

A close-up photograph of a person with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, working on a red bicycle frame. The person's hands are visible, carefully attaching a string of small, light pink beads to the frame. The background is blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a workshop or outdoor setting.

THE LINK

BEADS & BIKES

Indigenous women reclaim their space P. 3

CURRENT

Sick & Criminal

Criminalization of HIV non-disclosure perpetuates a dangerous cycle.

P. 5

FRINGE ARTS

Popping Off

The Link guide to POP! Montreal's weeklong, citywide festival.

P. 6-7

OPINIONS

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P. 13

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Invisible No More

A New Indigenous Women's Bike Collective Takes to the Streets for Visibility

ELYSIA-MARIE CAMPBELL
@ELYSIAMARIE

Plastic strings and colourful glow-in-the-dark beads are scattered across a table outside Concordia's EV building.

Three students enjoy an arts and crafts session in the sun at the FOFA Garden as they bead strings—one goes over to her bike and ties a beaded string to its frame. Their mission for the afternoon is to bejewel their bikes and make themselves “Indi-Visible.”

“We were talking about being indigenous in the city and how biking is really a mode [of transportation] that we’ve used to mobilize,” said Camille Usher, an indigenous student who studies art history, and a member of the Indigenous Art Research Group at Concordia.

“Bikes have really helped with our personal freedom and empowerment, and they move us to a place we want to be,” she said.

The use of glow-in-the-dark beads plays on the idea of visibility as urban indigenous women.

“When we’re biking around it’s a way of making the roads indigenous and taking space,” said Isabella-Rose Weetaluktuk, an indigenous filmmaker raised in Nunavik.

Crafting a Place for Themselves

According to Dr. Karl Hele, professor and director of First Peoples Studies at Concordia, there are endless reasons why indigenous students may feel unwelcomed at the university.

Over the last decade or so of teaching, Hele said some of the comments he has been privy to about indigenous students are often examples of blatant and systematic racism, ongoing colonialism, and a large deal of ignorance.

“Being aware of the fact that we’re on unseated Mohawk land is not something you get through [being at] the university. I wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t taken certain classes. There just needs to be more awareness,” said Usher.

“The difference is we’re not recognized in our own country,” said Cedar Eve Peters, an indigenous art history student who was selling her handmade beaded jewelry outside at the FOFA Gardens. “We’re the only people in the world who have to prove our identity with a status card. If someone says they’re German, then they’re German. You don’t question it,” she said.

When receiving comments about being lucky for not having to pay taxes, Peters said she just wishes her family didn’t have to go through a great deal of suffering to get that in the first place.

“It’s not that one minority suffers more than the other,



Isabella-Rose Weetaluktuk pimps her ride.

PHOTOS ELYSIA-MARIE CAMPBELL

it’s that we’re not even recognized in our own country,” said Peters. “That’s what I think is really messed up.”

Moreover, indigenous students are often away from their home and culture, and that Montreal and the university are foreign to them—a factor that many might not realize.

“There are a limited number of indigenous students, making you feel alone in class or on campus,” said Hele.

“I feel like it’s really hard to be in an institution that’s not very welcoming. There’s not a lot that’s directed towards our success. I didn’t really feel welcome here and I still don’t because there’s not a lot of funding for indigenous people,” said Usher.

Hele echoes that there is indeed a lack of indigenous faculty and staff and support in departments and faculty.

“It comes down to money and space [which is] something universities seem to be loath to part with in great amounts when it comes to indigenous peoples,” said Hele.

The problem may be stemming from a national academic standpoint. When looking at Canada’s school system as a

whole, Hele expressed that there is not enough in being done to educate students on native history or current affairs from kindergarten to university.

“There are few to no courses relating to indigenous peoples, a lack of readings and materials by indigenous authors, and the course content usually makes them not appear at all, briefly, or as social problems,” said Hele. “Course content on indigenous peoples that is wrong, [...] or stereotypical fails to capture the idea that we are not all ‘issues.’”

Biking for Visibility

The bike beading was inspired by a documentary involving a group of indigenous women called the Ovarian Psychos who established a bike collective in L.A.

“They got together and started biking around the city raising visibility for the fact that they’re indigenous and still present. We care about where we live and we still want to find ourselves and our identity in our landscapes,” said Cheli Nightraveller, a Cree Concordia student originally from Saskatoon who also studies art history and is a member of IARG.

These three bike beaders are the founding members of the Uppity NDNs, an all-indigenous women’s biking collective. According to Usher, they are using biking as a methodology to decolonize space, spike conversations and inspire creative production.

This year will be the first time that IARG will be organized entirely by indigenous people without directors or any sort of hierarchy.

“Our idea for this year is to focus on conversations that need to happen at the moment,” said Usher.

Their events last year, according to Usher, were planned in academic settings with panels and conferences. This year, however, they wanted conversations to happen in a friendly space, without any constraints.

“We want to give everyone an opportunity to say things, and get a bit messy, and be able to make mistakes,” said Weetaluktuk. The three women are making it clear that they want to hold events that are open, which will give anyone the opportunity to join in and talk a bit.

The collective described the event as an opportunity to educate people on issues that affect indigenous communities, from an indigenous point of view.

“It would be really fun if we did lots of bike rides on the full moon where we invite everyone who would like to join in, find more people to bike with us,” said Weetaluktuk. “Make the streets feel a bit more friendly.”



Glow-in-the-dark beads are used to fill the roads with indigenous colours and make them “Indi-visible.”

Laughter That Empowers

Using the Stand-Up Stage to Centre the Marginalized

MARION LEFÈVRE
@MARIONLFEVRE

Using comedy as a mean of expression for those affected by oppression might not be intuitive, but on Friday, Sept. 16, the Centre for Gender Advocacy proved that it works.

The Feminist Stand Up Comedy Night, organized by the centre, provided an open space for women, queer people and people of colour to laugh away their experiences with oppression onstage.

The evening took place at Reggie's, Concordia's downtown campus bar. It featured eight artists, including six open-mic performers and two full-time stand-up comedians: Ify Chiwetelu and Kalyani Pandya.

"There is a demand not only for feminist comedy which mainly focuses on gender empowerment but also the need for anti-oppressive humour more broadly," said the centre's action coordinator Stacey Gomez.

Comedy as a medium happens to be an increasingly important tool for social justice, with burgeoning feminist and alternative comedy both inside and out of Canada. Retaking the stage, and feeling that you deserve the space you take, can still be a long and painful process for women, queer, non-binary people and people of colour.

Reaching Out to the Audience

On Friday, Reggie's became the safe space it aims to be. Everyone was welcome and encouraged to come laugh and witness the artists' perspectives.

"It was a precious night. The audience has a very similar positioning. They understand the material, they are politically savvy," Pandya reflected. "It's a handpicked audience."

Sometimes though, reaching out is more difficult.

"Not everyone is your audience, but you can still try to

win over people who may not have considered laughing about it," Chiwetelu explained. "Comedy allows people to not necessarily have their guard up."

Talking about social justice on stage also has its pitfalls. Finding a balance between getting people to laugh and not compromising one's voice is a tricky experience.

"I certainly don't want to get to the point where I'm re-inscribing sexism, inequality or homophobia to get the laugh," Pandya said. Both Pandya and Chiwetelu expressed the importance of being aware of the possibility that a marginalized audience could feel downplayed by seemingly witty wordplay.

Under the Spotlight

The comedy field is not different from other oppressive spaces. Misogyny and sexism can seep in and influence it.

"We want to open the space to people of different communities for them to bring their perspectives and challenge discrimination," Gomez said.

A 1998 study from the scholarly journal *Sex Roles* actually found that the enjoyment of sexist humour was positively correlated with both psychological and physical aggression in men. Opening the stage to a variety of comedians with different stories and sensibilities was the event's goal.

