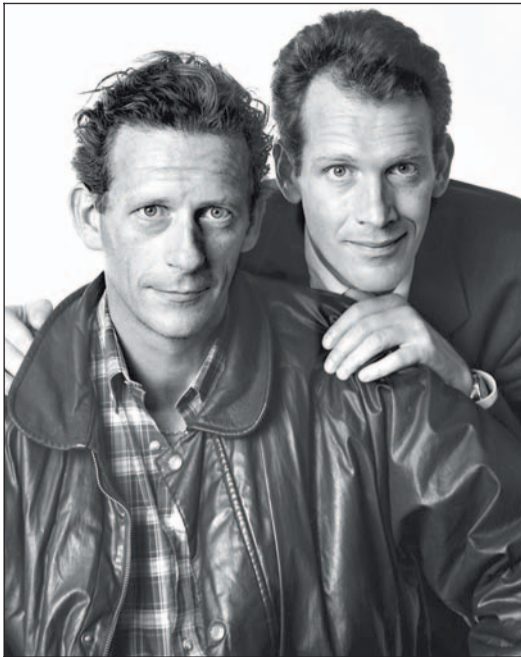


## Project Look-alike



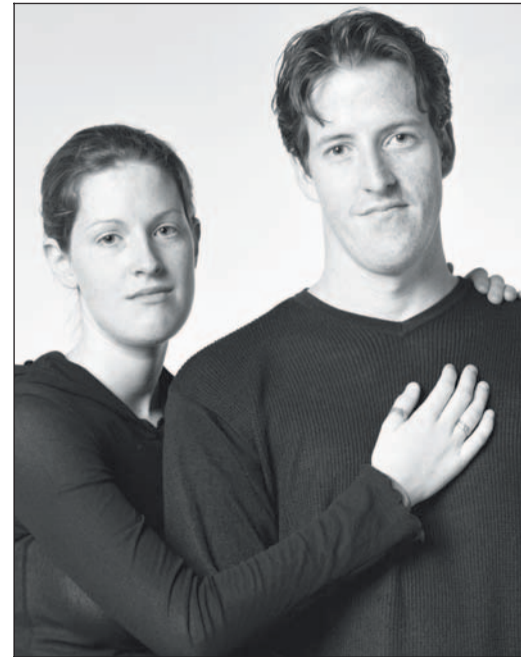
Yves Mégevet, left, is from Geneva, Switzerland, and Rémi Bacon, from Lyons, France.



Marcel Stepanoff, left, a Corsican, and Ludovic Maillard, a Parisian, often pretend to be brothers.



Montreal-born Nathaniel and San Salvador-born Edward used to work at the same company.



Sarah Fournier, from the Ottawa area, and Alan Madill of Toronto worked at the same ad agency.



Edith Préfontaine and Stéfanie Tremblay have similar glasses and even dress the same.



Isabel Zimmer and Diane Fortin both work in the photography industry.



Kathy Grant and Yaromi Nunez attended the same school in Montreal.



Nina-Rose Singh of Hamilton and Anna Rubin of Toronto were born on the same day.

# A case of double exposure

There is something compelling about the idea of a doppelgänger — your mirror image walking the world, doing good if you do evil, evil if you do good.

Montrealer François Brunelle has been fascinated by look-alikes all his life. Six years ago, he decided to turn his interest into a personal quest: Find and photograph 200 people with their doppelgänger.

Not that Brunelle buys the myth that if you are good your doppelgänger is evil — one of many doppelgänger myths. The relentlessly upbeat professional photographer quite simply loves people, in all their unvarnished ordinariness, without makeup, hairstylists or special effects.

He is fascinated, not so much by identical look-alikes, as by people who resemble each other in ways that make you wonder about genetics, genealogy and chance.

Montreal photographer François Brunelle has turned a fascination with doppelgängers into a quest to find 200 sets of look-alikes that has taken him across the globe, *writes Francine Kopun*

He began his project with people he knew, Nina-Rose Singh and Anna Rubin, a friend of one of Brunelle's daughters. From Hamilton and Toronto respectively, they were both pursuing careers as artists in Montreal.

They were introduced to each other for the first time at a bar in Montreal by Rubin's boyfriend. "There was a sense of familiarity and wonder and humour, too," Rubin, 29, says of that first meeting. "Almost like mischief, you know, when life sends you those funny coincidences? I think within three seconds we were in some totally deep conversation."

They learned they were born on the same day of the same year, hours apart. They lived in

the same building. Both are performing artists. They remain friends.

"I consider the world to be magical, so when things happen that are magical, I'm just like, 'Ha-ha, you see?'" says Rubin, now studying in Seville, Spain.

Sarah Fournier, 23, of Toronto, thought it was cool to be paired in a photo with her look-alike, even if her look-alike was a man, 10 years her senior, who worked at the advertising agency where she was working.

"It was the most uncanny thing, seeing someone as tall as me, which never happens, and with as many freckles as me, which never happens, and as pale as me, which never happens," says Fournier, a six-foot-

tall native of a hamlet called Waba in the Ottawa Valley. "There's six kids in my family, and I don't really look like anyone else in the family. I told my mother, 'Aha, I was right, you did abduct me from somebody else.'"

There were other coincidences: When Brunelle put together a weatherman and his look-alike, the doppelgänger turned out to be something of an amateur meteorologist, keeping a daily weather log. Two women who had dated the same man at different times showed up to be photographed and the resemblance between them was striking.

Brunelle has travelled to Britain, France, Switzerland, Spain and Germany to find look-alikes,

sending press releases to the media there and hoping for stories, which inevitably turn up new doppelgängers. He made a cold call to Rowan Atkinson's office — in his younger days Brunelle was often told he resembled Mr. Bean, the character made famous by Atkinson — and nearly got thrown out. The media-shy actor allegedly liked the project, but declined to participate.

Brunelle has shot 140 portraits so far. He hopes his quest will result in a book. If it doesn't, he's enjoying the ride.

"This is a crazy idea," says the 56-year-old father of six.

"I just went for my own thing. If nobody likes my pictures then that's fine, at least I'll be happy."



Montrealer François Brunelle is fascinated by look-alikes and has shot 140 people so far with their doppelgänger. Go to [thestar.com](http://thestar.com) for a gallery of his pictures.