing international EXPOSURE of the city thanks to foreign delegations' visits enchanted by its uniqueness.
- + MONTRÉAL COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE, making circus arts vibrate in all its DIVERSITY.
- + The FALLA, a colourful annual summer gathering celebrating world culture.
- + A MODULAR circular hall to welcome various forms of arts and disciplines such as Robert Lepage's *Playing Cards* or Akram Khan Company's *Until the Lions*.
- + The hundreds of Saint-Michel neighbourhood's youth participating in TOHU's employment program for full recognition of their SKILLS.



HIGHLIGHTS
SINCE 2004

1.6 M VISITORS
SINCE THE
OPENING

97 CIRCUS SHOWS
FOR A TOTAL OF
1,184 PERFORMANCES

469 FREE SHOWS
AND EVENTS
FOR THE COMMUNITY

88 EXHIBITIONS

125,582 VISITORS HAVE TAKEN PART IN ONE
OF OUR GUIDED TOURS

51,668 HOURS ALLOTTED TO PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
(RESIDENCIES, TRAINING AND RENTALS)

243 CREATION AND
PRODUCTION RESIDENCY
PROJECTS

*TOHU data on December 31, 2016



TOHU at the heart of the
Cité des arts du cirque



TOHU Frédéric-Back Park's reception pavilion



TOHU family-oriented



TOHU festive

AN EXCEPTIONAL SITE, AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY

FROM 1999 TO 2004: FROM AN *IDÉE* TO A *CITÉ*

In the early 2000s, Cirque du Soleil, the National Circus School and En Piste, the circus arts national network, unite around a promising idea: building suitable and accessible infrastructure to reassert their leadership and position Montréal as the international capital of circus arts. For this purpose, they founded a non-profit organization, Cité des arts du cirque.

A THREEFOLD MISSION: CIRCUS—EARTH—HUMAN BEING

It is the context in which TOHU emerged in 2004. It then soon welcomes its first visitors, in its capacity as dissemination, training, creation and production hub for circus arts. Its green architecture shows respect for environmental standards and the 360-degree circular hall, unique in North America, is in the purest circus tradition.

Reception pavilion of the Saint-Michel Environmental Complex (SMEC) and Frédéric-Back Park, TOHU is also a leading support for citizens, businesses and organizations of the neighbourhood. TOHU is part of a human-based sustainability movement through its activities, community relations, and has a concrete interest in contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of the community.

Choosing the Saint-Michel neighbourhood indicates TOHU's openness to multiculturalism, while also directly contributing to its empowerment with the introduction of free programming, access to exhibitions, mediation as well as a local employability policy.

It thus supports the principles outlined by Agenda 21 for culture by the Québec government, a framework whose objective is to provide the impulse to a renewed vision of cultural development. Its threefold ideology uniting CIRCUS, EARTH and HUMAN BEING draws the attention of media, professionals, researchers and citizens worldwide.

THE FOUNDERS

Jan Rok Achard, Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Marc Lalonde, Gaëtan Morency, Cirque du Soleil, the National Circus School and En Piste.

WELCOMING

PAMPERED AUDIENCES

TOHU and MONTRÉAL COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE introduce their audiences to a remarkable wide range of circus disciplines for educational purposes, thanks to quality references. Between the indoor programming and the Festival, numerous dissemination opportunities are there to introduce the public to contemporary circus arts.

With mediation workshops, visual arts exhibitions, guided tours, animations and performances, TOHU raises public awareness with a great deal of inventiveness. Young and old are also invited to try their luck at some techniques: juggling and balancing is a fun way of coming together.

INTERNATIONAL MARKET OF CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

Every year since 2015, TOHU welcomes professionals and invites more than 1,000 local and foreign programmers to the Festival. Held during the event, the second edition of the International Market of Contemporary Circus (MICC) was attended, in 2016, by more than 240 professionals, a sign of ever-growing national and international recognition!

Directors, producers and promoters from all around the world are given the opportunity to meet the artists and creators of the local circus world, and discover their newest creations. They are also invited to panel discussions, showcases, lectures, happy hours, professional dinners and tours of the Cité des arts du cirque.

