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GRAPHIC MORAGH AILISH RAHN-CAMPBELL

EDITORIAL:

Bringing the Marginalized Voices to the Front

Let's Keep the Discussion on Gender and Sexuality Going

In the wake of heavy conversations surrounding gender equality and body autonomy, we need to highlight the experiences of women, queer, and non-binary folks now more than ever.

With our Gender and Sexuality Issue, we aim to put those voices front and centre.

The stories in this issue vary, but all of them demonstrate the value of cooperation, sharing ideas, and fostering imagination and creativity in our efforts for gender inclusion and queer representation.

In this, you'll read stories about biphobia, drag artists who are changing the scene in Montreal, and women who created a workspace and social hub for female entrepreneurs and independent workers, as well as so much more.

Two female entrepreneurs realized the need for their own social hub specifically for women to have a fair chance to thrive in the business world—a world was created for men by men. It's ideas like this

that can foster creativity in a safe and inclusive space.

Biphobia is real, and many people experience hate or misunderstanding from both straight and queer people. It's an ongoing struggle that needs to be openly talked about to get rid of the bisexual stereotypes that dominate in our society.

Drag performers have been challenging gender norms since the 1920s, and have faced discrimination for decades. Four local drag queens continue to protest gender norms by putting on shows in local cabarets and theatres. They teach us about putting our identity forth into the world regardless of the stereotypes or mainstream opinion.

Similar to our other magazines, we aim to make this issue as inclusive as possible. Although the articles within these pages tell different experiences, our hope is that something will resonate with our readers and lead to some much-needed reflection.

We believe that, when reading these articles, it's important to remember that different forces of oppression intersect to affect us in different ways. Intersectionality acknowledges that our experiences with oppression vary, and that we can recognize the universality of our situations while still highlighting and understanding the implications of our differences.

These stories are the individual experiences of people navigating the forces of oppression which marginalized communities encounter. That individuality shapes our perception, and it's important to keep that in mind.

We always have to remind ourselves that women, queer, and non-binary people face these challenges on a day-to-day basis. Dialogue about how to eliminate those challenges must be ongoing, and we hope that stories like the ones in this magazine serve to do just that—to make sure that the voices of the marginalized are at the forefront. ▮

Exploring Indigenous Spirituality

Course at Concordia Now Being Offered Full-Time

BY JOSEPH COPPOLINO
@JOSEPHCOPPOLINO

After a few years of only being offered occasionally, the Department of Theological Studies at Concordia decided to make a course on indigenous spirituality available full-time.

Starting in the Fall 2018 semester, Indigenous Spirituality (THEO 243) will be offered regularly as an elective for all students, as well as a mandatory course for the department's certificate in Christian Spirituality.

For Christine Jamieson, associate professor in the department, the development and teaching of the course is more than just an academic pursuit—it's a personal one.

Growing up in a military family that constantly moved around Canada, Jamieson's roots with the Boothroyd First Nation in British Columbia remained unexplored because of abusive treatment her father experienced as an indigenous person.

"My father was someone who had a very deep sense of unworthiness that I know came out of the abuse he suffered," said Jamieson. "He, in some ways, tried to escape that by ignoring that part of himself."

Over the past decade, Jamieson has taken the time to reexamine that undiscovered aspect of her heritage.

Jamieson returned to British Columbia, connected with her ancestry and took part in workshops that provided her with a background in indigenous teaching methods. She is also in the process of working on an Indigenous Educators' Certificate in Indigegogy from Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Now, she's importing her knowledge and cultural understanding into the lecture halls of Concordia University.

"I recognized that was an important thing I needed to explore myself in order to be able to feel I could offer this course. That was very much a part of my own research," said Jamieson. "This course comes out of that experience."

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY Jamieson designed the course to explore aspects of spirituality in an indigenous context through methods not commonly used in current academic settings.

She hopes to teach students the meaning of indigenous spirituality, as well as allow them to experience it and understand as not simply a belief system, but as something more tangible.

"It's not an intellectually abstract thing, it's actually very concrete. It's grounded in the experience of being in the land, and the experience of the people as a community," said Jamieson.

An indigenous approach to knowledge sharing and understanding differs greatly from traditionally "academic" methodologies. Often, they will supplant objectivity in favour of embracing the connection they have to the subject they're studying.

"They are not standing apart from their research, but they are engaged in it. It is about being in a relationship with others," said Jamieson. "It's a profoundly different type of research, and more and more it's becoming respected in the academic world."

Jamieson also notes the course won't shy away from the history of abuse

indigenous people faced in Canada. In particular, the course will examine the role Catholic churches had in running the residential school system. In a calculated effort to get rid of indigenous culture in Canada, the residential school system removed children from their families, exposed them to physical and sexual abuse, and forced children to study in English or French.

"Many indigenous people see it as an imposition, and I do emphasize that oppression in the course," said Jamieson. "But at the same time I do look at that encounter between indigenous and Christian spirituality."

Jamieson studies the overlap between indigenous spirituality and Christianity. According to her, there are many indigenous people who have embraced Christianity, which is an important dynamic to address despite its controversial nature.





participate in a traditional smudging ceremony and circle work, as well as visit a long house organized by well-known Kahnawake figure Dr. Kenneth Deer.

Deer, a lawyer and activist in the Mohawk community, said some fear of appropriation exists when non-indigenous people take part in these ceremonies. That being said, he recognizes that some sharing should take place so both communities can coexist.

“They have taken everything else, so I think there is a fear in the indigenous community that they are going to take our ceremonies and our teachings that are specific to us,” said Deer. “But I think we can do both.”

The course is also intended to delve deeper into understanding how indigenous spirituality differs from western and Christian spirituality.

While spirituality in a European society often stands alone as a separate realm, the spirituality of indigenous people often runs through all aspects of life. According to Jamieson, indigenous spirituality is expressed through art, clothing, music, and storytelling, and is inextricable from the community and the environment.

Jamieson says the course, and indigenous spirituality itself, is appealing to those seeking a spiritual dimension to their lives because it avoids a lot of the “institutional trap-pings” of Christianity.

“It allows them to experience this spiritual dimension of human existence that they can really respect and understand, without feeling like they are being coerced into something,” said Jamieson.

The indigenous conception of spirituality interests people because it allows them to question certain aspects of themselves not normally explored in a public or academic setting, said Jamieson. By incorporating it into academic institutions, students are engaging with

their own inner spirituality.

“It touches a deep part of the human person, particularly students, in their exploration of their own deep questions,” said Jamieson. “It’s partly a personal journey and partly an academic journey.”

While the course is open to both indigenous and non-indigenous students, Jamieson believes that non-indigenous students will benefit the most. By learning about the history and culture of indigenous peoples in Canada, students are not only exposed to the difficult reality they face, but also the resilience and power of their spirituality.

SPURRED ON BY RECONCILIATION

In December 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published its calls to action to help “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” with the indigenous peoples of Canada.

The 94 calls to action are extensive. They range from recognition of distinct language rights within Canada, to calling upon the Pope to publicly apologize for the role of the Catholic Church in the residential school system.

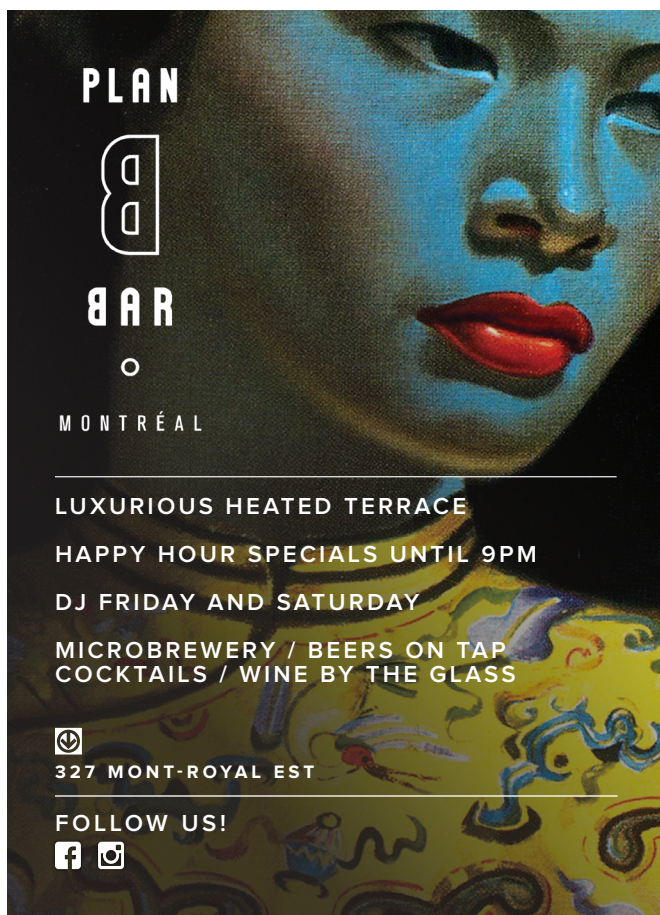
One call to action insists that indigenous teachings be used in both secondary and post-secondary institutions across Canada. Not just incorporating more history into the curricula, but actually utilizing indigenous methods of knowl-

“These people have not come to see the gospel message as a foreign construct onto their own spirituality,” said Jamieson. “They have been able to see in the Christian message something of the roots of their own spirituality.”