While content matters, Chiwetelu argues that "sometimes, even just the act of taking space can be political," even when the artist showcases a type of humour that has nothing to do with social justice.

Empowerment

"In my own experience, those who had the toughest experience are the ones who have the greatest sense of humour. It helps us to be resilient," said Gomez.

From weird dating experiences to parents' homophobia and cultural appropriation, performers voiced the hardships of



MARION LEFÈVRE

Kalyani Pandya performed in Reggie's spotlight on Sept. 16.

their lives, while successfully putting a funny spin on it.

"It is so empowering to talk about the crap that happened with other people going through the same crap," said Pandya. "Getting my own voice and being okay with the fact that my humour is going to be feminist and probably lesbian feminist as well as antiracist was key in this process."

Yesterday's Socialism, Today's Sexy

Fightback Concordia Attracts a New Wave of Socialists

JOSHUA DE COSTA
@JOSHUADECOSTA21

On the evening of Sept. 14 in a Concordia classroom, Joel Bergman looked out into the crowd and saw a sea of snap-backs instead of the usual flat caps. In place of the worn faces of the working class, he saw fresh-faced youths—more than 65 of them had come to learn. Bergman was there to teach.

The night's lesson: Marxist theory. Tomorrow's test: conquer capitalism.

"It's like trying to push a massive boulder up a giant hill that you're never going to push up. You've got to change the terrain," said Bergman as he explained why capitalism needs to go. "Capitalists don't invest for fun. They don't invest to make people's lives better. They invest for profit."

Originally from the Yukon, the 34-year-old integrated himself in the socialist movement after learning about Fightback more than ten years ago. Fightback, a Canadian Marxist organization that publishes a journal under the same name, organized the discussion at Concordia.

"The word socialist is back in the mainstream," said Bergman. "The amount of people interested in socialist ideas today is skyrocketing. I make the joke that it's the only expanding market today."

The classroom was so full that people had to sit in the aisles. "A couple of years ago, we probably would get a dozen, maybe twenty [people]," he said. The evening's turnout shows just how powerful social movements have become around the world, said Bergman, especially as inequality continues to widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

In January, Oxfam reported that 62 billionaires—or about one per cent of the world population—owned more than half of the world's combined wealth.

"We've seen the Occupy movement come up with this great idea—the one per cent and the 99 per cent," said Bergman. "It's almost Marxist terminology."

Vermont senator Bernie Sanders touted the same terminology earlier this year as he fought to win the Democratic Party's nomination. Despite eventually losing to Hillary Clinton, Bergman acknowledged Sanders' popularity had soared along with resurging leftist thinking among young voters.

According to the *Washington Post*, by June 1, more than two million people under age 30 had cast ballots for Sanders across 21 states. Of that same demographic, less than 1.6 million had voted for Clinton and Donald Trump combined.

"If I was to tell you a few years ago that you were going to have a mainstream politician in the United States [today] call himself a 'socialist' and talk about a revolution against the billionaire class, you'd probably tell me I was crazy," he said. "[The United States] is the anti-communist country."

With Bergman's 40-minute presentation nearing its end, 27-year-old Ahmad Zakaria waited outside the door, speaking with attendees as they left. Zakaria encouraged them to take a look at a nearby table covered with Marxist materials, Fightback journals and pamphlets.

The final-year political science student came to his first meeting three months ago and joined the Montreal arm of Fightback shortly afterwards.

"I went through four years of political science and I didn't feel fulfilled. After four years, I still felt like I didn't understand the world better," he said. "Then I stumbled upon Marxism, and it just really clicked with me. It put everything into a theoretical framework of why things are this bad."

Zakaria came to Montreal from Egypt in 2008, when the Egyptian political climate was in turmoil, and still operating under the Mubarak dictatorship. In 2011 Egypt had a revolu-

tion, but Zakaria still believes the country is subject to capitalist influences from the United States and other foreign interests.

Although Zakaria prefers Montreal's political climate to Egypt's, he still thinks there is work to be done.

"You see homeless people everywhere—and yet we have so many homes. We can give homes to everybody but we don't," he said. "Because [in a capitalist system] we can only connect the people to those homes if they can afford it."



JOSHUA DE COSTA

Joel Bergman proclaimed Marxist beliefs in his fight to conquer capitalism on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

Decrying Criminalization

Concordia Lecture Series Prompts Discussion on HIV Non-disclosure

OCEAN DEROUCHIE
@OSHIEPOSHIE

The sentiment surrounding HIV/AIDS is often one of discomfort. But the reluctance to speak openly about such a significant and impactful disease is hurting the people closest to it.

Under current Canadian legislation, HIV non-disclosure is criminalized. It exercises some of the most punitive aspects of our criminal justice system, explained Alexander McClelland, a writer and researcher currently working on a PhD at Concordia.

McClelland was one of four panelists speaking under Concordia's Community Lecture Series on HIV/AIDS on Thursday, Sept. 15 in the Hall building. The collective puts on multiple panel-based events in order to address the attitudes, laws, and intersections of political and socioeconomic stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Talking About HIV, Legally

There are three distinct charges that guide prosecutors in HIV cases—transmission (giving the disease to someone without having disclosed your status), exposure (e.g. spitting or biting) and non-disclosure (not informing a sexual partner about your HIV/AIDS status).

Aggravated sexual assault and attempted murder are some of the charges that defendants often face, explained Edwin Bernard, Global Coordinator for the HIV Justice Network, during the discussion.

While there are clearly defined situations in which you are legally obligated to tell a sex partner about your HIV status, there are no HIV-specific laws. This results in the application of general law in cases that are anything but general.

In 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada established that "people living with HIV must disclose their status before having sex that poses a 'realistic possibility of HIV transmission.'"

Aidslaw.ca presents a clear map of situations in which you'd have to tell a sex partner about your status because, in fact, it is not in

all scenarios that you'd be legally required to have the discussion.

A lot of it depends on your viral load—the amount of measurable virus in your bloodstream, usually taken in milliliters. A "low" to undetectable viral load is the goal, and is achieved with anti-viral medication.

Treatment serves to render HIV-positive individuals non-infectious, and therefore lowering the risk of transmission. A "high" viral load indicates increased amounts of HIV in the blood.

If protection is used and with a low viral load, one might not have to disclose their status at all.

That said, there is a legal obligation to disclose one's HIV-positive status before any penetrative sex sans-condom, regardless of viral load. You'd also have to bring it up before having any sex with protection if you have a viral load higher than "low."

But not all sex is spelled out so clearly.

Oral sex, for instance, is a grey area. Aidslaw.ca says, "oral sex is usually considered very low risk for HIV transmission." They write that "despite some developments at lower level courts," they cannot say for sure what does not require disclosure.

There are "no risk" activities. Smooching and touching one another are intimate activities that, as health professionals say, pose such a small risk of transmission that there "should be no legal duty to disclose an HIV-positive status."

Moving Up, and Out of Hand

Court proceedings are based on how the jury and judge want to apply general laws to specific instances. There are a lot of factors that can influence the outcome.

The case-to-case outlook leads to the criminal justice system dealing with non-disclosure in such a disproportionate way, said McClelland.

The situation begs the question: "Why is society responding in such a punitive way?" asked McClelland.

This isn't to say that not disclosing one's HIV status "doesn't require some potential form of intervention," he explained, adding

that intervention could incorporate counseling, mental-health support, encouragement around building self-esteem and learning how to deal and live with the virus in the world. "But in engaging with the very blunt instrument that is the criminal law is the wrong approach."

He continued to explain that the reality of the criminalization of HIV ultimately doesn't do anything to prevent HIV transmission.

"It's just ruining people's lives," said McClelland, who has been interviewing Canadians who have been affected by criminal charges due to HIV-related situations.

"It's a very complex social situation that requires a nuanced approach to support people."

