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TIME: 8:00 P.M.
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Same System, Different Struggles

Trans, Black, Indigenous and Palestinian Communities Resist Separately, Together

JOSHUA DE COSTA
@JOSHUADECOSTA

Fatima Ayad*, a migrant to Canada, left her home of Tunisia five years ago. She would return once, but after her transition, never again.

She couldn't.

At least, not with her new name, Fatima, or the wrong gender designation on her passport. Returning to Tunisia as a trans woman meant she risked getting beaten, harassed or even murdered, Ayad said. She recalled how when she was 17, men threw stones at her as she walked along a busy street in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. Nobody helped.

"I had to find a way out in order to find a way in—to give myself the security and the chance to become the woman I always yearned to be," she said to an audience of more than 30, gathered in a classroom at UQAM's Pavilion N Building Thursday night.

Ayad shared her story as part of a panel, organized and streamed live on Facebook by Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights Concordia for the second annual Boycott, Divest and Sanctions week. The panel combined a diversity of scholars and activists who, by sharing their experiences, sought to reveal the struggles facing each of their own communities.

When Ayad migrated to Canada in 2011, she thought she might find a new home in a land more accepting of trans peoples than Tunisia. But Canada left her wanting.

Ayad soon learned that trans migrants couldn't change their names or sex designations on official papers until they became Canadian citizens, which could take anywhere between seven to ten years.

Recently, Quebec's trans laws have progressed. In June, the province amended its Civil Code to allow transgender minors over the age of 14 to legally change the name and gender on their birth certificate without needing to undergo surgery.

At the federal level, however, Canada is slow to recognize trans migrants for who they are. Ayad's official documents today still list her as male, and her name, Fatima, doesn't exist on paper, but only on the lips of those who know her.

"Both countries [Tunisia and Canada] reject my identities. Both countries challenge my existence," she said. "All I want is a home welcoming and accepting of who I am."

This search for acceptance, and



Zahia El-Masri holds a key as a symbol of her belonging.

PHOTOS PAT CAHILL

resistance to swallow rejection are inherently associated with being mistreated, according to Catherine Richardson, an associate professor at Université de Montreal, as part of her panel presentation.

"Whenever people are mistreated, they always resist," said Richardson. "It's part of our collective being."

Richardson, who is Métis, moved from British Columbia to Quebec where she became privy to Indigenous oppression.

Struggling to settle in Quebec, Richardson started following her Jewish partner to dialogue groups organized between Jews and Muslims. There, she would often hear the word "settlements," but she was chagrined to find the groups never discussed Indigenous land rights, an issue she felt people frequently overlooked.

Even though Section 35 of Canada's Constitution from 1982 has since recognized Indigenous rights, communities today continue to get lost in a colonial system.

Richardson explained it was that universal struggle against oppression that tied the Indigenous community and each of the other

communities, represented there that night, together.

Each group ultimately sought their own kind of recognition under an oppressive system, and resistance has long been the only resort.

"Across time, there have been people in every single culture that have resisted oppression," she said. "Nobody owns that—we all share that same history."

When Zahia El-Masri, a Palestinian refugee born in Lebanon, first came to Canada, she was taught a quick lesson about how oppression could cross borders. Immigration had listed her father as a 'pirate.'

"Why is my dad a pirate?" she had wondered, seeing the words written on her father's visa.

She later learned that "pirate" was the closest word to "Palestine" border police were able to find in their database when her family arrived in 1986. Palestine wasn't recognized as an independent state then, and little has changed today.

In September, President Barack Obama, in his final address at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, urged Israel to end its

occupation in Palestine and to recognize Palestine as its own state.

The occupation continues to oppress, El-Masri said, and Palestinians moving within their own land risk being stopped at checkpoints and "treated like herd."

"Once you get to a checkpoint, anything is possible," she said. "The humiliation is there, the questioning of your existence. This is what Palestinians go through every day."

Like Ayad who had fled Tunisia for Canada, El-Masri was forced to leave Lebanon, the land she loved. But she could never leave behind her Palestinian-refugee birth—it has followed her everywhere her entire life, she said.

"Growing up, everybody denied my existence," she said. "But we exist. We are here."

Being here, however, is not always enough.

Growing up as a Black youth in Montreal, activist Will Prosper witnessed systemic racism from the inside. In an interview with The Toronto Star in December 2009, he claimed he had been accosted dozens of times by police since he

was 16 simply because he "fit the description."

On Thursday night, Prosper decried uneven laws that are ravaging Black communities and landing an increasing number of Black people in jail, not just in the United States, but here in Canada as well.

In the ten years between 2005 and 2015, the Black inmate population in Canadian prisons grew by 69 per cent, according to an annual report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada.

Canada's current legal system disproportionately targets black people, said Prosper, and as a Black man in Montreal, "you are seven times more likely to be arrested for being in possession of marijuana."

As jail cells fill with minor offence and misdemeanor perpetrators, it's the public that pays. It costs the state \$100,000 per year, per man in jail, said Prosper, and \$160,000 per woman.

"Just imagine if we invested that kind of money back into the community," he said.

*Names were changed for privacy and security.

This Week in News Online

Clean energy stations to be reality by 2018: How Quebec is making a push towards clean energy.



NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER AND KELSEY LITWIN

The Sitting Situation

Concordia Senate Approves Proposal to Change Senate Eligibility Requirements

VINCE MORELLO
@VINNYMORELLZ

On April 1, 2015, student-protesters disrupted political science professor Michael Lipson's class as part of a strike mandate. Lipson, alongside two other professors from his department, eventually filed formal complaints against 25 students under the university's Code of Rights and Responsibilities. At least 16 of them received a letter of reprimand, the most lenient of consequences, from independent tribunals.

Those affected included current Concordia Student Union General Coordinator Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis and Marion Miller, a former CSU coordinator and the current Fine Arts representative on Concordia's Senate. Due to these letters of reprimand, the two have thus far not been able to participate in the activities of Senate, the university's second highest decision-making body.

Senate eligibility bylaws state that senators cannot serve if they have been sanctioned under the university's Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

"This letter of reprimand, all it's done is provide a very small bureaucratic hiccup in terms of sitting on Senate and Board of Governors," Marshall-Kiparissis said after she was elected.

Now, that has all changed.

When Senate established an ad hoc committee on May 3, 2016, their goal was to

"review the current eligibility requirement for constituents to serve on Senate and its standing committees and bring a recommendation in the Fall 2016."

After a summer of deliberation, meetings, and a wide range of opinions on the subject, the committee came to a conclusion, and a proposal—which was presented at Senate on Oct. 7, 2016 and passed with no issues.

"I am looking forward to being able to participate in the university's decision-making as I've been [appointed] by the undergraduate [students] to do," said Marshall-Kiparissis after the proposal was approved.

The committee was made up of faculty members in addition to Sophia Sahrane, the CSU Academic and Advocacy Coordinator, and Gene Morrow, a Campaigns and Academic Researcher at the student union.

David Morris, the Chair of the Philosophy Department, who also chaired the committee, presented the proposal at Senate.

"This is a good development for Concordia to build trust across the different constituencies and I don't see any reason why we don't need to trust one another," he said. "This kind of discussion, this kind of support for things, is just what Concordia needs as I think a really growing, young, cosmopolitan university."

The committee recommended that they remove all requirements based on the Academic Code of Conduct, which requires students to be in good standing, as well as the requirement for

students not to be sanctioned under the Code of Rights and Responsibilities within the three years previous to their nomination.

"I can't put enough emphasis on the fact that the spectrum where [everyone on the committee] stood was out of this world," Sahrane said. "It is amazing that we were able to come to a conclusion that everybody was kind of happy with."