A number of traditional indigenous ceremonies have been built into the course. Students get the opportunity to

“It’s not an intellectually abstract thing, it’s actually very concrete. It’s grounded in the experience of being in the land, and the experience of the people as a community.”

Christine Jamieson





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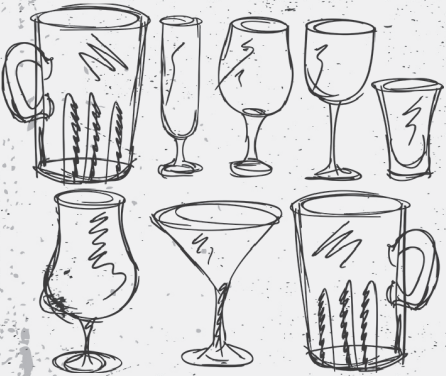
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edge sharing in Canadian classrooms.

The hope is that by leveraging indigenous methodologies, not only will teachings be more inviting to indigenous students, but that stronger intercultural relationships will be built, allowing indigenous and non-indigenous people to coexist peacefully. Building that understanding between the communities is an important step towards reconciliation.

The recent explosion of programs, courses, and even faculties that focus exclusively on indigenous history and culture in universities across Canada has seen a steep increase over the last few years.

Research from Universities Canada, a membership organization of 96 universities across Canada, found that from 2013 to 2015, Canadian universities saw a 33 per cent increase in indigenous related courses or programming for indigenous students. The research also revealed that over two thirds of their member universi-

ties were working to include indigenous leadership within their administrations.

For Deer, this is due in part to the TRC. "Universities are almost competing with each other to see who can have the better program, and for Indigenous staff to fill these positions," said Deer. "I wish I was 20 years younger to take advantage of it."

These calls to action also proved to be the impetus for Concordia to offer Jamieson's course on a full-time basis.

STILL MORE WORK TO DO

While Deer is content with recent interest of universities in indigenous studies and culture, he remains skeptical, electing to wait and see what will be done to continue investing in indigenous education and programming.

"There will be some experiments that will be good and some that might not work so well," said Deer. "We will see

"There will be some experiments that will be good and some that might not work so well. We will see how things are ten years from now."

Kenneth Deer

how things are ten years from now."

Jamieson believes the course is one way that Concordia can further teach non-indigenous students about Canada's indigenous people.

"My hope is to help students broaden their understanding of this important reality that is part of our country and the history that is still with us." □

THE LINK

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: JANUARY

LAUNCH PARTY (JAN 12)

Break's over, the semester is starting, and it's still cold outside. But fear not, friends, *The Link* has your back! Come warm up and celebrate the release of the Gender & Sexuality issue with us. We'll have a panel discussion featuring a few of the people we profile in this magazine, followed by some sweet live folk music by The Dusty Faces.

Where: Kafein Cafe-Bar
(1429a Rue Bishop)
When: Jan. 12, at 8:00 pm

NASH WORKSHOP (JAN 19)

Every year, *The Link* sends delegates to the Canadian University Press National Conference, also known as NASH. Our delegates attend workshops and learn about the best practices that other student journalists, and professionals, employ. Now that they're back they want to share that knowledge with you!

Where: Our Office, H-649
(1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)
When: Jan. 19, at 4:00 pm

GAME COVERAGE (JAN 26)

Game recaps are essential in *The Link's* sports section, and are great to get your foot in the door for sports journalism. Want to learn how to do it? Sports Online Editor Harrison Rahajason, along with Coordinating Editor Tristan D'Amours and former Sports Online Editor Julian McKenzie will teach the tricks of the trade when it comes to game coverage.

Where: Our Office, H-649
(1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)
When: Jan. 26, at 4:00 pm

OPS WRITING (FEB 2)

A well-crafted opinions piece can change the reader's views, and can help change the narrative. But it's not a free-for-all! There are some general rules that are important to remember when writing an ops piece. Join *The Link's* Opinions Editor Savannah Stewart and Managing Editor Jon Milton for a lesson on how to write strong opinions.

Where: Our Office, H-649
(1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.)
When: Jan. 26, at 4:00 pm



Neither Here Nor There

A Photo Essay

WORDS BY KELSEY LITWIN, IMAGES BY CHRIS M. FORSYTH
@KELSEYLITWIN AND @CHRISMFORSYTH

The neighbourhood of Saint-Pierre is an enclave.

As urban development sprawled westward from Montreal's core, the once economically and politically independent village became boxed in—closed off by a Canadian National railway to the west, highways along its southern border, and a hill to its east. It's physical capacity is confined by these immovable and imposing structures, and without proper planning, so are its residents.

In the 15 years since the neighbourhood officially became a part of the city of Montreal, Saint-Pierre's approximate 5,000 residents have become increasingly limited by what remains within these borders. In recent years, local essential services have dwindled, leaving the population particularly vulnerable. One group hopes to change that.

LEFT: A sign on Des Érables St., known by many as Devil's Hill, welcomes passers-by into the Saint-Pierre neighbourhood of Lachine. Until 1999, Saint-Pierre was its own village. The name Ville Saint-Pierre for many has stuck, despite the fact that it has since become a part of the Montreal borough of Lachine, on which it is economically dependent.

BELOW: About 5,000 people live within the less than one square kilometer that make up Saint-Pierre. But 40 per cent of those residents move away every five years, said Isaac Boulou, the project lead for Revitalisation Saint-Pierre. Boulou's group has been working with the municipal government to solve some of the area's biggest problems since 2003. Forty per cent of Saint-Pierre residents are also considered to be low-income.







LEFT: Some of the homes that sit along Saint-Pierre's southern and eastern border, like this one on Richmond St., are decorated with billboards, aimed at the drivers who travel along Highway 20 and through the Saint-Pierre Interchange. Because of the neighbourhood's proximity to the major autoroutes, noise and air pollution are a serious problem for residents, explained Bolou.

ABOVE: Over the last two decades, Saint-Pierre has continued to lose local businesses, explained Boulou, who also lives in the neighbourhood. In June, the last bank in the area, Caisse Desjardins, closed their sole remaining ATM—the branch itself had closed in October of last year. The only ATM in Saint-Pierre is in a dépanneur, much like this one sits on the corner of Des Érables St. and Saint-Pierre Ave.



Due to its proximity to one of Montreal's major highways and the city's near-constant construction, many commuters opt to travel through Saint-Pierre's main artery, Saint-Jacques St., to bypass the almost-certain traffic. Bolou explained that 12,000 cars travel on Saint-Jacques St. daily. The problem, he continued, is that Saint-Pierre is a village and its roads aren't built to sustain such frequent use, especially by trucks that use the alternate route.

"The state of urban planning in Saint-Pierre needs to be reviewed completely," said Boulou. "Environmentally, as well as economically and socially."

"It becomes a matter of public health," he continued.



The increased road traffic contributes to an overall rise in temperatures in Saint-Pierre, Bou-lou said. A heat map put together by the gov-ernment of Quebec's Institut national de santé publique in 2015 depicts Saint-Pierre as being among the hottest recorded areas on the island, compared to the municipality of Montreal West, which borders it and is significantly cooler.



Boulou calls disappearing industry and business a contributor to Saint-Pierre's problems. Used car part centre, Vincent, on Vincent Ave. is an anomaly for the area and has remained in business for the last 70 years.

"There are a lot fewer options and less services [for local residents]," he said. There used to be a large grocery store, but when that closed, those who lived in Saint-Pierre were left with nothing. One of Revitalisation Saint-Pierre's larger successes was the opening of a new market, Marché Saint-Pierre, in June 2010.

But still, he said that Saint-Pierre's streets aren't welcoming for pedestrians, which impedes residents from visiting the stores and restaurants that still stand in the neighbourhood. □



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No Refuge

Social Media and Our Perception of Refugees

BY AAKRUTI PATEL

Nadia Naffi recalls the 2015 Paris attacks.

They happened around the same time Justin Trudeau announced he would welcome up to 25,000 Syrian refugees into Canada.

During this time, she saw a lot of hateful comments circulating around the internet, especially against Muslims. Ever since then, whenever another tragic attack occurred around the world, Naffi would spend the next 48 to 72 hours online reading comments and tracking people's reactions over social media.