Counting the Cases

The Community AIDS Treatment Information Exchange, a Canadian resource for information on HIV/AIDS, states that about 75,500 Canadians were living with the virus by the end of the 2014, according to the yearly national HIV estimates.

That number has gone up since. On Monday, Sept. 19, Saskatoon doctors called for a public health state of emergency due to overwhelmingly increasing cases of new infections and transmission, according to CBC.

In Quebec, there have been cases surrounding transmission and exposure. In 2013, Jacqueline Jacko, an HIV-positive woman, was sentenced to ten months in prison for spitting on a police officer—despite findings that confirm that the disease cannot be transmitted through saliva.

In this situation, Jacko had called for police assistance in removing an unwelcome person from her home. Aggression transpired between her and the officers, resulting in her arrest and eventually her spitting on them, according to Le Devoir.

"[This case] is so clearly based on AIDS-phobia, AIDS stigma and fear," added McClelland, "and an example of how the police treat these situations and use HIV as a way to criminalize people."

Police intervention is crucial in the fight

against HIV criminalization. McClelland urged people to consider the consequences of involving the justice system in these kinds of situations.

"It's important to understand that the current scientific reality for HIV is that it's a chronic, manageable condition. When people take [antivirals] they are rendered non-infectious," he said. "They should then understand that the fear is grounded in a kind of stigma and historical understanding of HIV that is no longer correct today."

The first instinct, or notion of calling the police in an instance where one feels they may have been exposed to the virus in some way is "mostly grounded in fear and panic," he said.

"[Police] respond in a really disproportionate, violent way towards people—so I would consider questioning, or at least thinking twice before calling the police," McClelland explained.

On the other hand, he suggested approaching the situation in more conventional, educational and progressive methods.

"I think it could be talked through in different ways—by going to a counselor, talking to a close friend, engaging with a community organization, learning about HIV and what it means to have HIV, and understanding that the risk of HIV transmission are very low because of people being on [antivirals]."

As for the current state of Canadian legislation, there are a lot of complexities that hinder heavy-hitting changes to the laws.

Due to the Supreme Court's rulings in 2012, they are unlikely to review the decision for another decade. For now, the main course of action is "on the ground," said McClelland. From mitigating people from requesting police involvement in order to "slow down the cases," to raising awareness through events such as Concordia's Community Lecture Series, and engaging with the people to resolve issues in community-based ways and collective of care.

Then, McClelland said, "trying to do high-level political advocacy to get leaders to think about how they can change the current situation" would be the next step.



Laurel Sprague, a researcher from the HIV Justice Network, addressed an audience on Sept. 15 in the Hall Building.

OCEAN DEROUCHIE

Must Sees

The Kills // Sept. 21 // 8 p.m. // Metropolis // \$32

Fan-favourite indie rock band The Kills released their fifth studio album this year entitled *Ash and Ice*. The record has proven that the duo still know how to put together a solid project after years of working together.

Angel Olsen // Sept. 21 // 9 p.m. // Rialto Theatre // \$25

Angel Olsen just released her beautifully luscious album *My Woman* at the beginning of this month. She'll be gracing the stage with new cuts from her latest record, which has undoubtedly garnered high praise from music critics and fans alike. If you're looking to have a tranquil Friday night in Montreal then you should let Angel Olsen serenade you into comfort.

Un Blonde // Sept. 22 // 8:30 p.m. // Casa Del Popolo // \$10

Montreal based artist Un Blonde will headline Casa Del Popolo with his sentimental style of music with guest performers Cindy Lee, Whitney K, The Submissives and Carla Sagan. Judging by the lineup it's worth showing up early to secure a cozy spot.

John Cale // Sept. 22 // 8 p.m. // Rialto Theatre // \$40

If you're willing to throw down some money on a show, then go see legendary musician John Cale, founding member of the highly influential New York art-rock band, The Velvet Underground. Cale will be performing material from his latest LP *M:FANS*—which dropped at the beginning of this year.

Holy F*ck // Sept. 22 // 9:30 p.m. // Fairmount Theatre // \$17

Toronto punk band Holy F*ck will stop by to perform new songs off their latest smash record *Congrats*. The band infuses the influence of punk rock with elements of house music to create a distinct sound that fans have become familiar with since their formation in 2004. Fake Palms and New Fries will accompany Holy F*ck to hype the crowd up for what is sure to be a funky night of dancing.

Free Cake For Every Creature // Sept. 24 // 9 p.m. // Bar Le "Ritz" // \$13

Flowery soft vocals are laden on Katie P. Bennett's musical project, Free Cake for Every Creature. If you like Frankie Cosmos, the *Juno* soundtrack, or generally cute music, you'll probably dig this show.

POP!

Goes
MTL

POPPING OFF

Festival season in Montreal seemingly never ends.

This city is buzzing in a constant cycle of pre-drinking, partying and passing out—almost on repeat. Maybe that's the beauty of it. But what better way to start the first weeks of school than with a weeklong, citywide festival like POP Montreal?

60,000 attendees. Over 250 events—nearly half of them free—spread between more than 50 venues. POP Montreal offers up a hefty load of musical and artistic experiences, but where to start with such a slew of opportunity?

cool stuff

Puces Pop // Sept. 23 to 25 // Laurier Metro // Free entry

A tri-annual tradition, Puces POP Fair is a cute 'lil fair that will make your crafty heart swell with joy. A rotating showcase of creators will be present to showcase their work of many mediums. If you're into that DIY vibe, this designer and artist fair is for you.

John Cale // Sept. 23 // 5 p.m. // Musee des Beaux Arts // \$15

POP symposiums are unique keynote conferences that invite creative minds to the stage to share their voices. This year, legend in the flesh John Cale—you know, founder of The Velvet Underground—will be speaking at the Museum of Fine Arts in conjunction with the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit. In addition to his talk, Cale is also a main headliner of this year's lineup. Even cooler, he's basically just here for POP. "[Cale's] not playing anywhere else, or playing in New York or Ottawa or Boston. He's coming in for this specific show and conference—we are very lucky to have him. It's going to be a unique experience and opportunity," quipped POP director Dan Seligman about seeing the iconic musician.



A Guide to the Weeklong Festival

MICHAEL EIDELSON and OCEAN DEROUCHIE
@MOOKELL and @OSHIEPOSHIE

Dan Seligman, POP Co-founder and Director of Programming, suggests that newbies head over to the POP Quarters to start their adventure. If you're just curious to see what is going on and want more information, it's the best place to start—and it's open everyday, he says.

The organization's headquarters will begin each day of the festival with a barbeque and live music. "It's the best place to hang out and get a sense of the festival, and meet people from all over the world," Seligman says.

With that said, do what you need to do, kid. We offer you this not-quite-exhaustive guide to the festival, in hopes that you will discover new music, new places and new friends.

FREE stuff

You don't have to be rich to be my girl. If you're not feeling like burning cash out at the shows, you're in luck—POP Montreal hosts a ton of free events—from conferences, to gigs, to local designer and craft shows.

Opening Party // Sept. 21 // 6 p.m. // POP Quarters

Kick off the first few days of festivities by getting to meet some fun and cool people at the opening party. Located at the POP headquarters it's a great way to engage with new people and figure out your plans as to which artists to check out in the coming days. Bring some friends or make new ones and dance to some mixes provided by dj flugvél og geimskip and Hoan.

Producing Change from Inside the Studio // Sept. 23 // 1 p.m. // POP Box

A feminist approach to the whirlwind that is the music industry, this panel discussion will seek to address the realities of women in the biz. Intersecting issues such as access, inclusivity and tokenism are on the agenda. Canadian musicians Foxtrott and A Pigeon will lead the talk around creating spaces for women and fostering participation in existing areas of the industry.