The change in eligibility requirements fall in line with Quebec's Accreditation Act which says that "an accredited students' association or alliance may, alone, appoint students who, under an Act, regulation, by-law, charter or agreement, are called upon to sit or participate as student representatives on various councils, committees or other bodies in the institution."

Not Over Yet

Although some changes were made, independent students and students in "conditional standing" according to the Academic Code of Conduct are still not able to sit on Senate. This is something that the CSU still wants to change.

"In terms of respecting the CSU's ability to appoint its own representatives like in accordance to the Accreditation Act of Quebec for student unions, we should be able to appoint independent students, and students in conditional standing if the undergraduates see fit to do so," Marshall-Kiparissis said.

When the eligibility issues came up after their annual General Elections in March,

the council of the CSU mandated the executive team to demand the university to change its bylaws regarding Senate and Board of Governors eligibility. They were also mandated to take legal action if the laws were not able to change.

"I voted 'Yes' but I do want it noted in the minutes that although I did support this recommendation, I also voice our dissatisfaction with independent students, and conditional standing students being eligible to sit on Senate," Sahrane said during the Senate meeting.

The reason why Sahrane made a point to have that noted in the minutes was to make sure that the CSU's dissatisfaction with the motion was on record at Senate. The CSU can still challenge it and sue the university should they want to take that avenue.

"Either a dialogue needs to keep going on this issue or we are going to sue the university," she said, adding that they won't sue the university just for the sake of it.

As for the future, although Marshall-Kiparissis can now legally sit on Senate, she still cannot legally sit on the Board of Governors, which is the senior governing body of the university, because of her letter of reprimand.

"There is an intention from the Board of Governors to mirror the eligibility process for Senate so that just needs to be discussed, but I'm not anticipating right now," Marshall-Kiparissis said.

Diverting Divestment Divides

How Students and University Admin Differ on the Need to Rid Concordia of Fossil Fuel Investments

JONATHAN CARAGAY-COOK
@HIIMBIRACIAL

In clear view on the way up or down the first floor escalators of Concordia's Hall building downtown are large hanging banners. The message: a call for the university to fully divest from fossil fuels now.

This installation is one tactic employed by the student coalition Divest Concordia to pressure the university's main investment fund—worth approximately \$155 million—to rid itself of ties to the environmentally harmful industry.

Called the Concordia University Foundation, the fund announced in October last year that it had invested \$5 million into Nelson Capital Management. CUF chose the company to handle and reinvest the \$5 million because of their “environmentally sustainable practices.”

“We literally custom-tailor the portfolio to the clients for their own needs, wants and desires,” said Scott Benner, President and CEO of Nelson Capital, in an interview last year.

Since then, a Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee has been set up in order to monitor this investment and others, while providing recommendations on how CUF can best operate. The JSIAC comprises of CUF board members and university administrators as well as student constituents—including Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis from the Concordia Student Union and Noelia Gravotta from Divest Concordia.

“People on the committee are interested in sustainable investments,” said Marshall-Kiparissis, who is the General Coordinator of the CSU. “But I’m not sensing a lot of urgency.”

Her main concern about the committee, she said, is that they will allow CUF to remain mostly unchanged because it's easier to preserve the existing pools of money put towards research, bursaries, employee benefits and other university initiatives. The issue with this, she added, is that the environmentally destructive fossil fuel industry is unsustainable and liable to collapse in the near future.

In Nelson Capital's last report to the JSIAC, they reported a 3.92 per cent return from the \$5 million investment, according to Bram Freedman, Vice-President of Advancement and External Relations at Concordia, and a board member of CUF. The return is higher than the benchmark they originally set, Freedman said. This report is not public but its availability, as well as transparency in general, will be a topic of discussion at JSIAC's next meeting, he added.

Despite this update and an annual report by CUF, there are still questions surrounding exactly where the foundation invests its money.

CUF has an estimated ten per cent of its investments placed in the fossil fuel industry, which includes oils and pipelines, according to Freedman. This is difficult to know exactly, he said, because there are no detailed breakdowns of their investments. In order to figure this out, CUF would have to hire a specialized firm to contact all their different investment managers and compile a report, he added.

Of the \$5 million put into Nelson Capital, Freedman said it's not known how much came from the estimated ten per cent of the CUF's total fund, which is invested into fossil fuels. “We carved it out without calculating where it came from,” he said. When asked whether it's an actual divestment, he said it wasn't, adding that he's not sure whether the university ever used the term.

When Concordia originally announced \$5 million from CUF would be placed into a sustainable investment fund in 2014, Trevor James Smith, then a member of Divest, wrote an op-ed in *The Link* saying the initiative was “a far cry from the target that the Concordia community requested” and “wholly ignores the suggestions of Divest Concordia and

the student associations involved.”

Today, Freedman said the student coalition's goal of complete divestment from fossil fuels is made clear by Gravotta, the Divest representative at JSIAC meetings, but added that CUF is not there yet.

“But from where we started from a couple years ago, I think there's been a lot of progress,” he continued. “As long as we're talking and making progress, I think that's positive.”

A foundation of (lots of) money

Incorporated in 1991 and operational by 1996, the Concordia University Foundation is a not-for-profit organization and currently has 11 directors on its board. CUF is a private, separate entity from the university, but administrators like Freedman and Concordia President Alan Shepard sit on the board to help align the two.

In addition to Nelson Capital, CUF has money in ten other investment firms. Their total investments equal \$154,814,046, according to an independent audit found in its 2014-15 annual report online. Of this number, CUF has approximately \$16 million invested into Canadian common shares, of which \$1.6 million is invested into “energy.”

In CUF's 2009-10 report, the breakdown was more specific, with categories like “oil and gas” and “pipelines.” The switch happened due to changes in Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and was not a conscious decision made by CUF, according to Freedman.

GAAP is the model their accountants follow, he said, continuing that they can add more specific categories if they want on top of the more generalized “energy.” This will be part of the discussion of becoming more transparent at JSIAC's next meeting, he added.

CUF has not committed to accepting all the recommendations put forth from the JSIAC, according to Freedman. As well as monitoring investments by CUF, the committee also looks at investments by the Graduate Student Association and the Concordia Student Union, which has recently announced it's own divestment campaign, worth approximately \$6 million.

Escalation of tactics

The banners in the Hall building form only one part of Divest Concordia's campaign this year. A few weeks ago, the group held a general meeting to explain the harmful effects of the fossil fuel industry and discuss future mobilization. Jenna Cocullo, a Concordia graduate and member of Divest, led a PowerPoint presentation and subsequent discussion with about 20 participants.

On Friday, Sept. 23, for the Concordia Shuffle—a charity walk between the downtown and Loyola campuses—members of Divest, including Cocullo, presented Concordia President Shepard with a document called, “Concordia's Nine Directions for Divestment.” Pictures of the demonstration were posted to Divest Concordia's Facebook page afterwards.

It was a parody of the university's Nine Strategic Directions to follow as guidelines for the coming years. None of the university's directions are explicitly about divestment, and there also is no direction dedicated solely to sustainability.

Shepard thanked them for the document and looked enthusiastic during the encounter, Cocullo said. For the upcoming academic year, she said there will be an “escalation of tactics” by Divest Concordia.

Last semester, Divest McGill—a group Cocullo said they're close to—occupied the office of McGill University's Principle Suzanne Fortier. This form of protest may happen at Concordia too, as escalation of tactics could mean possible sit-ins, according to Cocullo.