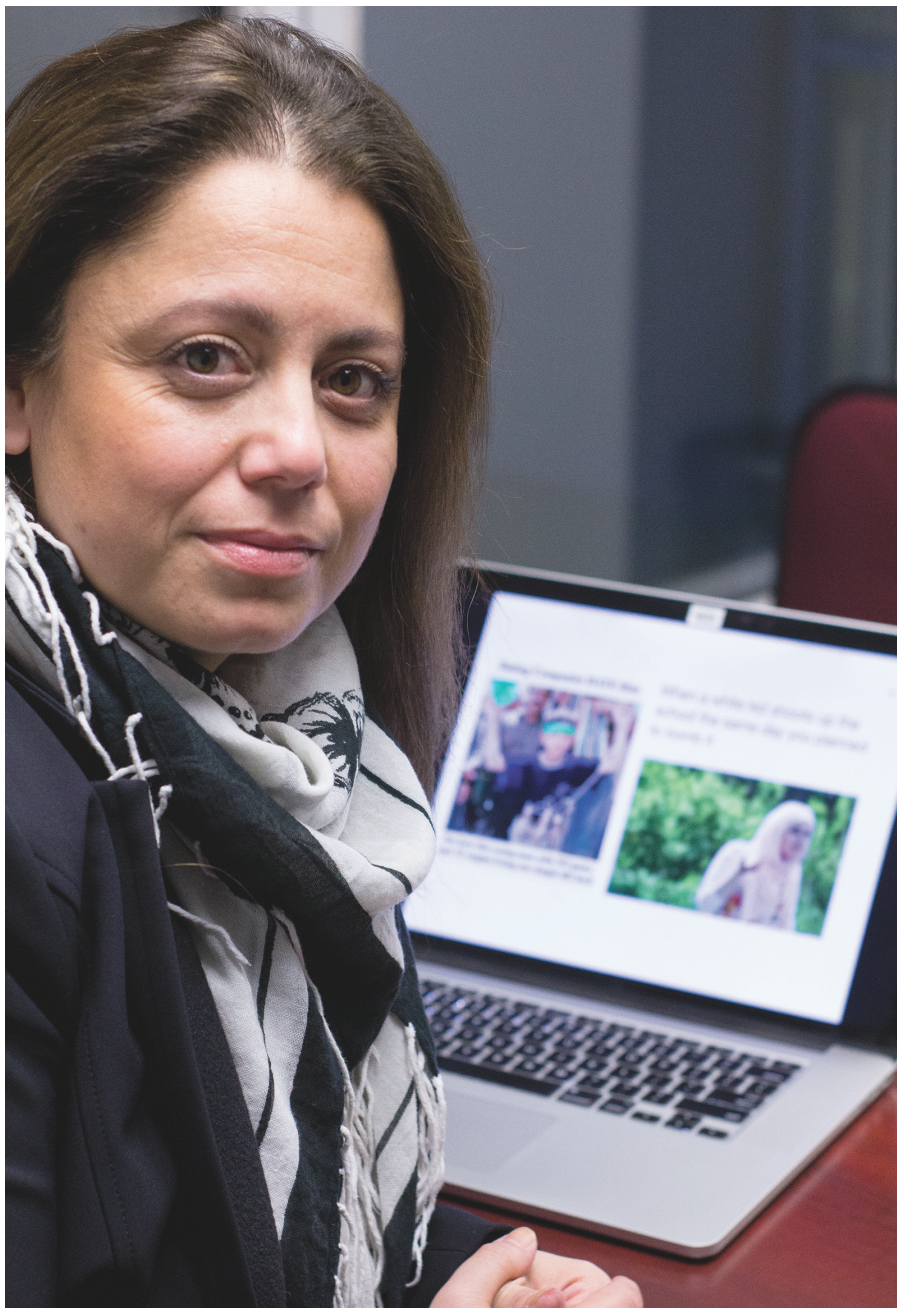
"I was super interested whether youth actually looked at these comments, and how they construed the image of refugees based on what they see online."

With this in mind, Naffi, a PhD candidate at Concordia, launched a study on the intersection between social media and refugees. Naffi's research focuses on the consequences of social media, specifically on the ways it shapes people's perspective on refugees. Most of her research is directed towards the youth of a host country, like Canada, and their feelings towards refugees entering the country.

With the research for her PhD degree now finished, Naffi defended her thesis on Dec. 18.

Naffi called for young participants between the ages of 18 and 24, and she got an overwhelming response. Though she was ultimately looking for Canadian participants, she got a worldwide reaction. But to stay within her scope of how youth in Canada deal with the arrival of refugees, Naffi decided on a final 42 Canadian participants that she met with to get a better understanding of how social media impacts their opinions about Syrian refugees.

Most of her participants had positive



Concordia University PhD candidate Nadia Naffi's research looks at how social media affects refugees. Most participants in her study felt that many refugees become dehumanized online. —PHOTO BRIAN LAPUZ @BRIANLAPUZ

reactions towards refugees. "People who are against [refugees] refused to speak to me," she said.

What Naffi found was that many of her participants perceived refugees were being dehumanized online by people who were against their arrival in Canada. While the people leaving these kinds of comments are often labeled as racist, ignorant, and bigoted, Naffi's participants were of the opinion that any sort of name calling against them meant stooping to their level of negativity.

"We're not being better than the ones who want to keep refugees out," she said.

This is why Naffi said it's important to start by understanding where these people are coming from—to spark a dialogue rather than igniting animosity. Yet still, some people often feel helpless on an online platform, she pointed out.

"When it came to online, they felt their voice didn't really count," she said. Her participants also experienced discomfort because they felt that they couldn't change the minds of those

who are against refugees, and felt that the task of trying was pointless. But Naffi noted, “By being bystanders, we were actually supporting the people against refugees and harming the refugees themselves.”

Naffi urged people to step up to defend refugees. “I really hope students make an effort to include [refugees], we have a role to play to accept them and help them,” she said.

Naffi argued that the negative comments we come across online don’t represent all of Canada. “It’s just a small group that’s really loud,” she said. She believes young people have great strength, and they can have a huge influence if they choose to use their voice.

“As a researcher, our role is to interact with the public and listen to them, not to be a detached researcher,” she said. Naffi wants to interact with the public in order to get feedback, which then makes her work a collaborative effort.

Naffi, an immigrant herself, was accustomed to an inclusive environment when she first arrived at Concordia as a masters student. This easy integration is not common for all immigrants or refugees, though. So was the case for her children and husband who felt excluded from their respective environments. Her children, who had to bounce around from school to school, had a difficult time finding acceptance.

“How can you integrate in a place where people don’t want you?” she asked.

Naffi’s children inspired her research, and it was through them that she was able to explore social media.

“I saw that they suffered, and I feel no youth should suffer because of hate being put online,” she continued.

Her research is also heavily influenced by her past. She was born and raised in war-torn Lebanon and grew up during the civil war. She has memories of suicide bombings and of having to dodge snipers who sat spread across rooftops during her walk to school. Despite all of this, Naffi refused to live in fear.

“We never stopped going to school and we never stopped living,” she said. For her, it was more important to adapt to her surroundings rather than letting it stop her from living her life.

For Naffi, the choice to leave Lebanon was an easy one to make. After giving

birth to her three children, Naffi and her family relocated to Canada in 2008.

“I could not let my kids grow up that way and so I had come to Canada to give them a safe environment.”

STARTING OVER

Reham Al Azem, a Concordia graduate student, was one of the 25,000 Syrian refugees to come to Canada in February 2016 after Trudeau promised to resettle refugees in Canada.

She recalled leaving Syria with memories of fleeing bullets in Damascus, the country’s capital, and running away from dropping shells in her neighbourhood.

“Unfortunately, this is the image I have of my country,” she said. This, along with government corruption is what prompted Al Azem and her family to leave Syria.

Al Azem was nervous about coming to Canada, especially since she didn’t have many relatives or friends here. However, the decision was made simple for her and her family because they were confident their rights would be valued here—something they lacked back at home.

After sending requests to Ontario and Alberta, the Anglican Church in Jasper sponsored Al Azem and her parents to come to Canada. Her parents stayed in Alberta, while Al Azem left for Montreal for her studies.

Though she was happy about being accepted, the prospect of starting over was scary.

“The journey took 29 hours to get to Toronto, and during this time I kept looking out the window to the Atlantic Ocean, but all I could see was darkness,” she said.

For Al Azem, she felt like the dark-

ness she saw through the window was like looking into her future.

“Endless darkness, I felt like I was being extracted from my roots,” she continued. The uncertainty of her future mixed with feelings of doubt and fear made her question her decision to leave.

However, upon her arrival, Al Azem felt she had made the right decision.

Al Azem still experienced hostility online though, from people who have contempt against refugees. She remembers being tagged in a post on Facebook by someone against accepting refugees. She even typed up a comment in response, but ended up deleting it. “I felt that instead of arguing with him, I could change his opinion one day.”

“Since that day, I have decided to ignore these kinds of negative thoughts and comments, and focus on my life in Canada,” she continued.

Overall, Al Azem felt welcome and has had a positive experience in Canada. “I think as refugees, if we can make Canadians proud of us, I’m sure we will not find anyone against our presence.”

Naffi said that negative comments online are like red flags for her. Having experienced conflict back in Lebanon, whether it was Christians towards Muslims or Muslims towards Muslims, she knew that it’s more important to start a dialogue instead being further entrenched in our own views.

Naffi hopes that her research can be used to help facilitate conversation between those who promote immigration and those who are firmly against it.

“Yes we have our differences, and yes we might not agree, but we need to have a dialogue,” she said.

For Naffi and Al Azem, the overall experience of integrating in Canada was positive, despite some of the negative comments that circulate online.