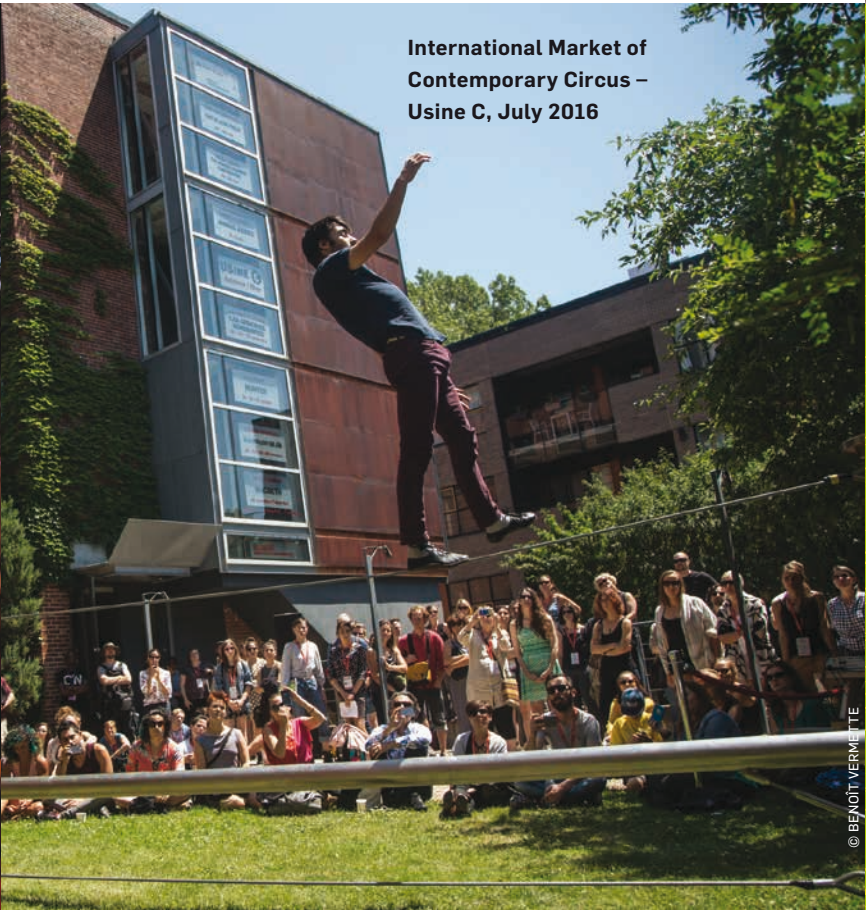
The MICC and its activities are an ideal opportunity for discussions, exchanges and conclusion of agreements. Several local companies have made valuable connections with various promoters and went on to sign agreements with producers from here as well as Argentina, Japan, Spain, Austria, France and the United States, for example.



Summer animations at TOHU



International Market of Contemporary Circus – Usine C, July 2016



A RECEPTION PAVILION

Named Saint-Michel Environmental Complex (SMEC) since 1995, what was initially a 192-hectare limestone quarry was previously converted, in 1968, into a landfill site. Over 30 hectares of this greatest environmental rehabilitation project ever undertaken by the City of Montréal are already accessible, including a 5.5km multipurpose trail.

TOHU is the reception pavilion of the SMEC since 2004. For the 375th anniversary of Montréal in 2017, two newly rehabilitated sections of over 5 hectares will be open to the public. The development of Frédéric-Back Park will be completed in 2023: 153 hectares will then be accessible to Montrealers.

DISSEMINATE

INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE FOR CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS

By combining boldness, magnitude and originality, TOHU and its Festival operate in perfect synergy to promote the best on the world stage of contemporary circus.

TOHU doesn't cease to impress and bring together audiences through captivating programming. Window to a fascinating artistic universe, it has audiences discover diversity in its form and aesthetics. An extraordinary experience and high level shows illustrating the leadership of international contemporary circus. A balanced formula, combining local creations and foreign productions, for the general public and returning audiences. Through its eclectic programming, and the uniqueness and versatility of its circular hall, TOHU has demonstrated its ability to build on amazing and multidisciplinary offerings, which goes beyond the circus.

MONTREAL COMPLETEMENT CIRQUE is a unique invitation to celebrate the circus in all its forms! The festive and immersive event literally takes the city's performance halls, neighbourhoods, Saint-Denis Street, Place Émilie-Gamelin, and Quartier des spectacles by storm. Characterized by the richness and quality of its exciting programming and exceptional level of performance, the Festival has now become a worldwide circus must. MONTREAL COMPLETEMENT CIRQUE is a mobilizing and unifying event proud to be the first international circus arts festival in North America.

Since August 2003, TOHU is the custodian of the Jacob-William Collection, one of the biggest private circus art collections. This unique collection is the result of thirty years of work by Pascal Jacob and Christian William. The Jacob-William Collection is displayed in *Quel Cirque!*, TOHU's permanent exhibition.

