Cher David Cronenberg,
Chère Madame,
Minister Aileen Carroll,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are occasions when the one bestowing the award is even more honored than the one receiving it. That is the situation tonight.

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for my wife Sophie, for Consul general Jérôme Cauchard and for me, as the French ambassador to Canada since last June, to welcome you tonight for this very special ceremony.

May I say a particular word of welcome to David Cronenberg’s wife, Caroline, to their two daughters Cassandra and Caitlin and their son Brandon and friends and family who have joined us here tonight to show their admiration and share this moment with him.

There are so many distinguished guests this evening. Among them I would like to greet Ontario Culture Minister Aileen Carroll as well as Helen and George Vari, who exemplify the friendship between France and Canada.

France is honoring tonight a giant of world cinema, a son of Toronto who is a wonderful representative of Canada on the five continents, an exceptional individual who is a great friend of my country.

Chers amis, la France honore ce soir un géant du cinéma mondial, un enfant de Toronto qui est devenu un superbe représentant du Canada sur les cinq continents, une personnalité d’exception qui est aussi un grand ami de mon pays.
Cher David Cronenberg, you were born in Toronto to a journalist father and a pianist mother, and very early on you submitted fantasy and science-fiction stories to magazines. You entered the University of Toronto Science faculty, but after a year switched to English Language and Literature, graduating in 1967. While at University, you became interested in film.

In 1975, you shot your first commercial feature, *Shivers*, which became one of the fastest recouping movies in the history of Canadian film. That was the beginning of an incredible success story.

Compte tenu de l'ampleur de votre œuvre, connue et reconnue dans le monde entier, ce serait mission impossible que de chercher à la résumer en quelques mots.


Your works also enable viewers to reflect on technology and its effects. The technological revolution has completely transformed the way our societies work, without sparing the human body. As you have underlined, Nature does not spontaneously create technology. It is a pure result of the human mind. Within this thought process, you speak of technology as “an extension of the human body”, for better or worse.

Cher David Cronenberg, you epitomize independent film-making yet have achieved the independent film-makers’ dream of reaching a worldwide audience. You have pushed the boundaries of creative genius to establish a film genre which has your unique imprint and signature. Your ability to invent new worlds and complex characters has impacted the imagination of millions.
What also strikes me is your profound attachment to Canada and more particularly to your great city of Toronto. You significantly contributed to making Toronto a world renowned venue for cinema.

Pardon me Madam, but I have to tell you that France has a love affair with your husband. Maybe because we French, who are so well-known for excessive modesty, we think we know a bit about genius. And the fact is that France was among the first countries to recognize early on your phenomenal talent and support your work. In 1984, you earned several of the Avoriaz Film Festival prestigious prizes.

Later, to give just a few other examples, Crash received the Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize in 1996.

Then, Eastern Promises was nominated as best foreign film at the Oscars in France, before receiving the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival. And in 1999, you presided over the Jury at the Cannes Film Festival, which is as we all know une véritable consécration.

By the way, the South of France is a region you love and where you have spent considerable time.

Several very successful retrospectives of your work were held in Paris by the Festival d’Automne and the Canadian Cultural Center, at the Fantastic Film Festival in Saint Malo, Brittany, at the Metz Film Festival and at the Cinémathèque Française. And beyond cinema, in 2008 you adapted The Fly into an Opera at the Théâtre du Chatelet in Paris.

Cher David Cronenberg, you hold a very special place in the hearts of my fellow citizens, and you are a source of admiration and inspiration for many of my compatriots. That's why you were invested Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 1990, and then Officier in 1997.

And I won’t even attempt to list the many awards you have received for your work around the world : they are simply too numerous.
Today, in recognition of your exceptional contribution to the world of the Arts around the world and in France in particular, as a film director, screen writer and actor, President Nicolas Sarkozy has awarded you France’s highest distinction, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur.

Now comes the formal part of this ceremony in French.

David Cronenberg, au nom du Président de la République, je vous fais Chevalier dans l’Ordre national de la Légion d’Honneur.