“We can never all be united,” said Naffi, but having differences doesn’t mean people can’t reach an understanding. Instead of always fighting against the other side, it’s more important to counterbalance the hate with positive images. By doing this, social media can help promote a positive image on refugees. □

“The journey took 29 hours to get to Toronto, and during this time I kept looking out the window to the Atlantic Ocean, but all I could see was darkness.”

Reham Al Azem

Igniting the Embers of Indigenous Art

Sacred Fire Productions Brings Indigenous Art Into The Mainstream

BY AYSHA WHITE

As Canada moves to right the wrongs of its colonial past, Nadine St-Louis believes that must include the art world as well.

That's why she founded Sacred Fire Productions in 2012. St-Louis realized that she wanted to do something she believed in, while not working under anyone else.

Sacred Fire Productions is a not-for-profit arts organization that aims to support indigenous artists in their professional recognition, accelerate social inclusion, break down stereotypes, and draw attention to the diverse cultures that exist under the descriptor of "indigenous."

"Sacred fire means manifestation of spirit," St-Louis said.

St-Louis also serves as the organization's executive director. She graduated from Concordia University in 1994 with a double major in English literature and film studies. She is of Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and Scottish descent.

Sacred Fire Productions was the result of St-Louis' desire to bring mainstream recognition and appreciation to often-ignored indigenous artists. Rather than just "stamping in and out," St-Louis wanted to work towards something she believed in.

And in five years, she has been very busy.

To fulfill its social mandate, Sacred Fire Productions undertakes actions meant to further the exposure of indigenous artists and contribute to their professional, economic, and personal development.

One example of this is the ASHUKAN Cultural Space. Another its annual Mixed Arts Festival.

Sacred Fire Productions also creates cultural events meant to bring indigenous and non-indigenous people together to begin a dialogue about reconciliation.

"We want to bridge cultural understanding between nations that has been eliminated from our past," explained St-Louis.

It is an uncommon and innovative organization that aims to promote indigenous artists, who according to St-Louis, are deeply under represented in the mainstream art ecosystem.

St-Louis explained that the Canadian federal government's policy of assimilation made it illegal to produce artwork, to speak their language, or engage in any other kind of cultural practice such as a pow-wow.

Sacred objects, like the peace pipe or totems, were removed by the federal government and redistributed to museums. Being able to express themselves through art is an important part of First Nations culture, and being prevented from doing so was an attempt to erase them from history.

Indigenous voices are invisible in media, film, and the cultural dialogue of today's world, said St-Louis. Sacred Fire Productions hopes to change that, in part, by creating events and a space for indigenous people.

Carmen Hathaway is one of the artists represented by Sacred Fire Productions. Born in Germany, she's lived in Manitoba since 1974. Hathaway is a member of the Abenaki First Nation, from Odanak in Quebec.

Hathaway is a dynamic multimedia artist who creates physical paintings and glass pieces, as well as digital artwork. Her art is sold in the form of digital prints at the ASHUKAN Cultural Space.

"Traditional skills I've developed over

30 years as a multimedia [and] intermedia artist transfer seamlessly into digital art," said Hathaway.

St-Louis and Hathaway first met in early 2011. "Nadine St-Louis invited me to participate in the upcoming MAMU (Together) painting symposium being held in August at Uashat, Quebec's Shaputuan Museum," she explained.

That led to her first exhibit with Sacred Fire Productions, which was presented for a year at Marché Bonsecours in Old Montreal.

Hathaway has been represented by the ASHUKAN Cultural Space since its inception in May 2015.

"In 2015, I accepted an invitation from ASHUKAN to present a solo exhibit in the gallery," she said. Her multimedia presentation, *From Smoke to Cyber Signals*, was a part of the Montreal's First Peoples' Festival.

"The exhibition addresses various themes such as communication mode, symbolic and semiological representations that link contemporary indigenous experience with the legacy of the past," according to the Sacred Fire Productions website.

Hathaway has used both video and digital technology in her evolving body of work. "Engaging in this dynamic long-distance relationship with ASHUKAN is empowering," she said.

Though she's a time zone and the province of Ontario away, "communication is key. Networking with Quebec-based organizations result in myriad opportunities," explained Hathaway.

Sacred Fire Productions works with over 91 artists and creators of First Nation,



Top: The ASHUKAN Cultural Space is located in Old Montreal.

Bottom: Sacred Fire Productions founder and executive director Nadine St-Louis works to bring attention to indigenous artists.

PHOTOS ION EXTEBARRIA

Métis, and Inuit descent. According to the Sacred Fire Productions website, the average earning for an indigenous artist is \$15,900 per year.

For all of last year, St-Louis served as a policy advisor to Quebec's minister of culture. The province was in the midst of renewing its cultural policy, which was created in 1992, shortly after the 1991 Oka Crisis, and hadn't been touched since.

"We got one paragraph in the cultural policy. Having that indigenous voice for the renewal of the cultural policy was essential to bring back the balance," said St-Louis.

St-Louis explained that many indigenous and Inuit people create art in the northern parts of Canada, but that there isn't space in the southern urban centres for them to be seen or heard.

An example of the barriers artists face trying to promote their work is the high transportation costs they face traveling from north to south. St-Louis has done extensive work mapping the northern parts of Quebec, often inaccessible by roads.

Finding success as an artist can be difficult, as the path to success is less predetermined than other professions. It requires you to put yourself and your work out there.

This requires time, money, and connections. Like any community, Montreal's art world has its own social codes. Sacred Fire Productions can help artists through workshops and professional development training who are unfamiliar with its do's and don'ts.

The Mixed Arts Festival is one of the manifestations of Sacred Fire Productions' social mandate. This year was

its fifth. It was also part of the official program for Montreal's 375th anniversary celebrations, the theme being "reconciliation through the arts," and was presented in mid-June.

The Mixed Arts Festival is a multidisciplinary festival that included workshops, a photo exhibit, a temporary art gallery, musical performances and more. The festival included a mixture of indigenous and non-indigenous artists.

According to St-Louis, indigenous people receive very little representation in film, and oftentimes when they are featured in film it is stereotypical and clichéd, such as the sexualized and one dimensional Pocahontas archetype, explained St-Louis.

"We want to build indigenous pride through arts and culture, especially for artists who live far away," said St-Louis.

The ASHUKAN Cultural Space is a social entrepreneurship project, birthed officially in 2015. It's intended to be a place to create dialogue, a fair trade economy, and professional developments.

"The ASHUKAN Cultural Space is an incubator for the creation, production, and dissemination of indigenous cultures and teachings," St-Louis said. "It is also a gathering space to bridge between nations so we can understand better their historical truths of Canada, and the impact of colonialism on indigenous artists."

It's the backbone of accelerating social change and of Sacred Fire Productions, said St-Louis, likening its necessity to that of a landing strip for an airplane.

The ASHUKAN Cultural Space is located in the centre of Old Montreal, in Place Jacques-Cartier. It's spacious, bright, and filled with colourful art work. Inside, it smells faintly and pleasantly of pine.

St-Louis had many of the building's original rooms removed to create an open space, with a pine staircase winding up to the third floor. Like many buildings in Old Montreal, its walls are composed of cobbled grey stone.

The grey stone walls are interspersed with painted white ones and bright spotlights highlighting the art.

The second floor of the space is where

fair trade, indigenous-made moccasins, soap, jewelry, furs, reproductions, beading works, greeting cards, and Inuit sculptures are sold.

There is also an online store allowing the artworks to reach an international market.

It serves as both a forum to display indigenous artwork and as a fair trade boutique. Stepping into the space is an educational experience for tourists as well as Canadians, according to St-Louis.

"We have a responsibility to know whose land we're walking on. It's unceded territory. We have a responsibility to know the nations with whom we share the land," said St-Louis.

St-Louis said that there are souvenir shops in Old Montreal that are flooded with cheap trinkets that are made in China, which look vaguely indigenous. She added that these objects represent cultural appropriation, as the souvenirs and their eventual profits have no involvement with the people whose cultures they claim to be representing.

One reason that this phenomena exists, according to St-Louis, was that indigenous people were viewed as invisible, which allowed the proliferation of faux indigenous souvenirs into the Canadian market.

"We're offering 100 per cent authentic handmade indigenous items," she continued.

"If you want true reconciliation, we need to do economic reconciliation, [in] the cultural sector," said St-Louis. "The federal government has a responsibility to help in the reconciliation of cultural economy."

If a tourist walks into the ASHUKAN Cultural Space and asks the question, "Who made this?" they can find out exactly who the artist is and what community they're from.

Profits go back to the artist so that they can continue to create. The souvenirs claiming to be indigenous cannot claim the same thing, and are attempting to profit off of a culture and people they have not asked, consulted, or compensated.

It is an example of cultural appropriation and fraud that St-Louis believes should be made illegal. "We're fighting

"Sacred Fire Productions is the manifestation of the spirit, not just of me. [It is] making room for the manifestation of the Nations to come through the art. [It is] making room for reconciliation, room for dialogue, economic growth, and reducing poverty."

Nadine St-Louis

against that," she said.

If it seems confusing that an arts organization could be so political, or be doing so many different things, St-Louis would have you understand that "the indigenous worldview is circular, that everything is interconnected. That's why we chose the medicine wheel as our business model." The ASHUKAN Cultural Space, its educational value, and the events are all interconnected and equally important.