CJLO BBQ // Sept. 22 // 2 p.m. // Quartiers POP

Featuring Wiklow, No Aloha, Joyce N'sana and Guy Madonna, Concordia's very own radio station will be hosting a little party with some little treats. Come enjoy food and music with students and radio enthusiasts alike.

Fashion POP // Sept. 21 // 8 p.m. // Rialto Theatre

Celebrating its tenth year, Fashion POP will hook up one lucky winner of a design contest with a live photo shoot at an after party that will be held at the Rialto Theatre. The contest will be judged by nine industry peeps. You can look forward to seeing all kinds of creative fashion designs that will please the judges and crowd alike.

Free Food // Sept. 21 // 7 p.m. // Le Clubhouse POP

Local DJ Frankie Teardrop will be spinning records late into the night at Le Clubhouse POP. There's no rush to make it to the show since it'll be a continuous set with many guest DJs hopping on and off the booth. You should bring some extra cash with you to the show—there'll be a guest chef serving up grub like mac and cheese, chicken and plantain skewers and a veggie sandwich packed with avocado, mushrooms, caramelized onion and tomatoes.

Vernissage // Sept. 21 // 6:30 p.m. // POP Quarters

A photo exhibition surrounding the idea of how food has been incorporated into young contemporary photography within the past decade will be available to attend at the POP HQ. A number of photographers will contribute their own work to the exhibition and will be available to chat with during and after the show.

Check out our ongoing POP Montreal coverage online:

www.thelinknewspaper.ca

OCEAN DEROUCHIE

Bordering on Impractical

Exploring Issues Immigrants Face Through Theatre

CAMERON STIFF

Who and what define where people have the right to live? Can we create a world that is more accepting of people from other places who may have differently coloured skin and speak with different words?

These are some of the questions immigrant artist Lynne Cooper set out to explore when she premiered *Sunk in the Trunk* in 2006 at Montreal Arts Interculturels.

The show, and the question of borders, was revisited last Wednesday evening during the first event of the Concordia-run conversation series, “University of the Streets Café,” held at the MAI on the tenth anniversary of the show’s premiere.

Billed as “a clown’s wonderful struggle with immigration,” the two-person show was developed by Cooper in collaboration with fellow Montreal actor and clown, Francis Neron.

The project served as a creative outlet for her own difficult experience of immigrating to Canada and gaining permanent resident status in Quebec.

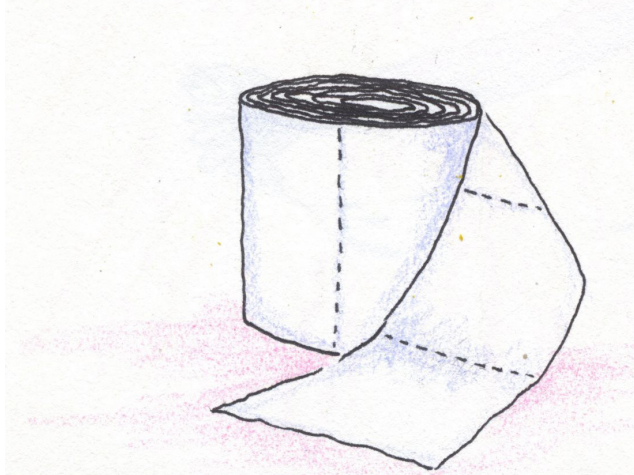
Born in Honduras to a Trinidadian mother and Chilean father, with British grandparents, Cooper got into theatre as a teenager, touring the world with a production of *Alice in Wonderland* and then pursuing studies in clowning. In 2000, she decided to move to Canada with the dream of joining Cirque du Soleil.

Unfortunately, she was not accepted into the company, but fell in love with Montreal and decided to stay and seek residency. And that’s when the trouble—and the creative inspiration—began.

After several years of applications and waiting, and numerous trips to the border to renew her traveler’s visa, she was eventually rejected by Canadian immigration officials and spent the next year out of the country, trying to get back in. Finally, she did—with papers—and set about creating *Sunk in the Trunk* using little more than toilet paper, a plunger, and

a big blue traveler’s trunk. Perhaps a testament to the resourcefulness of immigrants who often arrive with little more than the clothes on their backs, the toilet paper is used creatively throughout the show to suggest borders and the sometimes dirty work of maintaining them.

Cooper plays a big-hearted clown, determined to make a home with the few things she has. Neron takes on the role of the border officer, constantly laying down toilet-paper lines and deciding what is ‘in’ and what is ‘out.’



MORAG RAHN-CAMPBELL

“I wanted to use the show as a funny and provocative means of opening up discussion about the roles of borders in our lives,” Cooper said.

By chance, the show was put in the children’s section of a theatre event in Quebec City the year it opened, and Cooper ended up touring it in schools across the province and country.

Children responded well to the comic elements, and it also gave them an opportunity to discuss the sometimes-sensitive subject of immigration and citizenship through feedback ses-

sions after each performance. The show was even performed to a room full of border guards—many of them parents of local children—at a school in Coaticook, Quebec, which is close to the U.S. border with Vermont.

How was the reaction? Cooper smiles. “It was good, they enjoyed it and were willing to share a little bit about how they related to the questions raised.”

Ten years later, there are still many questions being raised about the role of borders in our lives, as evidenced by circumstances like the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union, largely motivated by fears of free movement of immigrants and refugees fleeing of war-torn countries in the Middle East, and Donald Trump’s threat to build a wall between the United States and Mexico.

The discussion was lively at the cafe as people shared their own experiences of immigration and detainment and the search for a home, and critiqued the relatively free flow of capital, corporations and weapons across borders, often aided by governments.

Michael Toppings, executive and artistic director of the MAI, shared his ongoing struggle to secure a visa for a Lebanese artist scheduled to perform with a troupe that very weekend. “It’s not just about what we are keeping out, it’s what we are keeping in, holding back,” he said.

Questions of borders, citizenship and multiculturalism remain central to Cooper’s theatre practice. She is now working on a puppet show involving a Sikh polar bear on a melting iceberg, a Mariachi moose on a sinking ship, and a white African, Habs-loving, spoon-playing elephant who all end up stranded on an island with one coconut tree bearing one single, solitary coconut.

“Borders have such an immense impact on our lives, more than we think,” Cooper says as the evening closed. “It’s good to remember that, to revisit this. Now, I’m Quebecoise, but I keep all my heritage inside me, carried with me like the suitcase in the show.”

THE LINK CALENDAR OF EVENTS Sept. 20 - Sept. 27

TU 20 Urban Bodies Earth-Herself A series of public art that explores how the quality of soil can impact urban gardening. La Ruche d'Art St. Henri • 4525 St. Jacques St. • 6 p.m. // FREE	WE 21 Art POP Vernissage Art POP, part of POP Montreal, will showcase art from local and international artists. Art POP • 3450 St. Urbain St. • 11 a.m. // FREE	TH 22 How the War on Terror Became a War on Journalism Join former Al Jazeera English bureau chief from Cairo, Mohamed Fahmy, as he talks about his imprisonment and covering Egypt's political uprisings with CTV reporter Paul Karwatsky. D.B. Clarke Theatre • 1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. // FREE	FR 23 A Panel on Organizing Around Anti-Black Racism RJ Pate, Leroi Newbold and Robyn Maynard will discuss their respective experiences as journalists, activists and educators combatting racism and their connections to Black Lives Matter. Concordia University, MB 1.210 • 1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W. • 5 p.m. // FREE
SA 24 Win Butler's POP versus JOCK IV A fundraising basketball game featuring Win Butler of Arcade Fire, and former NBA champions Matt Bonner, Luke Bonner, and Brian Scalabrine. McGill University Sports Centre • 845 Sherbrooke St. W. • 1 p.m. // \$25 or \$75 for tax deductible corporate donation	SU 25 Etsy Fait au Québec 2016 Join a celebration of everything that is handmade at the third edition of this artsy event. Technopôle Angus • 2600 William-Tremblay St. • 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	MO 26 In Conversation With Iggy Pop Iggy Pop, the musical innovator behind the The Stooges will be speaking wisdom to Montrealers in collaboration with Red Bull Music Academy. Monument National • 1182 St. Laurent Blvd. • 7 p.m. // \$23.50	TU 27 Patterns by Pierre Friquet Watch Patterns, a horror and poetic film that tells the story of a man named Walter, as he goes on a journey through his dark, repressed past. SAT (Société des Arts Technologiques) • 1201 St. Laurent Blvd. • 7 p.m. // \$18.25

Material Becomes Storytelling

Fans, Creators and Newbies Alike Come Together for Montreal's Stop Motion Film Festival

JONATHAN CARAGAY-COOK
@HIIMBIRACIAL

Animated—that's the best way to describe Érik Goulet, the founder of Montreal's Stop Motion Film Festival.