THE IMPRESSIVE TOHU NETWORK

Thanks to its many contacts in the circus universe, the province and the world, TOHU encourages reciprocity in cultural exchanges, a crucial aspect of the dynamism and viability of circus arts. Regional, North American and European networking is key to improve circus arts dissemination and ensure its accessibility to the public, but also to offer ever-spectacular shows.

In 2011, TOHU joins the 360° Network, a group of a dozen presenters, most of them Europeans. Their common characteristic: the roundness of their exceptional performance halls. Fruitful collaborations have emerged, such as Robert Lepage's *Playing Cards*, in 2014, the very first Network order. In 2017, TOHU presents the North American premiere of *Until the Lions* by internationally known choreographer and dancer Akram Khan, a coproduction with the 360° Network and Danse Danse.

BLENDING CULTURES AND PRACTICES

By endorsing so many roles, and between high-calibre cultural proposals and free activities, TOHU proves its versatility and awareness. Welcoming, it opens its doors for every audience to experience a wide range of discoveries. Its choices in performance and visual arts unite culture, environment and human beings. All efforts lead towards new artists of the community, emerging practices and the fusion of genres to highlight local creators.

HORS-PISTE

This series explores art creations that complement the circus. The public will discover dance performances and theatre, among other forms of art. Through a partnership with Le Tournoi de L'Impro Cirque (LIC), TOHU also showcases improvisation on stage, the ideal place to express the sacred bond between the artists and the audience.



“What a beautiful journey undertaken together since Les 7 Doigts were invited to TOHU's inauguration; 13 years side by side, hand in hand, sharing our love of the circus. Long live TOHU!”

– Nassib El-husseini
Chief executive officer of Les 7 Doigts

“I love TOHU for its creativity, insight, relevance and its search for new talents”

– Paul Antoine Pichard
Photographer

MONTREAL

COMPLÈTEMENT

CIRQUE

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS ARTS FESTIVAL IN NORTH AMERICA

For eleven days in July, circus arts take Montréal by storm. The city becomes alive, amuses, surprises and entertains. Its streets, parks, sidewalks and performance venues become the stage for colourful performances. Mirror to the undisputed vitality of local circus creators and home to international companies, the Festival pulses to the rhythm of the world's most innovative proposals and biggest names.

The Festival also takes up the challenge of presenting circus arts in all its forms to show diversity among disciplines and the mix of genres. It culminates in contemporary circus creations boiling with ingenuity, intertwined with theatre, dance, music, burlesque and poetry.

- + A varied indoor programming inclusive of other forms of arts; a global showcase for circus arts.
- + An impressive free outdoor programming, signature of the Festival.
- + A large-scale immersive show in the Quartier des spectacles, at the heart of the city; a Festival creation.
- + Acrobatic travelling performances, MINUTES COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE, led by over forty artists transforming the urban architecture into a playground.
- + A brilliant formula taking over the city, making Montréal an open-sky circus ring.
- + An event that inspires creativity as well as participatory culture.

A REMARKABLE EXPANSION

Every year, the Festival's notoriety and the number of festivalgoers continue to rise.

In 2016, 317,000 festivalgoers experienced circus arts.

With its unique free outdoor programming and indoor performances inclusive of all forms of circus arts, where the intimate goes side by side with the magnificent, the Festival has become a must for the circus universe as well as Montréal festivalgoers. Washington Post journalist Christine O'Toole has experienced it last year. Her article titled *How circus-loving Montreal has persisted as the big top of the world* earned her the 2016 Explore Canada Award of Excellence in the World-class Attractions, Festivals and Events category.

**“A great international
festival highlighting the
vitality of Québec contemporary
circus”**

— Le Nouvel Observateur (France)

**“A festival of circus arts
that would have thrilled
Federico Fellini”**

— Boston Globe (US)