Seeing that there wasn't a space explicitly for indigenous artists to be seen and valued, St-Louis created Sacred Fire Productions and extended her vision to the ASHUKAN Cultural Space.

"I'm using what I believe in to bring me forward in life," she said.

"Sacred Fire Productions is the manifestation of the spirit, not just of me," St-Louis said. "[It is] making room for the manifestation of the Nations to come through the art. [It is] making room for reconciliation, room for dialogue, economic growth, and reducing poverty."





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Les Filministes Spur Feminist Discussion Through Film

Student-Run Film Screenings Promote Feminist Ideas

BY MAYA LACH-AIDELBAUM

Three students, one bright idea.

Eighty-five guest speakers, 49 films screened, 32 themes discussed. These numbers embody Les Filministes, an independent student-run association that screens documentaries and films on themes related to feminism.

Les Filministes was created in 2015 by Gabrielle Doré and Soline Asselin, two Université du Québec à Montréal students. It all started after Doré's Masters degree supervisor asked her to help organize an event where a film would be presented to raise awareness about sexual assault.

However, as Doré became more and more involved, the event became something completely separate from her work as a research assistant.

That's when Les Filministes was born.

Les Filministes' first movie screening was *The Hunting Ground*, a documentary film directed by Kirby Dick about sexual assault on college campuses in the United States, and what its creators say is a failure on college administrations' part to deal with it adequately. Dick is one of the only male directors in the repertoire of movies.

Their first event was such a success that more screenings followed in the months afterward, and then significantly more in the following years as this feminist film movement gained traction.

With time, the events became so popular that the original duo running Les Filministes needed additional help. Now, three UQAM students are running the show: Gabrielle Doré, Coppélia La Roche-Francoeur and Anne-Julie Beaudin.

Feminism and film are no strangers. Many renowned feminist scholars and critics have discussed gender in film.

In her essay "City of Women," outspoken feminist author and essayist

Rebecca Solnit writes "I've come to wonder what it would feel like if... I had the option, at any moment, of seeing several new releases lionizing my gender's superpowers, if lady Bonds and Spiderwomen became the ordinary fare of my entertainment and imagination."

This past February, Les Filministes explored that topic and presented *Wonder Women: The Untold Story of American Superheroines*, directed by Kristy Guevara-Flanagan. The theme of the screening was representation of women in popular cinema.

There were three guest speakers at the event. Fanie Demeule and Sandrine Galand, both literary studies PhD students at UQAM, were present. High school teacher Sophie Delmas, who is also a lecturer on queer comics and the founder of the LGBTQ+ Subconvention at Montreal's Othakuthon in 2009, was also present. Delmas has implemented queer-themed conferences at Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec's Comic Cons.

Of course, an important aspect of Les Filministes' screenings are the guest speakers. The goal of these events is ultimately to open the discussion about important issues in feminism.

"[We want to] create a space to discuss feminism other than in universities or in more closed environments," said Doré.

One of their guest speakers of particular relevance to Concordia students interested in feminism was Maïr Verthuy—the founder of Concordia's Simone de Beauvoir Institute. She attended Les Filministes' event where they screened *Autour de Maïr* directed by Hejer Charf. The event was about teaching literature to women in university and Verthuy was in fact the star

of the movie screened.

Questions surrounding the representation of gender in film go hand in hand with questions about gender on the other side of the camera, in cinema production. Les Filministes try their best to curate movies directed by women. The movie production world is male-dominated, hence the importance of promoting women directors who portray the world and its women in a very different light.

Feminist philosopher Laura Mulvey, who coined the term "male gaze," argued that the camera in movies assumes the point of view of the heterosexual male. Women in film are objects of the male gaze, and the male characters are meant to be reflections of the male ego who identifies with them.

In September, Les Filministes

"Feminism is a reading that can be applied to many domains. It can be applied to mechanics just as much as it can be applied to the theatre world or the music world."

Anne-Julie Beaudin



Les Filministes organizers from left to right: Coppélia LaRoche-Francoeur, Soline Asselin, Anne-Julie Beaudin and Gabrielle Doré.

PHOTO COURTESY JULIE GAGNON

addressed the issue of women in cinema and hosted a roundtable discussion with female directors and actresses.

The representation of gender in film is only one of the many subjects brought to the forefront by Les Filministes. The selected films have broached a wide array of topics, such as women and music, women and aging, women and bicycling, and women in prison.

“Feminism is a reading that can be applied to many domains,” said Beaudin. “It can be applied to mechanics just as much as it can be applied to the theatre world or the music world.”

Beaudin believes in the power of film and its ability to change the way people see the world. “Films are powerful,” said Beaudin.

“They are only one or one-and-a-half hours long, but afterwards they throw lots of ideas out into the world. It is a very accessible way for everyone to broach subjects,” said Beaudin.

Though Les Filministes has been an overwhelmingly positive and successful venture, they have run into some backlash.

For example, Les Filministes were criticized by UQAM’s anti-speciesism association for screening the French documentary *Un film de chasse de filles* directed by Julie Lambert. This documentary introduces several female characters who also happen to be avid, talented hunters.

To members in the anti-speciesism association, this movie promoted the idea of speciesism, which is a prejudice similar to sexism or racism. They argued that we should not exclude non-human animals from the rights, freedoms and protections afforded to humans. Hunting obviously does not abide by this idea.

The film was chosen as part of the theme of women and hunting. Doré explains the subject of hunting is already very sensitive, but they also tried to

adopt it from a feminist point of view.

“There were a lot of important questions,” said Doré. “But an anti-speciesist association came to the showing.”

Doré added that though Les Filministes received criticism from the anti-speciesist association, it was all done with respect. After all, the goal of these showings is to generate discussion.

Les Filministes used to host their events at the National Film Board of Canada’s (NFB) old theatre right next to UQAM’s downtown campus. However, when the theatre was bought by the university, they decided they needed to move their events somewhere else.

“[Our audience] remained a student niche already aware of the cause,” said Doré.

In hopes of diversifying their audience and separating themselves from the academic world, Les Filministes decided to host their screening at ArtGang near Beaubien Metro. ArtGang is a clothing boutique and art gallery that also hosts events.

ArtGang also has the advantage of being able to accommodate a lot more people. The theatre rooms next to the university have around 150 seats, and as Les Filministes became more popular, the rooms reached capacity very quickly. So far, the switch has been a success.

“The ambiance is different, so it attracts another crowd, both male and female,” said Beaudin. “ArtGang also brings in their own public.”

In late October, Les Filministes held an event about women and mental health that brought in 300 audience members. They had to turn people away at the door.

Les Filministes plan on expanding the scope of their organizing even more next year with a feminist film festival. This four-day festival will run March 7 through 10 and will feature a wide array of projections. Of course, guest speakers and discussion sessions will remain an important aspect.

Ultimately, Les Filministes hope to introduce feminist ideas to the widest range of people possible through films.

“It would be great to democratize feminism, to make it really accessible,” said Doré. □

La Guilde Keeps Thriving

An Inuit and First Nations Museum Run by Women

BY GABRIELLE BELAND

Last September, Montreal's Inuit and First Nations Museum La Guilde became neighbours with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Newly located at 1356 Sherbrooke St. West, just up the street from Concordia University's downtown campus, the museum currently hosts an Inuit and a glass exposition.

For more than 100 years, La Guilde's mantra has been the same—the promotion, preservation, and encouragement of the fine crafts profession.

The museum has come a long way from where it started. The concept began as the Montreal branch of the Women's Art Association of Canada. The founders wanted to pursue more of a crafts art approach, and decided to break off from the organization to become the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in 1906. Founded by two women, Alice J. Peck and Martha May Phillips, the initial idea was to give woman a role within the community. What is now a museum gallery started off as a store.

From its beginnings, the organization has been female-driven. It allowed women to give back and financially support their family. It created a sense of independence and individuality. To this day, all of La Guilde's directors have been women.

"The importance is to keep La Guilde's artistic direction," says Karine Gaucher, their programming and communications manager.

Gaucher says that "there was no distinction between Aboriginal and Inuit crafts and Quebec or immigrant artisans" when La Guilde first began. With time, the museum diversified and identified the different craft arts. Through the years, they've welcomed ethnographic and historical expositions. They own over 1,000 works of art and arti-

facts, the oldest one being arrowheads from the second half of the 19th century.

The museum chose to have Inuit and First Nations art to preserve traditional craft techniques. They also promote those techniques and encourage artistic standards through educational workshops, exhibitions, and sales.

One of the main expositions at the moment is called Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, which roughly translates to Inuit ancestral knowledge. The exposition is a partnership with EVOQ Architecture, a research center that specializes in Inuit and First Nations Architecture. EVOQ Architecture called on artists throughout the Nunangat Inuit territory to create artwork showing traditional knowledge in relation to science and technology development, in order to demonstrate the community's creativity.

La Guilde is hosting the projects of the nine winners. Gaucher said that, for editorial reasons, they are only presenting the sketches—with the exception of one sculpture by Koomautuk Curley. This exhibition was created to pay tribute to the Inuit Culture. The museum wanted to present a new generation of artists, and showcase a new perspective with a more contemporary approach to Inuit art.