During the event this past weekend, he skipped around the de Sève Cinema in Concordia's downtown library building, playing host, organizer, and lifelong stop motion fanboy all at once.

"I'm young at heart," Goulet said in an interview between film screenings. "I'm 49 years old but I love stop motion, I love going to the theatre—I love going to Toys R Us."

The Concordia part-time instructor's enthusiasm became almost a sideshow from the on-screen talent displayed in the festival's eighth edition. There were 48 films entered into this year's competition—which were split between three categories: academic, independent and professional.

The farthest submission came from Japan, while the closest was from Montreal. A majority of the films came from either the United States or Europe. There were two judges sitting among the audience during screenings, which played successively for each category, lasting about an hour each.

Claude Robinson, an artist known for protecting Canadian copyright, joined Sylvie Trouvé, a Montreal-based animator and filmmaker who animated for the 2015 animated blockbuster, *The Little Prince*. The pair served jury-duty for the first time, sitting alongside each other mid-theatre to measure the crowd's "pulse," as Goulet explained to the audience before each showing.

"It's nice to be able to sit down and watch a bunch of films," Trouvé said after the second academic competition showcase. "Student films are amazing—I love them because they really are unique and come from the heart and are not outside-influenced."

Eight Years and Counting

It was on a car ride back from the Ottawa Film Festival in 2007 when Goulet first got inspired to create a festival dedicated solely to stop motion films. The Ottawa event had a wide selection of animation films he liked, but Goulet remembered complaining to his wife Veronica about a lack of the presence his first love—stop motion.

"My wife turns to me and says, maybe you should start your own festival, then," Goulet recalled. It wasn't until the summer of 2009—after a company merger and subsequent "fortunate" layoff—that Goulet had enough free time between contracts and teaching to finally work on the festival.

With only three months between July and the festival's premiere in October, the 2009



The festival is now in its eighth year.

PHOTOS NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER

edition received 113 worldwide film submissions and featured 60 of them, according to Goulet—but to little fanfare. There was a lack of promotion, Goulet said, because he wasn't sure how many directors would submit work.

The first festival was well received by friends and family alike, and a second edition happened the next year. By the time of the fifth edition, Goulet explained that they became a non-profit organization, which meant they could apply for government grants and find sponsorships more easily. "I'm here for the long run," he said. "I feel responsible for the stop motion community I'm trying to grow in Montreal."

The animation community in Montreal—especially for stop motion—is small but thriving despite its size, according to Trouvé. "The festival and Erik really put it on the map," she said.

Inside the Experts' Minds

The festival kicked off on Friday with a talk by the duo behind the Clyde Henry Productions studio in Montreal, Chris Lavis and Maciek Szczerbowski. Best known for their 2008 Oscar-nominated short, "Madame Tutli-Putli," the pair gave an unrehearsed presentation on their process of using found items to create stop motion. It was a perfect start to the festival for those unaware of the nuance involved in the niche genre.

In between nerdy insider jokes that fell flat—a fact they acknowledged and laughed off—Lavis and Szczerbowski provided insightful gems to their craft and technique. In stop motion, material becomes storytelling, Szczerbowski explained. He recounted how one time

he saw broken glass on St. Laurent St., thought to pick it up, then thought better and continued walking, only to reconsider his decision a block away and go back to get it.

They showed images of their studio full of puppets, naked armatures, and different sets. Having a huge collection of found items from the street or elsewhere is essential to stop motion animation, they said, because the objects can speak to you and inspire.

"Sometimes they say, 'use me,' 'don't use me,' or even 'piss off,'" Szczerbowski explained to the audience.

Showcasing student work

Concordia has a class on stop motion animation in its Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, taught by Goulet. When asked about the program, Trouvé said Concordia places more emphasis on creating filmmakers than animators and that they need to provide more technical training beyond Goulet's course.

This lack of resources hasn't stopped recent Concordia students from getting work in the industry, though. Six of them worked on *The Little Prince* with Trouvé, and Goulet was the one who recommended them. "I'm really proud because they got the talent," he said. "[I received] lots of compliments from the [film's] production team."

"I can see in class who's good at constructing puppets or animating or constructing sets or miniature pieces."

Many of Goulet's former students tend to keep in touch with him on a professional and personal level. The team that coordinated the festival this year boasted five past students. "I work with them on contracts," Goulet explained. "It's more than just former students. They've become my colleagues—they've become my friends."

One might expect that his former students feature heavily within the festival's competitions, but Goulet said this isn't the case. "It's not just that they're former students of mine that they get a free pass," he continued. "They've got to have the talent and [show] they can compete with films all over the world."

One Concordia graduate featured in the academic category this year: Pascal Huynh. His three-minute short, "My Invisible Mother," was a hybrid between stop motion—using claymation and cardboard sets—and documentary-style interviews. "Pascal is one of the rare who has a film being presented," Goulet commented. "The quality of the work is awesome."



Claude Robinson joined Sylvie Trouvé in judging the films.

Working Through the Pain

Stingers Midfielder Stephanie Di Lemme Returns from Injury After Missed Season

ALEXANDER PEREZ

@DASALEXPerez

It was a spring afternoon in March of 2015. The Concordia Stingers faced-off against the Université de Sherbrooke Vert et Or at the Stinger Dome. Concordia midfielder Stephanie Di Lemme left the field in disappointment, knowing that she was going to miss the following season.

“After the surgery it was very tough. Even before, at that last game of the second year, it was tough to know I wouldn’t see the field for another year,” said Di Lemme.

Di Lemme suffered a torn ligament in her shoulder while playing for Collège Lionel-Groulx Nordiques, causing it to often dislocate on impact.

During a game with the Nordiques, she fell to the ground and felt her shoulder pop. From there, the pain would be recurrent, causing her to be substituted in and out of games for the next two years.

Di Lemme played two seasons with the Stingers before getting surgery done on her shoulder. It was in her second year where the injury started to become a struggle.

“We were hoping she would’ve gotten it in the spring,” said Stingers head coach Jorge Sanchez. “By the time she got her surgery we knew that the fall season was a total write-off.”

After surgery, it took six months of recovery before Di Lemme could get back on the field with her team. She made the decision to get the operation done in July and miss the 2015 fall season in order to strengthen her shoulder.

“It was important to strengthen the shoulder,” said Sanchez. “The goal was really to ease her back in so that she can be totally ready this August.”

Missing six months was a hard pill to swallow. For the first four weeks Di Lemme had her arm attached in a splint. Her physical capabilities were temporarily limited, even the easiest of tasks proved to be difficult. The injury was especially difficult for Di Lemme’s mother, Christine Langelier. Witnessing her daughter struggle was a painful sight.

“Of course at the beginning, she needed somebody to constantly help her. She couldn’t move. It was hard to eat, it was very painful,” said Langelier “For sure for me it was emotional.”

The three months post-surgery also proved frustrating for the Stingers midfielder.

“It was a good three months with no physical activity whatsoever. I was bored and missed the sport a lot,” said Di Lemme. “It was a pretty big injury so just doing normal things in the first three months was really rough.”