7TH EDITION IN 2016 WITH

317,000

FESTIVALGOERS

100

FREE OUTDOOR EVENTS

3,170,000

FESTIVALGOERS SINCE ITS CREATION IN 2010

230

ARTISTS FROM
7 COUNTRIES

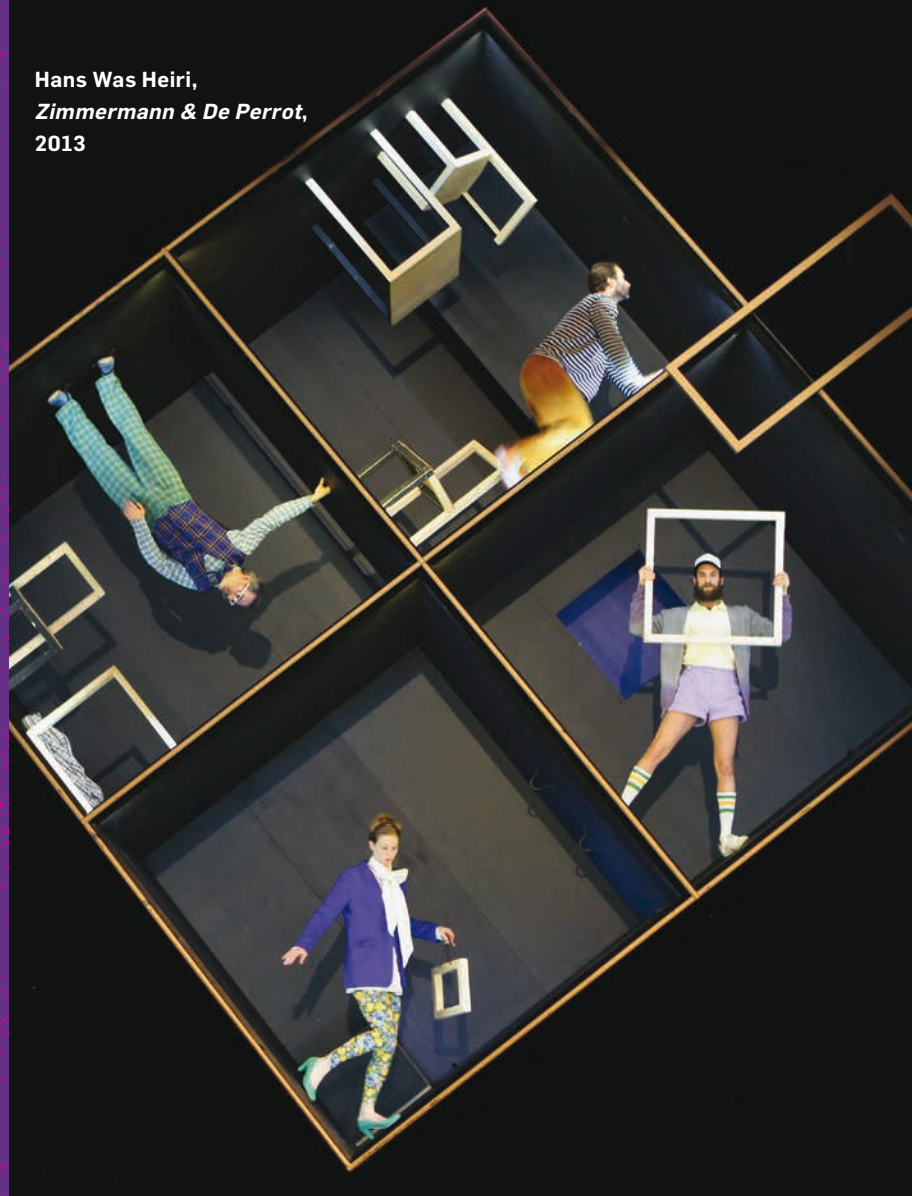
240

CIRCUS PROFESSIONALS
DURING MICC



Saint-Denis COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE. MONTREAL
COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE 2013

Hans Was Heiri,
Zimmermann & De Perrot,
2013



Sans Filet, January 2016



© ALEXANDRE GALLIEZ

Show by the National Circus School graduates,
L'art de la Fugue, 2015



© RÉNALD LAURIN

SUPPORT

DEVELOPING CIRCUS ARTS, FROM CREATION TO DISSEMINATION

TOHU's programming combines diversity and quality of the artistic forms. The results are works of scenery unifying fundamental criteria: originality, acrobatic level and scenic value.

TOHU actively supports local emerging artists and creations, while also giving exposure to renowned companies and troupes from the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

TOHU partners with the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM) and En Piste, the circus arts national network, to enhance the presence of the circus, familiarize people with the discipline and contribute to the professional development of the new generations of artists through a dissemination support program. This allows emerging circus collectives and organization to perform at TOHU or on tour, and get professional coaching through the individual training program of En Piste.

LAUNCHING EMERGING COMPANIES

TOHU provides several support services to circus professionals, such as access to the National Circus School's creation studio for research and creation residencies, free training and the use of a performance hall for production residencies (for the final stages of the artistic process). Furthermore, TOHU provides human and material resources for lighting, sound and rigging for the final stages of projects.

Since it first opened, TOHU has been providing support services to help in the development of the discipline, meeting a growing demand and revealing a genuine need. Between 2004 and 2016, no fewer than 243* residency projects have used the services, and more than 51,568* hours of free training and rental were granted.

In 2016, 29 companies and group of artists have used the services for about 27 creation and 2 production residencies. It resulted in 11 *Sans Filet* shows—public presentations for the entourage of artists, subscribers and employees—to collect their feedback. Those performances have paved the way for five companies to be part of the Festival programming.