Concordia's
INVESTMENTS

**Breakdown of
the university's
Canadian Common
Shares from 2015**

ENERGY

\$1.6 million

INDUSTRIAL

\$3.3 million

**TECH AND
COMMUNICATION**

\$1.5 million

**CONSUMER PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES**

\$3.3 million

Look Ahead With Concordia's New Provost

Graham Carr Has a List of Nine Academic Priorities for the Coming Year

JOSH FISCHLIN
@FISHYNEWSWATCH

Concordia's recently appointed provost, Graham Carr, has laid out an ambitious set of academic goals for the year.

The former Vice-President of Research and Graduate Studies assumed the position full-time after serving on an interim basis following Benoit-Antoine Bacon's departure for Queen's University at the end of last semester.

Embedded within Carr's list of nine priorities is an "Indigenous Strategy," along with various other goals, all focused around supporting both faculty and students in their academic pursuits.

"We think that this spectrum of first moves covers a wide variety of desires, goals, and objectives that reflect the different interests of the community," he said, affirming that no one goal is more important than another.

The creation of a Chemical and Materials Engineering Department is also on the menu for the upcoming academic year.

Indigenous Strategy

The university will announce an Indigenous commission within the next two to three weeks, addressing Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations for universities, said Concordia President Alan Shepard in an Oct. 4 interview.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, outlines 94 suggestions for the government with regards to Indigenous issues. Included in the report are numerous recommendations in the domain of education.

The report calls for the development of culturally appropriate curricula, "the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses," and for the federal government to "provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education."

Carr's first external trip as the new provost was to the University of Alberta, where there was a two-day forum on universities' response to the recommendations outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he explained.

The drive by universities is to better support Indigenous students, Indigenous scholars and research, and to increase "collaboration and engagement with Indigenous communities that the university serves," Carr said.

"There are a number of issues there," he said. "That's a top priority item for the university."

Offering Support

The nine priorities include initiatives that are meant to assist the research and curriculum creation process.

Hiring various professionals to focus specifically on research grant applications and curriculum creation are two methods Carr plans to use with this goal in mind.

The grant application preparation process, according to Carr, requires large time commitments and, in some cases, professional expertise. This exceeds what individual faculty members as researchers can devote themselves to, he said.

They're looking to create an "entourage" that can support the university's researchers, Carr continued.

Similar time constraints are being consid-



NIKOLAS LITZENBERGER

ered with relation to curriculum creation. The creation of "innovative curriculum" can be a very time consuming process, Carr said.

In order to help alleviate this concern, the new provost plans on hiring two or three professionals who are knowledgeable about curriculum creation to lend a helping hand.

A New Department?

A proposal for the creation of a Chemical and Materials Engineering Department was approved at a Senate meeting on Oct. 7.

"I'm super excited about the proposal," Shepard said, adding it was one of the first ideas to come from the university's strategic directions process.

The proposal initially came from the faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. It still needs to be approved by the Board of Governors after which Concordia's offering of such a program must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

"I feel confident that we would get ministry approval," he said. "I think it's a no-brainer, actually."

According to Carr, there is "incredible" demand in North America for chemical engineering, especially among aspiring female engineers and faculty.

"So, there is also going to be an important gender shift here in the composition of the faculty as a result of this program," he said.

Volume 37 by-elections are happening soon:

Tuesday, Nov. 1 @ 4 p.m. in *The Link's* office (1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Room H-649)

The Link could not happen without its team of editors, i.e. masthead. We have a few spots left on masthead to fill for Volume 37. All staff members—those who have contributed to four separate issues or more—are eligible and encouraged to vote in the elections.

Here are the open positions:

Fringe online

Arts and Montreal go hand-in-hand, and the fringe team needs an online editor to keep up with the city's seemingly endless vernisages, concerts, spoken word nights, etc. Use our website to publish reviews, previews, and profiles in-between print issues.

Copy

A lot of words pass through *The Link* every day. The copy editor is the last person to edit each printed article and ensures fact-checking and a consistent style. They are also the strongest defence against typos and style-guide errors.

Managing

Journalism works because deadlines are enforced. The managing editor oversees the print production, keeps editors and staff on their game, and makes sure the paper comes out on time. Along with the print cycle, there's day-to-day administrative stuff to do.

Coordinating

The Link has a website (check it out cause we do cool stuff). This website needs oversight—enter the coordinating editor. This person ensures online editors keep the website updated with great content, and also plans bigger projects like *Link* live sessions and radio content.

Eligible to run:

Sara Capanna, Joshua De Costa, Zoë Gelfant, Harrison-Milo Rahajason, Nico Holzmann, Sarah Jesmer, Etienne Lajoie, Claire Loewen, Julia Miele, Ninon Scotto di Uccio, Jordan Stoopler

Need one more contribution:

Michael Eidelson

Need two more contributions:

Solene Jonveaux, Miriam Lafontaine, Lucas Napier-Macdonald, Willie Wilson

Applicants must submit a letter of intent and three (3) samples of contributions at *The Link's* office by 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 25.



Jeremy Dodds, a Montreal-based poet, spoke last week at a Concordia writing workshop.

KATE LINDNER

Picking Up Inspiration at Writer's Reading

Concordia Hosts Series of Workshops and Panels to Promote the Art of Writing

KATE LINDNER

A room of eager audience members packed close together, hanging onto every word Jeremy Dodds, a Montreal-based poet, spoke last Friday.

In the middle of an energetic, prosaic piece, a cell phone goes off in the front row. Don McKay, the other poet reading at the presentation, hurriedly turns his ringer off, slapping his hand against his forehead in exasperation.

"I can't wait to see what sort of revenge Jeremy will repay me with over the next decade—when I'm least expecting it," McKay said afterwards, chuckling.

Like this event last Friday, Concordia University will host over ten authors from a wide range of disciplines to give readings, panel discussions, and master-classes over the next month. These events will culminate into a four-day literary festival run by the university from Nov. 3 to 6, open to all students.

In fact, you are encouraged to attend the "Off the Page" festival even more if you study outside of the English Department.

"You don't have to be in a class to be a writer. If you are a writer, you're writing. And if you are a writer, presumably you want to see other writers and talk to them," said Kate Sterns, a creative writing professor

at Concordia who has been involved with Writers Read, the organization responsible for these events, from the very beginning.

"We wanted to bring writers that we thought students would be excited to meet—with a broad range of interests, and to give the master classes so that there would be an intimate interaction," she explained.

This series of presentations replaced the Writer in Residency Program, and has expanded to bring in both emerging and established authors from around the world. While the series always starts off with an Irish author in conjunction with Concordia's School of Canadian Irish studies, this year will also include several Concordia alumni. Laura Broadbent, one such alumna, will be reading with Canadian poet Lisa Robertson, on Oct. 21.

"There are a lot of these two for one deals," Tess Liem, the current assistant to the program said. These curated pairings inspire a guided conversation about modern communication, rather than just a dry read.

Last semester, they hosted Jordan Abel, a writer from the Nisga'a First Nation, who performs his poetry with sound recordings and sometimes a neon-lit mask, Liem added as another example, stressing

the excitement of the talks and the open notion about creative writing in general.

Whether you updated your Facebook status this morning, shared a tweet, or commented on a hilarious cat video, you participated in the language and literature of the modern day. A novel or book of poetry may seem like a large leap from there, but it's actually the perfect starting point.

Dodds, who had his performance interrupted by the cell phone call, gave a hint to his beginnings as a writer. "I thought I was going to be like a rock star," he said. "I started reading the lyrics of other writers, really. And then I felt like, I really want to do that, the way they made me feel—I want to make someone feel that way. It was as simple as that."

His presentation partner, McKay, is a well-established Canadian poet who once mentored Dodds.

"He has been quite a big influence on me, so it's quite an honour to be reading with him," he added.