Throughout her rehabilitation, Di Lemme’s goal was clear: to play for the Stingers again. During her recovery, this became a source of motivation, spending a lot of time at the Concordia Stingers clinic.

Although she faced a lengthy spell on the sidelines, Di Lemme would occasionally make an appearance at Stingers practices. Di Lemme and Sanchez also managed to keep in touch. Her recovery and fitness surrounded most of their conversations.

“I think coach-player relationships can determine sometimes how connected you feel to a team,” said Di Lemme. “If you get injured and that’s the last time you hear [from the coach] it can be demotivating and you think you might not be a part of the team.”

Despite not being able to play, it was Di Lemme’s passion for her studies that proved promising throughout her recovery. Di Lemme is an exercise science major and interned as a physiotherapist on the Stingers men’s basketball team last season.

“I’ve always loved assisting someone for reaching a goal and it would help even more with what I was doing with the Stingers,” said Di Lemme. “It was very motivating. It was the reason why I chose athletic therapy.”

Her internship experience allowed her to develop a deeper connection with the Stingers.

“Although I couldn’t play with them, I was a part of the Stingers family in clinic, to see the players from all of the sports and always keeping contact with them,” said Di Lemme “I think that helped me stay connected in my rehab.”

Di Lemme’s return to the Stingers was a welcome one, especially



PHOTOS WILLIE WILSON

After a year off due to injury Stephanie Di Lemme made her third appearance for Stingers.

from coach Sanchez. Her experience in Canadian Interuniversity Sport bodes well for Sanchez and his new Stingers team.

“It’s nice to get her back,” revealed Sanchez. “It’s like you get a bonus in recruiting, to get a player with a very specific profile that comes and is CIS ready.”

It’s her presence on the field that’s been missed, and that Sanchez is glad to see back on his team. “She’s a very highly technical player, it’s something that we were sort of missing from that position last year,” said Sanchez. “She calms the play, she can distribute well from that defensive midfielder position as well as being a solid tackler on the defensive side of the ball.”

Di Lemme has wasted no time making her presence felt. In the first two league games of the season against the McGill Martlets and Université de Montréal Carabins, Di Lemme played the full 90 minutes. She also managed to cover 11 kilometres in both games, which proved to be the most out of any other player on the team—an astonishing feat for a player coming back from a long-term injury.

“She’s covering ground, she’s working hard, and doesn’t seem to be favouring her shoulder,” said Sanchez.

Di Lemme displayed a positive impression in her first two games, but Sanchez will still look to manage his returning player in order to avoid another injury.

“I don’t think it’s 100 per cent yet,” revealed Sanchez. “There’s probably some stiffness still there, but as far as I can see she’s fit.”

With the season up and running, and a healthy Di Lemme back in the squad, she will look to forget about her past injury woes, and help the Stingers make a push up the Réseau du Sport Étudiant du Québec.

Coming back from the injury, Di Lemme believes that she’s a better player now than before her operation. After spending two seasons playing with discomfort, she’s taking this opportunity in stride.

“It’s a fresh start. Also with the experience, with my first two years, I know the league, I know how it works so now it’s even better,” Di Lemme said.



Concordia's Dragon Boat Club flies down the river.

COURTESY ED NGUYEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Building Strength by the Books

A New Guidebook Provides Concordia Dragon Boat Club Knowledge Needed to Excel

KELSEY LITWIN

@KELSEYLITWIN

Over the phone, Tom Trung Zacchia shouts “Do you mind if I call you back? I need to get on the podium.”

Trung Zacchia and his dragon boat team, True Grit, had just paddled their way to second place at Quebec Cup, a competition based out of Montreal’s 22 Dragon clubs at Parc Jean-Drapeau.

The Concordia engineering student is one of the 20-odd members of the newly founded Concordia Dragon Boat Club, the university’s latest venture into the sport. This team, unlike past dragon boat clubs that Concordia has seen, are here to compete—they plan to develop a physically strong, cohesive team of both rookies and experienced paddlers alike.

One of CDNC biggest assests, Trung Zacchia explained, is that they have “so much experience in this community. Collectively, we have about 30 years of experience.”

He stated that it’s his involvement in the community that has enabled them to build and foster relationships with professionals in the sport.

“[True Grit is] the best men’s team in the club that we paddle in,” said Trung Zacchia. “Because of that, a lot of the coaches really recognized us.”

Former Dragon Boat Canada team member Michael Wu is one of the elite level coaches that the CDBC has brought on to shape their team for the next competition season. Wu, a kinesiologist, represented the country on the international stage in 2009

and 2013 in the sport, and has been coaching for the past ten years.

Part of Wu’s mandate is to help the team develop their guidebook for proper training techniques.

“The Concordia Dragon Boat Club this year is taking a big step up,” said Wu. “This year is the first time that the club has decided to take a step more towards a competitive sport level.”

“Time,” joked Trung Zacchia, “is not on our side.” The dragon boat training guidebook that the CDBC is creating in collaboration with True Grit will ideally provide new and old recruits alike with an optimized rubric, enabling them to maximize their strengths as quickly as possible.

“That’s the whole point of the guidebook, to lay things out for everybody,” explained Wu. “Here are some guidelines of what

kind of strength standards they should be accomplishing, what kind of cardio standards they should be accomplishing. Here’s the kind of training that you should do that will help you towards that.”

The guide, set to be published on Friday, Sept. 23, will also provide resources for students on how to balance sport and school as well as other mental tips and tricks for athletes. According to Wu, it will encompass “all the knowledge that we have available to help anybody who joins the club.”

To be more inclusive, the CDBC are ensuring that the guidebook is open source—that anyone else in the dragon boat community can add their expertise. For example, Trung Zacchia described, they want to make sure that both female and male perspectives are included. That

way, each member of the club can train appropriately, in a way that best suits their needs.

Trung Zacchia and Wu both stressed that the club is not exclusive to experienced paddlers.

“To give you an idea of what the team looked like for this summer, we were in a boat of 24 [paddlers],” Trung Zacchia explained. “In the team of 24, half was [made up of] really experienced rowers, the other half were novices. We don’t discriminate against anyone’s abilities.”

Unlike other competitive sports, dragon boat can be introduced at later ages. Trung Zacchia took part for the first time with his CEGEP team at Marianopolis. Wu took up the sport at 18 years old.

“The great thing about dragon boat is that it’s what’s known as a late-entry sport, meaning this is a sport that people are able to pick up and excel in even if they start at a relatively older age,” explained Wu. “Whereas other sports, if you hadn’t started as a kid, chances are you will never reach international-caliber competitions. Dragon boat is the type of sport that you can pick it up in university and [...] still have the opportunity to race at world championships.”

Further, Wu suggested that getting involved in the CDBC is a step in the right direction for building a healthy lifestyle.

“Dragon boat acted as a very good medium through which [athletes I’ve coached] picked up a lot of healthy habits,” Wu said. “If it weren’t for dragon boat, they would have probably never have started a sport, would have never have gone to the gym, or not as early as they did now.”



THE LINK

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Nahm'sayin?

World Cashgrab of Hockey

TRISTAN D'AMOURS
@TRISTANDAMOURS

I have deep issues with the World Cup of Hockey, that new tournament that's happening from now until the beginning of October.

It's not about the competition. I think it can be a legitimate thing. It's not about the fact that the National Hockey League is involved—I mean, it was really just a matter of time before something like this would happen.

It's the name—the World Cup—that really gets on my nerves.

The NHL decided to pick and choose who would participate in the tournament. Commissioner Gary Bettman and his hockey overlords even went as far as inventing countries—Team Europe, which is a continent, not a country, and Team North America which will feature Canadian and American players under the age of 23.