The glass art section of the museum is eclectic—numerous glass techniques and materials are on display. Artist Susan Edgerley distinguishes herself by sculpting the glass and playing with her glass creation's circumference. Each piece is made individually. Sebastien Duchange's acidified art pieces promote an environmental discourse.

"There is great attention to detail that

"To not create, I would die."

Sylvain Rivard



is extraordinary,” says Gaucher.

What makes glass art unique, Gaucher explained, is that once you start a piece, you have to finish it. This allows reflection on the interrelations of nature and humans, and on the passing of time.

While glass is the dominant material, some artists like to think outside the box. Artist Ito Laïla Le François is a pioneer in her art, incorporating wool and felt into her creations.

“Her vision is completely explosive,” Gaucher said. “It’s a challenge that makes us move forward at La Guilde.” Other artists like Montserrat Duran Muntadas blend glass with textiles, and Carole Frève’s avant-gardist art incorporates electrical components.

Featured artists have always been selected by the team. When selecting expositions, they try to find innovative artists that will challenge the museum. Social media has been an important platform, where a great amount of support by the community has been shown. They also use it as a way to discover new artists and find inspiration, Gaucher explained.

“To not create, I would die,” are the wise words of Sylvain Rivard. The artist and ethnologist has been partnering with La Guilde for a little over three years. Last year, his exposition *Pulpe*

Fiction featured works created with handmade paper and fabric. The technique he used is called basket weaving. He’s also known for his contemporary approach to the Abenaki art. “I like mixing up genres. I never want to put myself in a niche,” Rivard said. His work ethic is simple: He likes to create with whatever he can get his hands on.

Rivard’s interest in the Abenaki culture first came from his grandparents, who have Abenaki origins. His second inspiration comes from Joseph Laurent, a Chief of the Abenaki village of Odanak, Quebec in the late 19th century. Laurent founded the first Abenaki museum and wrote the first Abenaki-English dictionary. As a way of remembering his impact on the culture, Rivard likes to incorporate this character into his art.

The best way Rivard learned to create art was through other artists. Rivard said that he never wants to feel restricted to a specific type of craft, and would rather practice multidisciplinary art. “I like playing with taboos,” Rivard said.

Rivard felt that often people are quick to judge, and there remains an incomprehension for the profession of an artist. This is one of the reasons why he enjoys collaborating with La Guilde. “They have an incredible open mind and they really respect the artistic approach,” he said.

Left: Karine Gaucher, La Guilde’s Programming and Communications Manager.

Right: Sylvain Rivard, an artist and ethnologist, has worked with La Guilde for over three years.

PHOTOS SHANNON CARRANCO



This blown glass piece featured at La Guilde is called "Floating Green" by artist Maryse Chartrand.

La Guilde's desire to hold on to the core of fine crafts creates a strong bond with commercial and noncommercial artists.

The museum is registered as a non-profit organization. Its main source of income comes from donation and system membership.

"Nobody's putting money in their pockets," Gaucher said.

Part of the money goes to the artist and the other part goes directly to the museum.

Most visitors are professors, Concordia students, and people who attend La Guilde's vernissages. They hope that their new location attracts a broader range of people who want to learn about the arts of Inuit, First Nations, and fine crafts.

The museum's recent move allowed the museum to have a space that was four to five times bigger, which enabled them to keep some exhibitions longer. They also only used to welcome around 15 people a day, and can now see around 60 people. This new space inspires change, Gaucher said, such as adding an Inuit commissioner to the team. "We want to implement a new discourse that is more authentic and integrated," Gaucher said.

Looking forward, La Guilde's hope is to reach out to more established and emerging artists who are located throughout the country. For a long time, Gaucher said the museum restricted itself to artists in Quebec and Ontario. With the new space, they hope to extend, and possibly collaborate, with artists who have more advanced training in their artistic practices. As a non-profit organization, La Guilde will continue to educate the public on Inuit and First Nations crafts art. "The importance is in the niche," Gaucher said. "Artists need a place to showcase their art's magnitude in all its splendor," said Gaucher.

New projects are in the works. They are currently working on having a textile and beading exposition, possibly with glass artists. They will continue to have "chat with the artist" types of events at least once every exposition, and vernissages for several artists. And for the night owls, in partnership with the Festival du Nouveau Cinema, the gallery will be open all night during Montreal's Nuit Blanche. ☐

The Young Coach

After Missing a Full-Time Olympic Opportunity, Emerance Maschmeyer Finds Solace in Goalie Coaching

BY TRISTAN D'AMOURS
@TRISTANDAMOURS

It was an opportunity that the Concordia Stingers women's hockey team and its head coach Julie Chu could not pass up.

An elite goalie was in town and things weren't going according to plan.

Just off the plane from Calgary, Emerance Maschmeyer didn't expect to stay in Montreal for very long. Acquired by Les Canadiennes de Montréal of the Canadian Women's Hockey League over the summer from the Calgary Inferno, the 23-year old thought she would be part of Team Canada and leave for South Korea to compete in the Winter Olympics.

Instead, she was called by the Canadian management staff and told she would be an alternate for the country's Olympic preparation. Essentially, she would be on-call in the event that a goalie from the starting roster got injured.

"It was probably the most disappointing call I've ever received," said Maschmeyer. "Obviously, it's been my goal for my entire life. It's the team I wanted to make and expected to make this year, but unfortunately with sports you can't really control everything."

The Bruderheim, Alta. native is the first to admit that she was not expecting to spend her winter season in Montreal. However, new opportunities popped up for her.

Enter Julie Chu. As part of Les Canadiennes' extended roster, once she knew that Maschmeyer would be coming over, she called to welcome her and to gauge her coaching interests.

"I was more taking the chance to see if she had the time and availability to volunteer and help out with our team," recalled Chu.

"You can't be sad about everything, you [have to] use it as motivation. For me, motivation builds character, that's how you see a person's true character."

Emerance Maschmeyer

With that in the back of her mind, Maschmeyer decided to accept Chu's offer, putting the Team Canada disappointment behind her. Instead of preparing for South Korea, she would stay in Montreal guarding the net for Les Canadiennes and helping other goalies do the same for the Stingers. It was a humbling experience in the young goalie's career.

"It's one of those things where [there's] a lot of adversity, and I'm finding a way to have a thicker skin in all of this," she said. "You can't be sad about everything, you [have to] use it as motivation. For me, motivation builds character, that's how you see a person's true character. I don't want to dwell on it and not improve my game."

In a true transition year, Maschmeyer isn't dwelling on anything and takes her new responsibilities just as seriously as continuing to improve with a schedule she calls "a little unique, in a way." In addition to her regular Les Canadiennes practices and games, she adds another weekly practice session for herself, on top of her coaching duties with Concordia.

COACHING THE SAME AGE BRACKET

Having graduated from Harvard University only two years ago, Maschmeyer is still quite fresh off the "college experience" the players she now coaches are living through. She's coaching players just as old as she is.

"It's unique and I think it brings a different way that I can talk to the girls. Of course you're a coach but you can go: 'Okay, let's talk,'" said Maschmeyer.

“They feel comfortable because they are around my age and I just went through college, so I have that under my belt.”

This was exactly what Chu had in mind when she initially called her fellow, albeit younger, Harvard alumnus in the first place.

“That’s something as coaches, when we get older and transition out of our playing days into our coaching days, not that you lose it, but you’re not as fresh in it,” said Chu.

“Emerance helps to bring us that freshness that is a little closer to the players’ age that lets them understand that we go through the same thing. It’s okay if we’re struggling, it’s okay if it’s tough. But we’re going to push through.”

For Frédérique Labelle, a fifth-year goalie with the Stingers, it’s great to be able to relate to a coach with similar struggles but who doesn’t take her talents for granted, either.

“We definitely do [relate to her] and also the fact that she’s a prospect for Team Canada doesn’t put her on a higher level. She doesn’t look down on us,” said Labelle. “We’re the same age and it feels good to just talk about what she’s going through and [about] us.”

Labelle also enjoys the fact that Maschmeyer brings elements of her professional experience in the CWHL to Stingers practices.

“We talk about her games and how they went and we talk about stuff that we’re working on in practice,” said Labelle. “She is also practicing so she brings the drills that she feels could benefit us during our practice. It’s a big network and we’re taking advantage of her still playing.”

According to Maschmeyer, the goaltending position has been in constant evolution over the last ten years. With new techniques constantly becoming available, her approach leans toward sharing the wealth and receiving feedback from it.

“For me, when I learn something I want to bring it back and say ‘What do you guys think about this?’” said Maschmeyer. “Maybe for some goalies it works, maybe for others it doesn’t. For me it’s never a definite answer for goaltending.”

THE COACHING DUO

With the Stingers, Maschmeyer has the opportunity to say that she shares the goalie coaching job with Canadian goaltending legend and three-time Olympic gold medalist Kim St. Pierre. The two handle the primary goalie coaching responsibilities in practices on different days and behind the bench during games, but she admits having been struck when they met for the first time.