Attending an author's reading not only immerses the audience in a new way to experience written word, but can also help bridge two disconnects and expand one's worldview.

"How does one place themselves in what's happening at that time, and what's happening currently?" writer Phinder Dulai asked when

talking about his third book, *dream/arteries*, which he will be presenting on Oct. 11.

His latest book of poetry follows a community's relationship with an immigration ship—the Komagata Maru—and how Canada refused entry to the refugees.

"I wanted to bring that community trauma into a place of hope and beauty," Dulai added. "It's about taking that story, and reframing it in a way that brings humanity back into it."

All of the Writers Read and Off the Page events are free and open to Concordia students, with some inviting the surrounding community to join as well.

"You kind of have to vote with your time and your attention," Sterns said. Learning inside the classroom is one thing, but being able to see everything you've learned being put to use by someone outside of the faculty is important as well.

Upcoming Events:

Lisa Robertson & Laura Broadbent // Oct. 21 // 7 p.m. // York Amphitheatre, EV 1.605 // 1515 Ste. Catherine St. W. // FREE

Evie Shockley & Trish Salah // Nov. 4 // 7 p.m. // York Amphitheatre, EV 1.605 // 1515 Ste. Catherine St. W. // FREE

What Would You Do?

Interactive Film From FNC Invites Viewers to Choose the Story

NINON SCOTTO DI UCCIO
@NINONSCOTTO

A man is holding you at gunpoint in an empty parking lot.
“Get in the car,” he orders. Obey or run. Whatever you choose, be prepared for the consequences.

That is the basis of the newly released interactive film *Late Shift*, screened last Thursday at Cinema du Parc as part of the Festival du nouveau cinéma de Montréal.

“It started off with me watching movies and witnessing characters doing things and me not agreeing with the hero’s decisions,” said Tobias Weber, director and writer of the indie-thriller.

“Witnessing the impossible choices they had to make was very interesting and I thought, how would I make a choice like this?” Weber asked.

Ultimately, he wanted to pass this decision-making ability to his audience.

Before the film started, rather than the usual announcement about silencing phones, the projection on the screen read: “Please download the CtrlMovie app.” The app gave the audience the capacity to interact with the film in real time by choosing between two or three options presented to them. The majority decision would then dictate the outcome of the scene.

Engaging the audience in this way fit completely within the theme of actions and consequences. The main character—for whom the audience makes decisions for—is a student focused on probabilities. The way he weighs his options helps the viewer make more educated choices.

With 180 choices to make, each decision the



How would you like to choose the storyline of a movie as it unravels before your eyes? COURTESY LATE SHIFT

audience makes alters the story in some way. Your partner in crime, May-Ling, is hurt from a car crash. The police arrive. Convince May-Ling to come with you, or leave her. Every call you make opens up a certain segment of the four hours of filmed material to culminate into a consistent and flowing plot.

But this flawless linking of scenes was no easy feat—it took three years to create this divergent experience. A flow chart script was needed to weave in 500 different segments.

“There was no room for improvisation,” said Caroline Feder, an associate producer on the film. A lot of work was brought into not losing the plot so the viewer could follow the 200 branches of the story.

To execute this new cinematic experience they created a video editing software called “CtrlMovie,” the anchor of the

project, which enabled them to create a multi-optional narrative.

“It was a great project, very challenging,” Weber said. “It was a great experience, but a tough journey.”

Finance was another obstacle the project faced. “No one had seen anything like it so people wouldn’t trust us to pull it off,” Weber explained. The team was looking at a budget of 1.5 million Swiss Francs.

“Film funding said: ‘Well you’re a game right? No money from us,’” Weber said. “But on the other side it was the same answer: ‘Hello, this is not a game, this is a movie—come on!’ We fell in between the cracks.”

The directing team decided to go in the direction of a thriller because the concept lent “itself to that format, where you have a character that’s under pressure and by defini-

tion he hasn’t got all the options anymore to do whatever he wants,” according to Weber.

Weber’s team is currently brainstorming a drama flick—to bring attention to the little, interpersonal decisions we make everyday. You’re with a friend at a Chinese restaurant. She picks up a fortune cookie and hands you one. “What’s your fortune?” she asks. Do you tell her—or remain silent?

“You goofed up!” Weber exclaimed to the audience at the end of the Thursday screening. “There are seven endings—you almost reached the happy ending, but got close to some really bad ones,” he joked.

For those who missed *Late Shift*, fear not. The interactive movie can be purchased on the Apple Store for \$9.99, and with the app, you can watch this film unfold in every way possible.

THE LINK CALENDAR OF EVENTS Oct. 11 - Oct. 18

TU 11

FNC Presents: NOTFILM
Art shouldn’t be about art. A cinematic essay about the “unlikely collaboration between Samuel Beckett and Buster Keaton.”
Cinematheque • 335 De Maisonneuve Blvd. E. • 8:45 p.m. // \$9

WE 12

TNC Theatre Presents: Ghost World
Graphic novel turned movie—turned play! Fans of Enid Coleslaw and Rebecca Dopplemeyer’s pseudo-adulthood ongoings will not want to miss the chance to see the cult-classic on stage. To reserve tickets, email tnc.foh@gmail.com.
Tuesday Night Cafe Theatre • 3485 McTavish St. • 8 p.m. // \$6

Candelit Vigil for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
With McGill Students for Amnesty International, a vigil will be held in honour of the lives of the missing and murdered Indigenous women throughout the country. Show solidarity + support <3
McGill Arts Building, on the steps • 853 Sherbrooke St. W. • 6:30 p.m.

TH 13

How to Freelance
Have you ever wanted to break into the freelance journalism scene? Montreal freelancers Adam Kovac (former *Linkie*), Marissa Miller, and Erik Leijon will teach you all the ins and outs of jumpstarting your freelance career.
Crew Cafe • 360 St. Jacques St. • 6 p.m. // FREE

FR 14

I’ll Tell You in Person Book Launch
Chloe Caldwell’s latest book, *I’ll Tell You in Person*, will be launched in conjunction with Metatron Press. The debut of her essay collection will be followed up with a short Q&A.
Librarie Drawn & Quaterly • 211 Bernard St. W. • 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. // FREE

SA 15

Bad Nudes 1.1 Launch
Bad Nudes, a creative writing + poetry mag, will be launching its first issue at the Fattal Lofts. The evening will feature various readers involved in the project. BYOB!
Fattal Lofts Unit 639G • 617 St. Remi St. • 8 p.m. // PWYC

Vernissage: Do Not Pass By
Milos Reindl’s Picasso-esque, vintage-y art will be on display in the Victoria Park lobby from Oct. 15 to Nov. 15. A celebration of diversity, multiculturalism and acculturation, the vern will give visitors a chance to learn more about the ex-Montrealer and artist.
Victoria Park • 376 Victoria Ave. • 5 p.m. // FREE

SU 16

Citizen Vintage Studio Sale
Everything priced under \$20. Need I say more?
Studio #911 • 5333 Casgrain Ave. • 1 p.m.

Transfiguration
An artistic performance piece from visual artist Olivier de Sagazan in which he paints his face and body.
La Sala Rosa • 4848 St. Laurent Blvd. • 8 p.m. // \$12

MO 17

There’s Something Funny Going on at the Blue Dog Motel
Live, laugh—and then laugh some more. A night of hilarity hosted by Darren Henwood with beer n’ shot specials awwwl night, baby.
Blue Dog Motel • 3958 St. Laurent Blvd. • 8:30 p.m. // PWYC

TU 18

Sunburnfreezerburn + Own Eerie + Thanya Iyer
Up n comin’ Thanya Iyer will, as always, play a divine set in the Plateau cafe-bar! Come, discover new artists and become grounded with the effervescent vibes.
Divan Orange • 4234 St. Laurent Blvd. • 9 p.m. // PWYC



Coaches from McGill's lacrosse team are excited about Kieran McKay's talent on the field and in the classroom.