ZOË GELFANT

The purpose of a world cup is to have the world participate. There needs to be some type of qualifying in order to see countries that crave to qualify for these types of events. Look at any other World Cup in every other sport—they are all organized by international federations. This World Cup of Hockey is run by the NHL itself—a league that operates only in Canada and the United States.

What will happen during the next few days is really just a money-making scheme on the basis of making international hockey more 'interesting.' Philippe Cantin of *La Presse* rightfully called the competition in his Saturday column "La Coupe du marketing"—the marketing cup.

Call it Canada Cup, like the similar tournament that was held back in the day. You can even give it some other name to make it hip with the hockey fans. Just don't soil the term "World Cup" with this invented, faux tournament that you falsely call the World Cup of Hockey.

The Crossword Answers Are Here:



Navigating Bureaucracy While Trans

Quebec Needs Better Housing and Employment Protections for Trans People

JULIEN ROSE JOHNSON

We're beginning another fast-tracked year at Concordia University—two more semesters of studying, getting and hopefully staying organized, and dealing with the variety of other issues faced by people within our extremely large age group. In this hectic world, a wide array of complications can greatly affect our overall capacity to do well in school, maintain a healthy sleep schedule and even—if we're being optimistic—do things that we enjoy.

The outcome of these factors will be influenced by a person's status in housing and employment—two realms that can be extremely problematic for a number of folks, due to the stresses they cause within our capitalist society. The bureaucratic processes of getting and keeping a job, trouble with your boss or landlord, paying rent, and dealing with the Régie du logement can all be extremely complex and overwhelming.

It's often mentally demanding, emotionally taxing, and just plain tough to understand what messages from our landlords and bosses are trying to tell us—this applies to almost everyone. Beyond that, other elements of peoples' identities can become a factor in their navigation of those systems, and can greatly affect a person's capacity to swim—or drown—in seemingly uncharted waters.

Resources on navigating issues with bosses and landlords totally exist, but they don't exist specifically for trans and gender-nonconforming people. Since I experience the realities of living as a trans person in cisnormative society, I can also distinguish their effects in bureaucracy.

I'm a mixed, neurodiverse, trans-masculine person in the midst of my medical transition—an identity that allows me

a lot of privileges and perks. Neurodiversity is a concept that frames neurological differences like autism and bipolarity as natural human variation, rather than disorder.

I roam the world being seen as a primarily masculine or male person, but I am still read as queer and gender-nonconforming mixed person—and that plays into my navigation of bureaucratic spaces.

My work at Concordia Student Union's off-campus Housing and Job Bank helps me to better understand how trans realities intersect with legislation, politics and navigating a system that was built to be inaccessible to trans and gender-nonconforming people. It has helped me see that cisgender people controlling legislation surrounding trans people is dangerous, and often—if not always—leaves the most marginalized members of the community behind.

We, as trans people, should know better than to be satisfied with half-cooked caring.

Cisgender people creating legislation surrounding trans people's gender validity also raises the important question of whether all trans people even understand what this means. How does this affect us when it's applied? How does it make us safer? And how does this touch the people in our community in the most need of change?

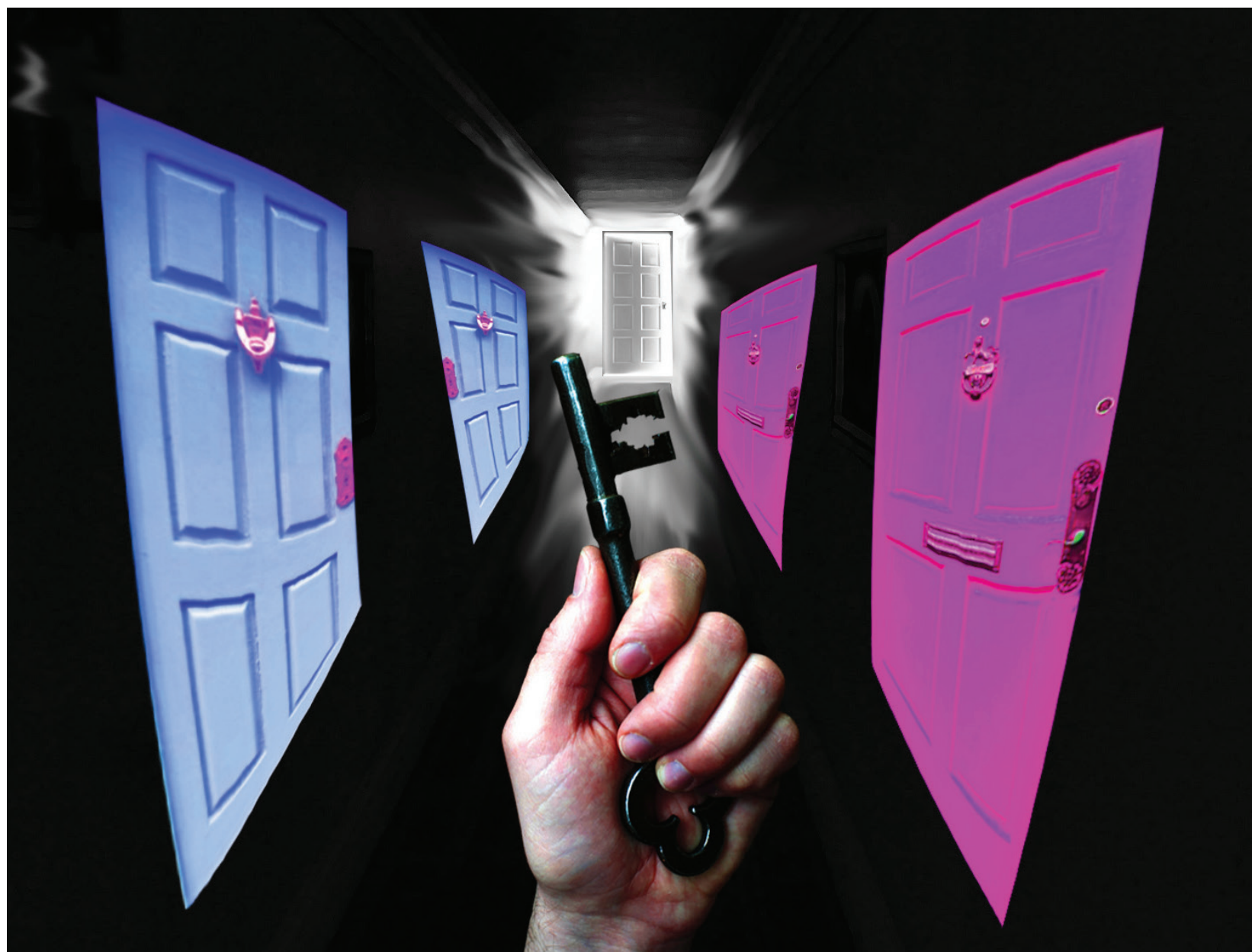
Some issues that trans people must face when navigating society include signing leases or work contracts with a name and gender marker that differs from their legal ID, being refused a job or apartment based on gender presentation, experiencing harassment, threats and violence from customers, coworkers and landlords. If legislation isn't specifically targeting these realities, then what is it doing? Finding and keeping stable housing and employment are two of the biggest obstacles faced by trans and gender-nonconforming people.