Walking into the locker room and seeing names on the stalls, she thought, “Oh my god, my name is alongside all of these names, it’s unbelievable!” Proudly sharing that she works with them in conversation, people are often pleasantly surprised. “They are like, ‘What, you’re working with her?’”

Chu has a great tandem of goaltending coaches since it’s a position that she admits is not her strong suit. Chu listens to both coaches from time to time, looking to draw from their expertise.

“Kim was one of the most mentally strong goalies I’ve ever played against or been around,” said Chu. “Now we also have Emerance, who also has that edge,” ultimately being great role models for all the players.

“We had really good goalie coaches before, but the fact that I’m looking at Kim and [Maschmeyer] as mentors; they’re taking us under their wing and it’s inspiring,” added Labelle. “Even though we’re at university level—and I know for me it’s not going to go further than that—the fact that they’re bringing this intensity and all their knowledge to their practice is awesome.”

With names like Chu and St. Pierre along with other Les Canadiennes teammates Karell Emard, Caroline Ouellette, and Cassandra Poudrier coaching the Stingers, Maschmeyer has a solid support system in Montreal. Approaching the mid-point of her transition year in the city, she’s looking forward to what is coming next.

“For me it’s about finding new challenges and new opportunities that come with those challenges,” said Maschmeyer. “In a way, you’re learning and it’s taking a step forward even though it didn’t seem like it at the time.” □

Emerence Maschmeyer is looking to be a difference off the ice and behind the bench.

PHOTO DAREN ZOMERMAN
@ZOMERMAN.PHOTO



**“For me it’s about
finding new chal-
lenges and new
opportunities that
come with those
challenges”**

Emerance Maschmeyer

A Captain in the Nets

Goaltender Katherine Purchase Named Co-Captain of Stingers Hockey Team, Alongside Veteran Marie-Joelle Allard

BY IRELAND COMPTON
@IRELANDCOMPTON

Concordia Stingers goaltender Katherine Purchase was surprised, she said, when she was named co-captain of the women's hockey team.

"I didn't even know I could be chosen as captain," said Purchase, who never thought that it could be a possibility.

Last year, coaches sat with Purchase to let her know they were considering her to be a leader of the team. Purchase wasn't expecting to get a letter on her jersey, though—especially given the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec regulations that say goalies cannot be captains.

"I thought when they were announcing letters they'd just be like, 'Kat will be part of the leadership group this year'. But they said I'd actually be a co-captain."

Even if these kinds of regulations weren't a factor, it tends to be uncommon practice to name a goaltender captain, simply given the nature of the position.

"It's a little funny for goaltenders because while they are part of the team, they tend to be in their own headspace a lot," said Stingers head coach, Julie Chu.

Purchase does see herself as a leader on the team, but also pointed out the fact that a goalie can't be the sole captain because of how separated they are from the players.

LEADING ON AND OFF THE ICE

There are limitations for Purchase as a captain during gameplay situations as a result of her position. RSEQ rules state

that goaltenders may not cross the blue line during a stoppage in play, unless being replaced by a back-up. This keeps her from being able to interact with officials in the event of an incident.

There is also the obstacle of not being able to handle matters on the bench, but in this case it might not be relevant. On-ice she has her co-captain and Stingers defender Marie-Joelle Allard, as well as the team's three assistant captains to handle any situations that are out of her hands.

There's also the fact that leadership on-ice doesn't only lend itself to games.

"We only play 20 games a season," said Purchase. "90 per cent of our time spent together in a season is away from games."

"It was the decision of her teammates and I think it was based on the tremendous athlete and teammate she is"

Julie Chu





Katherine Purchase's leadership resonates with her teammates.

PHOTO DAREN ZOMERMAN @ZOMERMAN.PHOTO



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Keeping team practices and work-outs in mind, and according to some of her teammates, she leads by example, proving herself to be extremely hardworking.

Stingers forward Claudia Dubois said Purchase is a leader not only in the locker room, but also on ice.

“She works hard every practice and in games, and she’s one of the most [hard-working members of the team].”

Off-ice, Purchase brings a positive energy to her teammates.

“I myself, try to keep people light,” she said. “You know some girls kind of take themselves too seriously and if they make a mistake they get really down on themselves, and I think my role is to pick people up and make sure they have a short memory.”

Overall, her coaches and teammates feel she is entirely deserving of the co-captaincy.

“It was never really my decision, it was the decision of her teammates and I think it was based on the tremendous athlete and teammate she is,” said Chu.

According to her teammates, her presence in the locker room is sizeable and inviting. Her ability to keep calm and pick up teammates who are down on themselves is hugely important, a testament to her leadership skills.

“Kat is one of the role models on the team. [...] She’s fun to be around. Her voice has a big impact in the locker room,” said Dubois. “She’s also accountable and she leads the team to success,” said Dubois.

A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Having been on the team for three years now, Purchase noticed a vast improvement on the way the girls perform.

“I find the last two years we’ve always had tough starts to the season, where it’s just tough to get motivated,” she said.

“This season is going really well, at the beginning of the year we struggled in some games but overall our record is miles better than it has been in the last couple of years so that’s really good, and the crazy thing is that we still have a lot of room for improvement.”

She noted that during some games, the team doesn’t play to their full capacity, not capitalizing on all chances they get. Yet they still manage to pull off wins consistently. It was only recently that the team suffered their first set of back-to-back losses, only to pull out a big shootout win in the following game versus the Université de Montréal Carabins.

Looking forward to playoffs, it could be anybody’s game.

“We’re not going to get too far ahead of ourselves,” said Purchase. “We have to take it one game at a time—every game counts,”

In terms of where Concordia might end up in the standings, Purchase is unsure, as we all should be given the tight nature of the league right now. Every team has beaten every other team at least once this year, and so things are on even ground.

“I have absolutely no idea who we’re going to end up playing in playoffs,” she said. “Anybody who tries to predict who’s going to end up where in the standings has no idea what they’re talking about.” ☒

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Katherine Purchase

Concordia's Fight Against Fascism

What Does the New CSU Position Mean for Students?

BY SAVANNAH STEWART
@SAV_EDEN_S

Though the problem existed long before now, 2017 was in many ways the year of the rise of the far-right, both here in Quebec and beyond.

In November, some 60,000 people marched the streets in a massive far-right demonstration in Warsaw, Poland—where, less than a century ago, hundreds of thousands of Jewish people were deported to concentration camps by the Nazis.

Participants from Poland and beyond congregated to share a message of white pride, xenophobia, and Islamophobia in what is now one of the largest such demonstrations in Europe's history.

And that's not even the half of it.

Europe, the main battleground of the fight against fascism in the last century, has recently seen an alarming surge in far-right, nationalist, and/or racist politics. It's seen the election of far-right party members to the German parliament, and France's presidential elections, when nationalist party Front National's leader Marine Le Pen secured 34 per cent of the vote in the final round.

Here, an ocean away, we are not immune to the tide.

In the United States, Donald Trump's election was both caused by and a catalyst for growing support for nationalist ideologies. Massive protests, like the "Unite the Right" rally that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia on Aug. 12 have highlighted the increasing popularity and normalization of alt-right, neo-nazi groups in the country.

In Quebec, groups like La Meute and Storm Alliance are gaining traction and increasing their presence with sizable demonstrations held on Aug. 20 and Nov. 25 around the National Assembly in Quebec City.

The demonstration that happened on Nov. 25 could well be the largest far-right demonstration in the province since the 1930s, when the National Social Christian Party, which identified with nazism and

anti-semitism, gained momentum in the leadup to the Second World War.

Around 400 La Meute and 250 Storm Alliance members came out. The Liberal government recently backed down on their plans to begin a commission into systemic racism, and changed their focus to instead plan a one day forum on promoting diversity and reducing discrimination in Quebec's economy.

Despite the drastic shift in tone, both groups came out to oppose the upcoming forum, with many arguing that they were tired of "always being called racist." La Meute even stood with their backs facing the National Assembly.

Atalante, a neo-nazi group operating in Quebec, made a brief appearance at the demonstration where they unfurled a banner near the National Assembly saying "Le Québec aux Québécois."

But what is perhaps the most troubling aspect of the demonstration was the behaviour of the Quebec City police—who, in their efforts to protect the far-right groups, violently repressed the anti-racist and anti-fascist counter-demonstrators there. Despite a lack of provocation by the counter protesters, who were seriously outnumbered by the far-right groups, police used pepper spray to fend them off. The counter-demonstrators began throwing snowballs in response to being pepper sprayed, a fact that has been reported often by mainstream media as if to highlight their supposed "aggression," taking it out of context by omitting the police's provocation. But when Atalante made an appearance, police stood by and showed little reaction.

Clearly, 2017 is the year that the fight against fascism took on an urgent tone.

Of course, this means that anti-fascist groups across the globe are getting orga-

nized and showing up to the fight with growing numbers and intensity.

Here in Montreal, the Nov. 12 Grande manifestation contre la haine et le racisme put on by various anti-oppression groups is just one of many examples of local action to combat and raise awareness of the far-right both in our city and around the world. Well over 1,000 people joined the family-friendly march, chanting and singing songs in support of refugees and immigrants, diversity and equality.