ION EXTEBARRIA

Paving The Way

Kieran McKay Becomes First Indigenous Player on the McGill Redmen Lacrosse Team

ALEXANDER PEREZ
@DASALEXPerez

By earning a spot on the McGill Redmen lacrosse team, Kieran McKay made history, yet he didn't even know it.

Since the "modern" varsity team's establishment in 2002, the McGill Redmen lacrosse club welcomed their first ever Indigenous player to the team. Rookie midfielder McKay, who is Cree and from Richmond B.C., is excited to represent both his culture and the McGill Redmen.

Being the first Indigenous player for the Redmen is a great achievement for McKay. While the first year Kinesiology student is proud of his achievement, he recognizes that he was a little surprised when he saw the news.

"I didn't really even think I would be the first, coming into the team," said McKay. "The team is already very culturally diverse compared to a lot of the other teams."

Being the first and only Indigenous player on the team, McKay doesn't feel he bears any extra responsibility, and says he doesn't want any special treatment in the process.

"Obviously it's a minority in McGill as a community, but it's great to represent in the varsity sport community as well," said McKay. "I'm obviously proud of my heritage and that I get to be the first on the team."

Lacrosse originates from Indigenous culture. According to Thomas Venum Jr., author of

American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother War, the sport was one of many varieties of stickball. Lacrosse got its name by French settlers, and then English-speaking Montrealers took it up while changing the rules.

Lacrosse is still popular amongst Indigenous communities. Coach Tim Murdoch said before McKay, he made attempts to recruit Indigenous players, but was unsuccessful in recruiting them to McGill. He was unsuccessful due to the fact many of them choose to play Division 1 lacrosse in the NCAA.

"It's very exciting for us cause we'd love to have more members of First Nations communities come to McGill to study," Murdoch said.

McKay started field lacrosse at five-years-old. He was interested in other sports, but to avoid being overwhelmed, both as an athlete and a student, McKay had to make a choice. It wasn't until he was 13 that he realized he had the potential to go further in field lacrosse.

As he excelled in the sport, head coach Tim Murdoch and McGill University eventually came knocking. Not only was it McKay's athleticism and talent in lacrosse that caught Murdoch's attention, but also his equally strong academic abilities. And for McKay, education was always top of the list.

"He's very strong academically. [McKay] has a family that really cares about getting a good education," said Murdoch. "He elected to go the academic route because I think he knew he

could [still] play lacrosse at a very high level."

Despite having received offers from schools in the United States, McKay eventually opted for McGill University because of the prospect of receiving a higher level of education.

"I chose McGill mostly because of the academics," explained McKay. "It was just an added bonus that I would get a good education and be able to play a sport that I love."

McKay's parents are delighted to see their son attending McGill University, a school that values education, as well as playing in a league that offers a high caliber of lacrosse.

"At the end of the day we want him to have a good education, not just a good athletic experience," said McKay's father, Colin McKay.

Murdoch is happy to have recruited McKay to his team. The coach has now turned his attention to finding other players from Indigenous communities.

Bill Shatz, the director of lacrosse at IMG Academy—one of the leading lacrosse teams in the United States—was present on Thursday to watch the Redmen face-off against the Bishop's Gaiters. Shatz, who is always recommending universities to his student athletes, was on an official visit at McGill.

For the five-years that IMG Lacrosse has been around, Shatz made it essential to establish a relationship with Indigenous communities and has been heavily involved in recruiting

Indigenous players. From Six Nations, Ontario, Tehoka Nanticoke is arguably the most notable Indigenous player to play for IMG Lacrosse.

"Their knowledge and their relationship to the game bring such an unbelievable capability to any program, whether it's at the college or the high school level," Shatz said.

Similar to IMG Academy's pro-Indigenous manifesto, McGill is now presented with the opportunity to do the same. Both Murdoch and Shatz feel that adding McKay to the team could pave the way and create positive ties between McGill and other Indigenous communities.

According to Shatz, McGill now has a great opportunity. He's also stressed that the key is to build the relationships now.

"When there's a trailblazer of sorts, it does open the opportunity," said Shatz. "So I think it will definitely pave the way and assuming the experience will be a very positive one, I think [members of Indigenous communities will] find more interest in McGill as an option."

Coach Murdoch highly regards McKay, and recognizes that he can shine at McGill.

"I see Kieran going far," said Murdoch. "I see Kieran as a really important part of our program for the next four years. He's a fantastic athlete."

As for McKay, he said that he's beginning to settle into the team. He's grown fond of his new school. "I love McGill and that it's just so centered within the city, and I love the big city kind of feeling of it," he said.

The Ultimate Exhibition

Quebec's Iris Will Play Boston's Brute Squad to Promote Women's Ultimate and Gender Equity

TRISTAN D'AMOURS
@TRISTANDAMOURS

October 15 will be an evening of firsts for Iris, a women's ultimate frisbee team comprised of the best talent from the province of Quebec. Their matchup at Complexe Sportif Claude Robillard will be the team's first exhibition game but also a first game at home in Montreal.

"We always get asked by our friends 'when are you playing in our neck of the woods so we can come to see you?'" said Iris captain Audrey St. Laurent. "So now it's a golden opportunity for them to do so."

The team is accustomed to playing in open fields where many games are played at the same time, and fans have to watch from the sidelines. This weekend, Iris fans, who can only keep in touch with the team through social media, will be able to watch them play while sitting comfortably in the stands of a full-fledged stadium.

"My only stadium-playing experiences were when I played in finals of the Canadian championship and it's clearly louder," said St. Laurent. "The crowd is with you on the field, so to relive that with our supporters from Quebec will be awesome."

In an exhibition game to promote the sport of women's ultimate frisbee, Iris have called up Brute Squad, a benchmark team in the Triple Crown Tour, the division Iris plays in. According to St. Laurent, it will be like playing a final game.

The team from Boston is fresh off winning the American national championship last weekend. For Iris, which has only been in existence for two years now, Brute Squad's longevity as a team can be an inspiration for them.

"It's a great chance for a young program to be able to play against such a storied team. Brute Squad is a dynasty," St. Laurent said. "They performed in the United States for many years now and they were always in the top teams."

For Brute Squad, taking the road up to Montreal will be a first as well. Used to playing in tournaments across the U.S., it is the first time the team will travel for a standalone exhibition game.

Gender Equity in Ultimate

The exhibition game is also meant to promote gender equity within the sport. In a motion directed towards the U.S. Ultimate federation, a group assembling of 17 men's, women's and mixed teams—called the Gender Equity Action Group—asked for equitable visibility for female athletes through a belief statement, which is found online. Brute Squad's player Leila Tunnell was one of the leaders of the project.



These are the champions.

COURTESY BRUTE SQUAD

"Leila has been really big in creating the statement that we have sent to [USA Ultimate], our federation," said Brute Squad captain Claudia Tajima. "We had discussions about it at club nationals last weekend and players from all divisions, men's, mixed and women's, all got together and talked about gender equity—it was really great."

One of the main demands of the group is to include more women's coverage on USA Ultimate's streaming partner ESPN3.

"[ESPN3 will] typically show both semi-finals for a tournament that they're covering in the men's division, where as they'll only show one of the women's semi-finals and one of the mixed semi-finals," said Brute Squad head coach Ariel Jackson. "Typically they tend to show the men's semi-finals in a primetime slot."