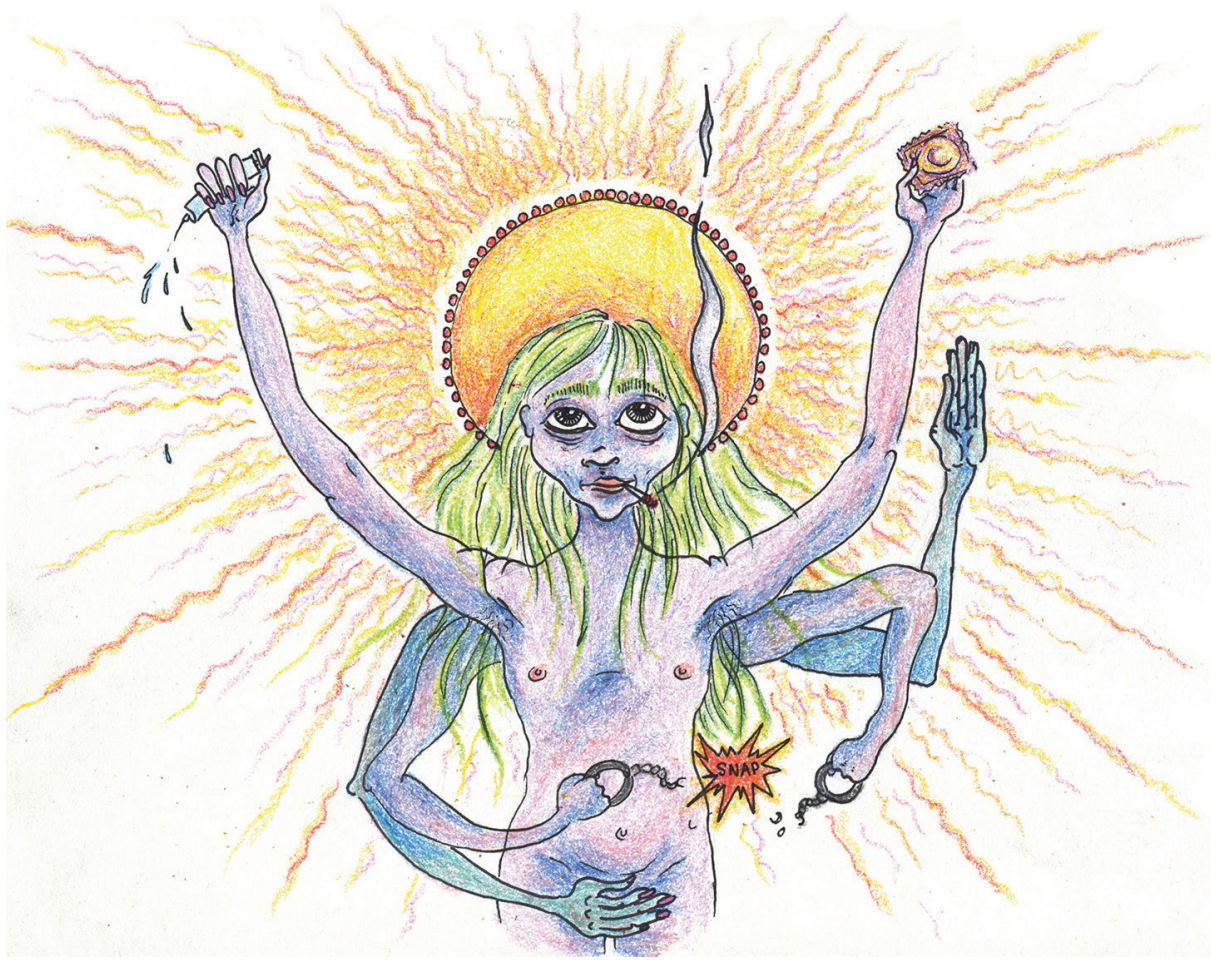
It's also important to note that attempting to solve these problems with legislation—or even a change in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms—is completely useless if it excludes people. For example, if those without Canadian legal status, those below or above a certain age, those of certain neurodiverse realities or those who don't conform to binary gender can't experience the effects of legal changes, then “falling through the cracks” isn't exactly the appropriate metaphor. Existing protections for trans people often seem more like they're made of fishnet rather than concrete.

We need to look at legislation that affects trans people, such as the recent bills 103 and C-36—Quebec's bill to allow trans children to change their name and gender identity, and Canada's prostitution law, respectively. We need to prioritize those who are invisibilized and focus on how these systems are adjusting to trans existence and resistance. When legislative changes occur, educational resources also need to be set up. Actual conversations surrounding these realities need to begin, otherwise we're stuck in a cycle of fake promises related to inclusion.

That is exactly the problem with trans-related legislation—the belief that changes for trans people will come from the system which has willingly invalidated us for decades. Creating faint, rainbow-coloured changes ultimately doesn't matter if trans people can still be systematically refused housing and employment because they're trans. And since there's no way to live within this machine without employment or housing, we are left with broken promises and hypervisibility.

Julien Rose Johnson works as an office assistant at the CSU's Housing and Job Bank. HOJO is a resource that offers students and non-students information and counsel on housing and employment issues.





MORAG RAHN-CAMPBELL

EDITORIAL

Community-Based Research is the Key to HIV Destigmatization and Decriminalization

Receiving an HIV-positive diagnosis is already a life sentence. The state of Canada's legal system threatens to give those living with the virus another one.

An HIV diagnosis is accompanied by its own set of complexities that are not encompassed in Canada's criminal law. By pushing HIV non-disclosure cases into the same box as more easily defined assault cases, we are generalizing an issue that frankly cannot be simplified.

This does not reflect the reality that one faces when living with HIV. Criminalizing the virus further stigmatizes what should and could be everyday activities.

This puts the estimated 75,000 Canadians living with HIV at risk of being further isolated. This takes us backwards, considering the scientific progress that has been made to make living with the virus manageable. Under the proper antiviral medication, one's risk of transmitting the disease is incredibly low. This stigma is rooted in an antiquated understanding of what HIV is and the associated risks—much of that fear having emerged primarily as a result of homophobia.

Further, with over 185 cases having been brought to court, Canada is leading in terms of criminalizing HIV non-disclosure. This pushes marginalized communities farther away. According to estimates from 2014, indigenous populations have a 2.7 higher incidence rate than the non-indigenous Canadian average. Gay men have an incidence rate that is 131 times higher than the rest of the male population in Canada.

As of Sept. 19, doctors in Saskatchewan are calling on the provincial government to declare a public health state of emergency, with a spike in HIV/AIDS cases around the province.

In 2010, it's reported that indigenous people accounted for 73 per cent of all new cases in the province. Outreach and treatment for these communities are at the forefront of Saskatchewan's doctor's recommendations for the government.

With such a highly treatable virus, however, the problem should never have gone this far. It is an excerpt from a much bigger issue.

As we can see from the available statistics, HIV—both the virus and its criminaliza-

tion—is a mirror for broader inequalities that exist within society. HIV related issues disproportionately affect racialized people, gender non-conforming people, and other marginalized groups.

Discussions around HIV also must include discussions around drug use. The heavy criminalization of injection drugs has created a context where users are driven deep underground, thus putting them at an incredibly high risk for contracting the virus. Treating drug use as a health rather than a criminal issue is an integral part of any effective HIV prevention strategy. Safe injection sites, such as Vancouver's InSite, have made staggering differences in their communities and prove to be a positive way of combating the spread of HIV.

This is just one of the many ways that we can control the spread of HIV without judicial intervention, without turning the HIV-positive population into criminals.

Using community-based research enables us to not only understand the needs of the affected population—particularly when it comes to understanding the almost inherent

intersectionality associated with the spread of HIV—but also allows us to better target our resources towards those who need it most.

Often times, that stretches to include those closest to HIV-positive individuals. Spreading awareness, and developing resources and a support network for them is just as important in fighting the stigmatization of the virus.

The Link stands for the immediate decriminalization of HIV non-disclosure, and the move towards restorative justice systems in non-disclosure cases. As always, those directly affected by an issue are the ones with who are best positioned to create a solution—something that the restorative justice framework embraces.

The disclosure of one's HIV status is important. Jailing those who don't disclose it, however, won't make the virus go away. It simply isolates the problem, places it out of site and out of mind.

Criminalizing HIV patients is less about justice than it is about appeasing the baseless fears of the general population. It's time for a more effective solution.

THE LINK

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