*2004–2016 HIGHLIGHTS (on August 31, 2016)

EDUCATE

CULTURAL MEDIATION

To foster encounters and interactions between artists and citizens, and for a full cultural appropriation, TOHU has created its own form of mediation. Its modus operandi: the implementation of activities encouraging public participation and education in the programming. It can take various forms: attending a free show, participating in a creative process or producing an event.

Year after year, TOHU welcomes exhibitions whose themes relate to one of the three elements of its mission. Montréal and international artists, some of them exhibiting for the first time, are given access to a privileged venue. TOHU's educational services put together numerous mediation workshops to help neighbourhood groups and associations of all ages and from all background discover visual arts.

EDUCATIONAL OFFER

Throughout the school year, TOHU's guides provide an enhanced educational program to elementary and high school students eager to learn more about TOHU's universe and CIRCUS—EARTH—HUMAN BEING mission. Thanks to interactive learning and tailor-made tours, more than 10,000 people engage in our activities yearly. And when summer comes, Montréal day camps are also given access to those activities.

BE INVOLVED

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Citizen of Saint-Michel, TOHU is rooted in its neighbourhood and maintains close relationships with its organizations. Employees are involved in various advisory committees, in the neighbourhood's 100th anniversary commemoration activities, and in the planning of community activities.

EMPLOYABILITY AND COMMITMENT

In its ongoing care for Saint-Michel's revitalization, TOHU makes a priority to involve youth. Thanks to dedicated resources and adapted training, they are offered support for their academic success and skill improvement for the job market. More than 500 Saint-Michel residents have benefited from the program.

A survey conducted by the Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (CRISES) confirms TOHU's impact to the urban revitalization of Saint-Michel.

According to its writers Wilfredo Angulo Baudin and Marguerite Mendell, TOHU's socio-professional integration program has a positive and concrete impact on youth, Montréal and the society. Every dollar—public or private—invested in FALLA has generated a \$1.85 return (tax effect, avoided costs, etc.), as well as numerous qualitative impacts.

CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TOHU welcomes and hosts plenty of activities as well as private and corporate events. To reduce its ecological footprint, TOHU strives to engage in a green and ecological policy which results in concrete impacts on the environment as well as economic and social benefits. The originality of TOHU's project draws much attention here and all around the world. The unique mission TOHU has given itself makes it an example increasingly cited as a model of cultural sustainability.



**“Thank you to TOHU
for demonstrating for the past
12 years that it is possible to
reconcile an inspiring project’s
economic, social and cultural
purposes!”**

– Nancy Neamtan
Former chief executive officer
of the Chantier de l’économie sociale

FALLA, a family event



© TIM HUSSIN

FALLA festivities



© JIM MEYMEH

AND BRING TOGETHER

FALLA: THE CITIZEN FLAME

FALLA is inspired by the carnival tradition of Valencia, Spain. This event unique in the province has become an impressive sociocultural event. The initiative is true to the essence of a celebration, with the construction of a gigantic ten-metre high collective work made of wood and paper, the fruit of the efforts of young Saint-Michel falleros, the daring creators. For three months, they tirelessly showcase their talents, whilst also benefiting from a personalized socio-professional integration program. More than 300 volunteers, artists and craftspeople assist them throughout the endeavour. It's an opportunity to celebrate in style, to the rhythms of world music, in a family-friendly atmosphere.

Beyond the actual construction, the initiative is a practical way of helping Saint-Michel's youth to build their confidence in order to later integrate the labour market. A positive experience supported by several government partners, main financial supporters.

FALLA has become a true annual Saint-Michel gathering and a key event in the cultural agenda of the community and the city.

KITES FLYING IN TOHU'S SKIES

Another crowd pleaser, *Grain de ciel* gathers Montrealers for kite creation workshops, demonstrations, guided tours of the SMEC, and street theatre. The public also gets to meet international kite experts and admire their unique creations in the sky.

2345 Jarry East
Montréal (Québec) H1Z 4P3
514-376-TOHU (8648)
1-888-376-8648

INFO@TOHU.CA
TOHU.CA



PUBLIC PARTNERS

Québec 

Montréal 

Canada 



OFFICIAL TRANSPORTER AND
CULTURAL PARTNER

AIRFRANCE 

ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation



SOCIAL PARTNER

KEURIG
CANADA



Caisse de dépôt et placement
du Québec

FONDS
de solidarité FTQ

PRIVILEGED PARTNERS



VAN HOUTTE



BCF AVOCATS
D'AFFAIRES

Cirque du Soleil, major partner of TOHU, engaged in its community.