For Tajima, the belief statement posted online and sent to USA Ultimate, as well as a petition posted on change.org, has got ultimate players across North America to talk about gender equity.

"People were just not having those discussions because it wasn't even on folks' radar on different

teams and in different parts of the country," Tajima said.

The situation for ultimate is also different from many other sports. Since women's ultimate is not a professional sport, athletes pay membership fees to the federation and in part feel they can have more of a say in decisions.

"In that way we feel like we have a say in what we think should be run and what games should be streamed on ESPN," said Tajima. "Because we all pay membership dues and it's a governing body."

Improvements have been made in more visibility for the women's game. As part of the national championship last weekend, Brute Squad's semi-final streamed in the evening, during a prime time slot.

"That was nice to see that USA Ultimate is responding to feedback from their membership," said head coach Jackson. "We're hoping to continue pressure to kind of build on the momentum and the drive in the community to have more equitable coverage in terms of what is shown."

Back in Quebec, St. Laurent thinks that Iris media visibility of any kind would be great simply for the grassroots—who could only follow the team through Facebook and Twitter—can have "something to aspire to."

"The little boys in elementary or high school have something to aspire to but the little girls, they have Iris but it's on social media," said St. Laurent. "To have a real game that will be filmed, that will give them something to aspire to because we have had good players in Quebec for years but equity in the media is not the same thing."

St. Laurent, who is also part of the Quebec Ultimate federation's board of directors, wants to stress that equity is different from equality.

"We don't aspire to have the same things the men have, we want a visibility that's proportional," she said.

Meanwhile, Iris will look to continue to grow on the American scene and help grow the sport of women's ultimate in partnership with the semi-professional men's ultimate team Montreal Royal.

Another subtle sign of equity for the Quebec ultimate federation backed team is volunteering at each other's games. Women's teams would volunteer to sell beer at Royal games but the roles will be flipped as Royal players will return the favour and sell beer for the exhibition game.



And these are the challengers.

COURTESY IRIS ULTIMATE

The Iris and Brute Squad exhibition will take place at Complexe Sportif Claude Robillard Saturday Oct 15, at 7 p.m.

The War on Us

Understanding Police Militarization in Montreal

JÉRÉMIE GAUTHIER-CARON

Heavily armed riot police patrolling the streets of Black neighborhoods in military vehicles is becoming a common image in the United States. From Ferguson in 2014 to Charlotte right now, a lot has been said about police militarization to our south.

This phenomenon isn't limited to the States, though—it can also be seen here in Montreal. Anybody who's been to night protests in the last couple of years can tell you about the military tactics displayed by the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal's tactical units. Clad in black, they're frequently seen marching in formation while the protesters chant Darth Vader's theme from Star Wars.

When the riot police jump on the buses they use to get to and from protests, they act like soldiers in Kandahar—covering every angle with their grenade launchers, on the lookout for eventual snipers or suicide bombers. Except they're not in Afghanistan, they're in downtown Montreal, facing frightened students and protesters.

Since the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City—when Alter-globalization activists came from all over the world to protest the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas—Quebec's police services started gearing up with modern riot control gear. The Sept. 11 attacks then accelerated the militarization of police forces all over North America—including Montreal. Here are some of the symptoms of police militarization in our city.

In 2014, the SPVM bought two Long Range Acoustic Devices—commonly known as sound cannons. These are weapons capable of projecting a concentrated beam of sound in excess of 145 decibels—as loud as a jet taking off—up to a kilometre away.

Sound cannons cause extreme discomfort, an instant headache and even hearing damage to anyone in its path. After the 2000 Al Qaeda suicide strike that damaged the USS Cole, the LRAD Corporation developed it as a less lethal alternative to heavy machine guns to defend US Navy ships from fast attack boats. It didn't take long for the US military to start mounting LRADs on Humvees and other vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan as a riot control device.

Since picking up the LRAD, the SPVM has been using it regularly. To be fair, it's mostly used as a high-tech bullhorn. They said they would never use the alert mode—which is basically its weapon mode. Instead of a voice message, the cannon emits a loud screeching siren that is impossible to withstand.

But I've heard what appeared to be alert mode sound coming from the LRAD at a protest in spring 2015. Though I wasn't

in its beam I instantly recognized the siren from past footage of the sound cannon being used in the US against Black Lives Matter protesters. This means that the SPVM has broken their promise to only use the device as a means of communications.

The SPVM has also rolled out a new digital radio system based on the Project 25 standard—P25 was developed for first responders and public security with radio encryption, and is born from the military.

It's way over-budget, and less trustworthy than the old analog radios—it struggles to even pick up signal in elevators or in

guson situation where the police face peaceful protesters with an armoured personnel carrier. How long will it last, though?

Beyond the increasingly militarized equipment, police training may be changing as well. Following the riots in Montreal Nord in 2008—a response to the police killing of Fredy Villanueva—the SPVM held exploratory meetings with the Canadian Army on setting up training for dealing with hostile populations and situations which could become riots, including protests.

It is unknown how much training the Canadian Army has actually given the SPVM following those meetings.

Look, I support the *Fraternité de la police* in their fight against pension cuts. I enjoy seeing officers wearing funky pants, and the fact that Montreal city executives are bothered shows that it's a good tactic. I had a good laugh when I saw a horse mounted police wearing fringed cowboy pants or the time when an officer wore Santa pants in the winter.

Most of the time, though, they're wearing military cargo pants. What does this choice of outfit signify? As John Oliver said in an episode of his show *Last Week Tonight*, “police should dress for the job they have, not the one they want.”

I'm not asking for a return to the times of *Samedi de la matraque*—a riot during a visit by Queen Elizabeth II in 1964 in Quebec City in the beginning of Quebecois sovereignty. Then, more than 4,000 poorly trained policemen, equipped only with nightsticks and helmets, attacked everyone they saw with baton charges, wounding hundreds of protesters and bystanders in the process.

To be sure, police officers have a dangerous job and they deserve the right equipment to do it. But it should be sufficient for the threat

they're facing. Technology and tactics derived from the “War on Terror,” developed for fighting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, shouldn't be used on protesters and small-time criminals.

All of this undermines public trust in the police force, making it seem like the community they're supposed to protect is seen as the enemy.

It's easy to look at what's happening in the U.S. and be shocked. But it's also important to realize that American police didn't become this way overnight—the process of militarization occurred over many years, and involved shifts in equipment and police culture. Military tactics and equipment gradually became normalized, and the police began to behave like an occupying army.

That shift—in equipment, tactics, and culture—is occurring right here, in Montreal. How long will we wait before we put an end to it?



NICO HOLZMANN

underground parking. Hackers have demonstrated that it is vulnerable to jamming. But luckily for them, it's encrypted, so radio scanners won't penetrate their communications.

This means that journalists won't be on the scene before the police and that every scoop will have to come from the media relation's team. Soon enough other first responders are supposed to join in the new standard—shutting down the constant crackling of radio scanners that run non-stop in newsrooms all over the city.

In 2013, the police spent \$360,000 on an armoured truck called a Cambli International Thunder 1, developed in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec. It is capable of withstanding fire from an assault rifle and is equipped with twelve gun ports. With its charcoal gray paint job, it looks like it's from a Nolan Batman movie.

They said it would only be deployed for situations when they would face potential gunfire. And luckily we've yet to see a Fer-

This Week in Opinions Online

Trudeau is No Environmentalist: Why he's not as green as his public relations team would like you to think.

Experience or Exploitation?

How to Know When Your Unpaid Internship Is Illegal

LEANNE ASHWORTH

There are a lot of things in life I'd like to experience, and working for free is not one of them. Yet, in this depressed economy, this is often what employers are expecting. People entering the job market are increasingly expected to prove themselves by working for experience or exposure—both codewords for working without really getting paid—or for less than minimum wage. These unpaid and underpaid jobs are often packaged as “internships.”

Despite what employers may think—or want you to think—not all unpaid work can be legally called an internship. Sometimes, it is just unpaid work, and that violates the labour code.

What many people do not realize is that ‘employee’ and ‘intern’ are not just random designations bestowed by an employer as they see fit. These are legally protected categories of work and there are specific laws governing them. Under the labour code there are legal recourses for abuse in either category. A so-called intern whose position does not actually meet the legal definition of an internship may be entitled, under the labour code, to the benefits of an employee—including wages.

The legal classification of internship differs from province to province. In Quebec, the specifications for what constitutes a legal internship are clearly defined. There are three basic conditions for a work position to be an internship—and therefore legally allowed without remuneration.

An internship must meet one or more of the following criteria: work that is part of a government approved training program overseen and directed by an educational institute, work that is part of a vocational training school program, or work for non-profit organizations that is of community benefit.

Many postings for internships do not fit this legal definition, and this is becoming an increasingly high profile issue. From small companies looking for a new website, to blogs looking for free content, to large companies like Bell Canada, employers looking to reduce their overhead often—whether intentionally or inadvertently—subvert the law when it comes to unpaid work.

In our depressed job market, employers seem to think that work opportunities are a favour. Wherever they can, they are replacing entry-level positions with unpaid work. Sadly, their point of view is reinforced by comments like those of Steven Poloz, Governor of the Bank of Canada, who famously encouraged jobless youth in 2014 to “work for free” as a way to gain entry to the labour market for unemployed youth.

This is a disaster for job seekers and workers generally, and one we need to fight against. By replacing entry-level positions with unpaid internships, employers effectively exploit our labour and privilege those who can afford to work for free. To take an unpaid internship, someone has to be able to rely financially on another source such as savings or family sup-

port. For those without access to those resources working for free may not be an option.

When unpaid internships begin to replace entry-level positions as a source of work experience, the negative effects of inter-generational poverty or family abandonment are increased in a person's employment prospects.

These situations are more often faced by people from marginalized communities—intergenerational poverty for example, may be exacerbated by race. LGBTQ youth are more likely to be abandoned by family—currently 20 to 40 per cent of homeless youth in Canada are LGBTQ, and while not all of these youth are necessarily abandoned, few can rely on their families for support.

Encouraging youth to work for free also obscures structural issues within the labour market. Employers are effectively externalizing the financial responsibility for training and preparing workers—once considered

a cost of business. This is not the answer to the structural shifts and decline in the labour market and economy that has taken place over the past ten years. As workers we should individually and collectively resist this.

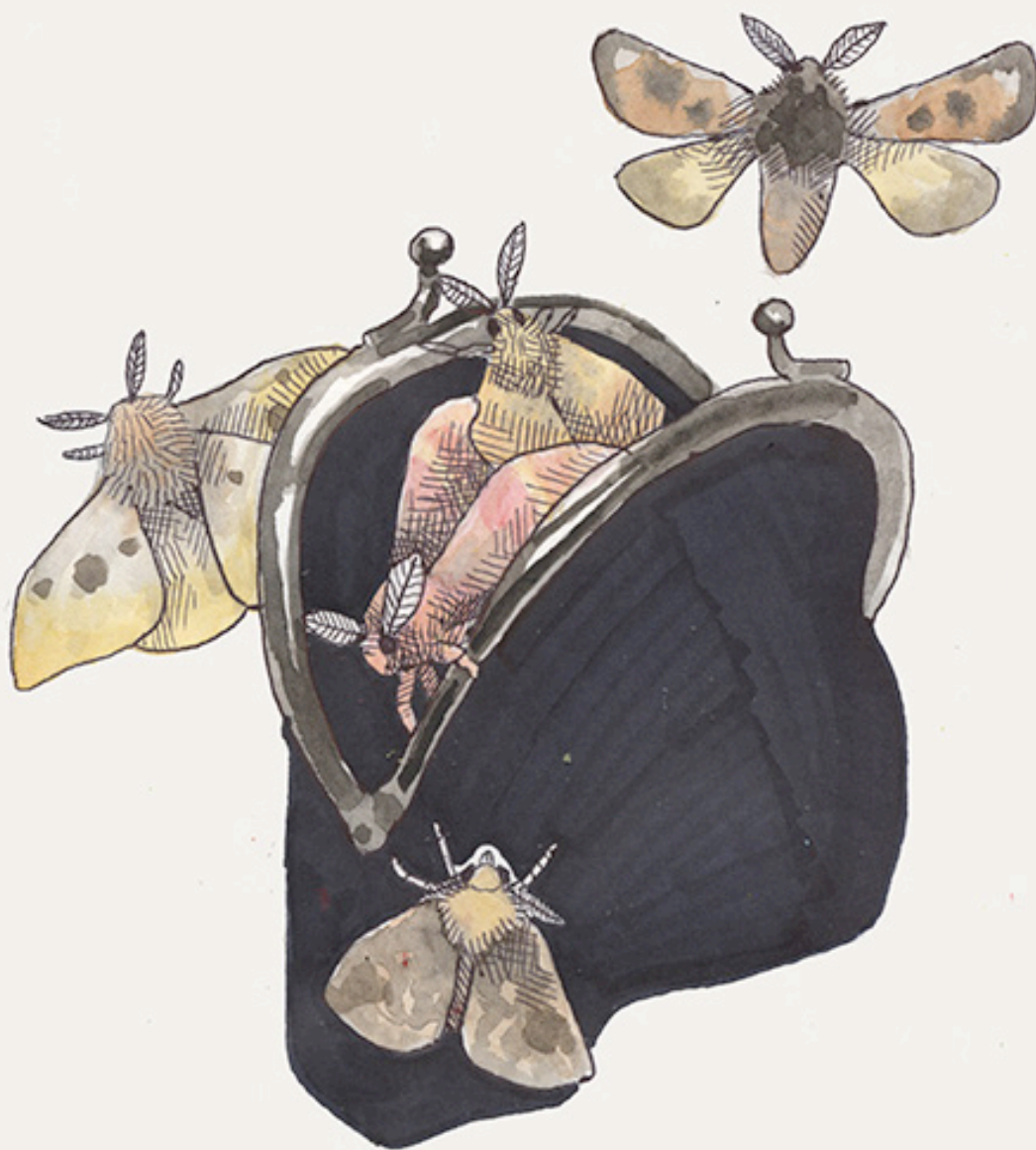
If you are currently, or have been, employed in an illegal internship you may have legal recourses. In 2014, former ‘interns’ of Bell Canada sued Bell for unpaid wages in relation to their internship program—the program was closed as a result. Other interns have successfully recovered wages in similar disputes, although the results of the Bell case are unreported. You can also inform employers, and others about the legal conditions of internships in Quebec.

You can help to assert the rights of employees by refusing to participate in unpaid labour. Don't get me wrong; I am a firm proponent of volunteerism and community engagement. If the work you are considering fits the legal definition of an internship, or is volunteer

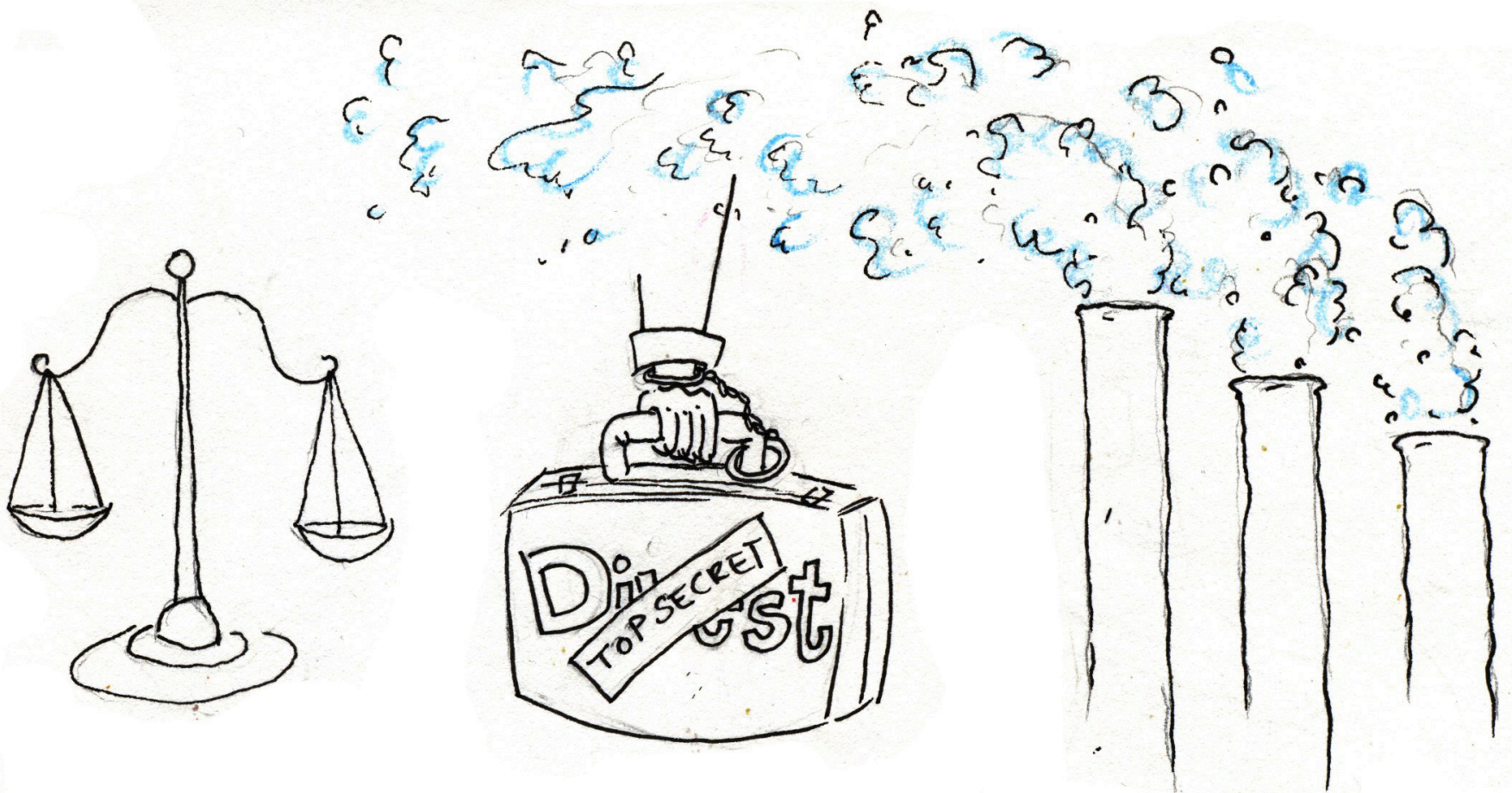
work that benefits your community, it can also be a great way to gain work experience. Also, if it is possible within your degree, doing an internship for which you receive academic credit—in which you actually receive hands on experience and training—can be a great way to maximize the utility of your degree and learn about jobs in your field.

If the work you are being asked to do does not fit the legal definition of an internship, refuse it. No one should be working for corporations for free. The corporation is profiting from your work—there is no reason you shouldn't be.

Leanne Ashworth is the Coordinator at the Concordia Student Union off-campus Housing and Job Bank (HOJO). HOJO has drafted a letter for employers offering ‘unpaid internships’ which violate the labour code. If you see an internship posted that you believe may be unfair, you can speak to HOJO about contacting the employer.



NICO HOLZMANN



MORAG RAHN-CAMPBELL

EDITORIAL

Divest Properly, Divest Now

"An ongoing issue with both McGill and Concordia investments is the general lack of transparency." Sound familiar?

That was from our editorial on fossil fuel divestment last September. Since then, nothing much has changed. The administration is still opaque on much of the process—they set up a \$5 million sustainable investment fund, but have not said how much, if any, of that money was taken out of their investment in fossil fuels.

The world, though, has changed. We're permanently past 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—which is not good. As scientists learn to better predict sea level rise—factoring for permafrost-stored greenhouse gases, ice-cap melt acceleration, and more—long-term worst-case scenarios are starting to look like guarantees. And this past year had more record-breaking heat than any period in recorded history.

And it'll get worse, faster, sooner, if we don't act better, sooner, faster.

So why is the Concordia University

Foundation waiting?

The CUF right now still has roughly ten per cent of its \$155 million total investments in fossil fuels—that's around \$15 million dollars invested in advancing climate change, rising seas, resource wars, environmental contamination, and Indigenous rights abuses.

Potentially more disconcerting is that while last year we objected to the lack of transparency in the school's sustainable investment fund, now it seems the administration still can't even answer the question of what the \$5 million is even invested in.

Bram Freedman, Concordia's Vice-President of Advancement and External Relations, couldn't confirm where the university's dirty investments are because there aren't any detailed breakdowns of the school's investments. That makes it difficult to know where to divest from, if the school doesn't even know what pipeline or gas company it's profiting from.

Concordia University Fund's 2009-10 report had specific categories like "oil and gas" and "pipelines" in its investment break-

down. Now, because the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles were changed, those categories have merged to become "energy"—a category vague enough to include wind and solar as well as fracking and tar sands.

Can we, as students, believe that the Concordia administration is divesting from fossil fuels when they haven't given any indication that the new fund's funds were taken from Concordia's oil and gas holdings? The administration made this fund seemingly in response to Divest Concordia's campaign, but that doesn't mean it was a divestment.

It's nice to say that the school is working on being more transparent, and is working with the Joint Sustainable Investment Advisory Committee to reach those goals, but there's yet to be any action on the matter that can be verified by external sources, like us.

So the lack of transparency is one thing. The lack of expedited action is another, and there really is no excuse for waiting. Issues of climate and sustainability are urgent. Universities should

set the example, as centres of thought and progress. The will of the students is for divestment, and respecting that is fundamental. Continuing to invest in oil-stained stacks also tarnishes the school's public image.

And, perhaps most importantly for those on the fence, divestment isn't the financial debacle it's straw-manned up to be by its opponents.

Concordia's investment in sustainable funds garnered a 3.92 per cent return since October 2015—that's only 0.39 percentage points less than the Toronto Stock Exchange over the same period, for guaranteed sustainable and ethical investments.

Is it worth undermining the integrity of the university's investments—let alone the future of our planet—for a difference of \$70,000 return on investment over a year?

The Link is in favour of 100 per cent divestment from fossil fuels. We're so in favour that we want divestment to be done properly, transparently, and as soon as possible. We don't want to have to rewrite this again next year.

THE LINK

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Letters to the editor are welcome. All letters 400 words or less will be printed, space permitting. The letters deadline is Friday at 4:00 p.m. *The Link* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length and refuse those deemed racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, libellous, or otherwise contrary to *The Link*'s statement of principles.

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Sept.
1
—
Nov.
20

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The Phi Centre teams up
with the Centre d'histoire
de Montréal



Sept.
17
—
Nov.
30

Films

Phi@MMFA

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Oct.
15
—
Nov.
12

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