That demonstration was endorsed by the Concordia Student Union at a regular council meeting in October. For that endorsement, they cited a new position added to the CSU positions book only a month before—a motion that explicitly opposes the rise of fascism and the alt-right locally and globally.

CSU Arts and Science Councillor Camille Thompson, who co-wrote the motion and presented it to council, confirms this position is a direct response to the current local situation in the fight against the far-right.

"You have La Meute [...], you have Storm Alliance, which part of their group is neo-nazi and they are part of the far-

"Concordia has a particularly diverse community and has a large proportion of more targeted communities in Quebec."

Anas Bouslikhane



right. And you have this increase of fascist groups and far-right groups, and Islamophobic ideas and racist ideas,” she says. “So I feel like it’s important for the CSU to have a clear stand on what is happening and to encourage the groups that are fighting against the rise of the far-right.”

Endorsing the demonstration was the first time the position had been used, and at the time of writing this article, it was one of two instances of its use. Rowan Gaudet, an Arts and Science councillor who co-wrote the motion with Thompson, says that there are no plans for the position within the CSU, but having it explicitly stated will make it easier for the CSU to provide assistance to anti-fascist groups working on or around campus.

“One of the main reasons to actually have a position is that, without any sort of direct position, it’s kind of strange for the CSU to be actively supporting something,” Gaudet says. “I don’t think the CSU is going to be the on-the-ground organizer, but kind of the support.”

The new position is an effective way to take a stand on the issue, and it’s encouraging that the CSU has openly denounced the far-right, in support of the many students who are part of marginalized communities targeted by groups in the province like La Meute.

However, as the CSU is in a position of leadership for student groups around campus doing anti-fascist work, it would be nice to see the union filling that support role and proactively finding ways to make use of the position. Support for student groups is important, but it can and should extend past that.

“It’s actually pretty interesting that the CSU is one of the first larger associations that actually has a clear anti-fascist position,” says Anas Bouslikhane, anti-fascist activist with Solidarity Across Borders and former CSU finance coordinator.

“It being a position, it doesn’t actually entail them to act upon it. But that being said, it is a position that involves all students and the [Concordia] community so I would argue that they should potentially have a plan to act upon it in the near future, given the larger anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles that are coming up in [the next] few years that we’re seeing, and the rise of the far-right that’s happening.”

Gaudet and Thompson say that

although racism and fascism affect a large number of students, it is not something that is specific to Concordia students or university students in general, unlike unpaid internships for example, so it’s to be expected that the position might not be acted upon as frequently.

It’s easy to make the argument that the CSU does not need a concrete action plan to combat the rise of the far-right now, but that would surely change when far-right groups begin to make more of an appearance on campus.

Throughout 2017, stickers had been found around campus promoting Generation Identity, an ethno-nationalist group that opposes non-white immigration, and *The Daily Stormer*, a neo-Nazi website. Posters saying “It’s okay to be white” have also appeared, based on a concept developed by users of 4chan, an online message board populated heavily by the alt-right.

If far-right groups continue to impose themselves on our community in this way or escalate with more oppressive tactics, then it is the CSU’s obligation to ensure that action is taken to stop them.

It wouldn’t be the first time the CSU works to prevent on-campus oppression towards minority groups. Gaudet says that last year, when a journalist from *Journal de Montreal* came to Concordia’s Hall building and tried to take photos in the seventh floor Muslim prayer rooms, they worked with campus security to improve the security on that floor.

The CSU also got involved back in March when two far-right groups, the Canadian Coalition of Concerned Citizens and Soldiers of Odin, planned demonstrations at Concordia’s downtown campus. Those groups opposed a series of workshops called Learn to Resist put on by the Resist Trump & the Far-Right Network of Montreal.

“Concordia has a particularly diverse community and has a large proportion of more targeted communities in Quebec within the context of xenophobia,” Bouslikhane says, highlighting the importance of anti-fascist efforts at the university level.

CSU Mobilization Coordinator Ahmed Badr says their external committee approved \$1,500 in funding for the Nov. 25 counter-demonstration. The money was used to secure transportation to Quebec City for counter-demonstrators

coming from Montreal.

However, the CSU didn’t organize a Concordia contingent to the counter-demonstration, where the anti-fascist protesters were greatly outnumbered. Financial support is appreciated, but so is visible physical presence at far-right demonstrations.

The adoption of the position, though encouraging, means that the CSU has even more leeway, and therefore more of a responsibility, to assist the students targeted by the far-right. Over the next few months, it will be crucial to pay attention to how the situation plays out and when the position is used, as it will set the tone for future anti-fascist efforts around campus.

“I think it’s too early to say how it’ll look [now that] the motion has been adopted. I think they’ve been supportive in general of anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles,”

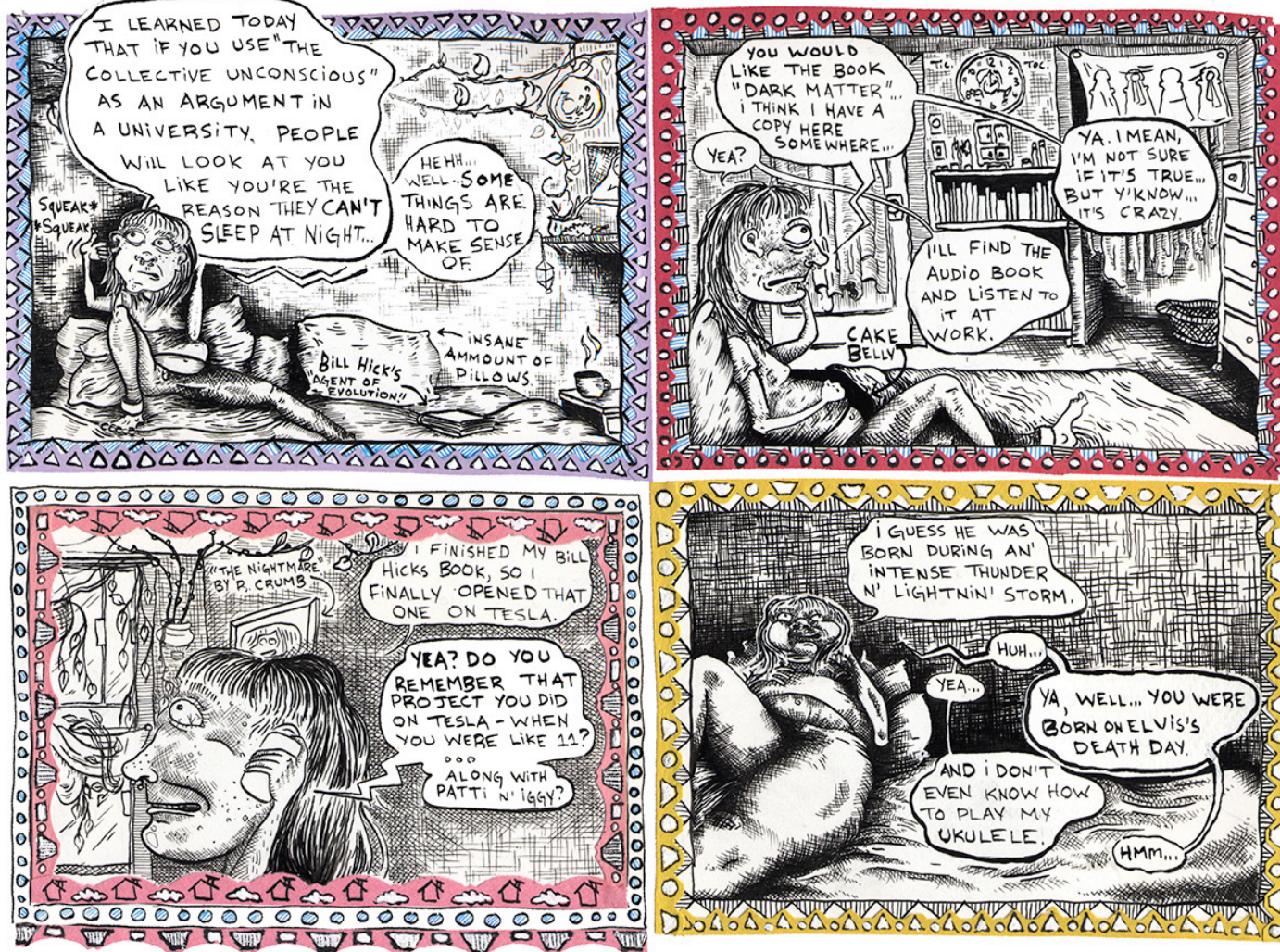
It’s easy to argue the CSU does not need a plan to combat the rise of the far-right now, but that would change when groups begin to make more of an appearance on campus.

Bouslikhane says. “But I think it takes a bit of time for them to be able to apply it more concretely and I think we might be seeing that more next semester.”

The fight against fascism has taken on an urgency that is unprecedented in this century, and the CSU’s effort to extend that fight into our university is crucial. The next few years will see rising tension here and around the world, and a position will soon not be enough for our community. Now that the CSU has gotten the bureaucracy taken care of, it’s time for real, concrete action. □

COMICS

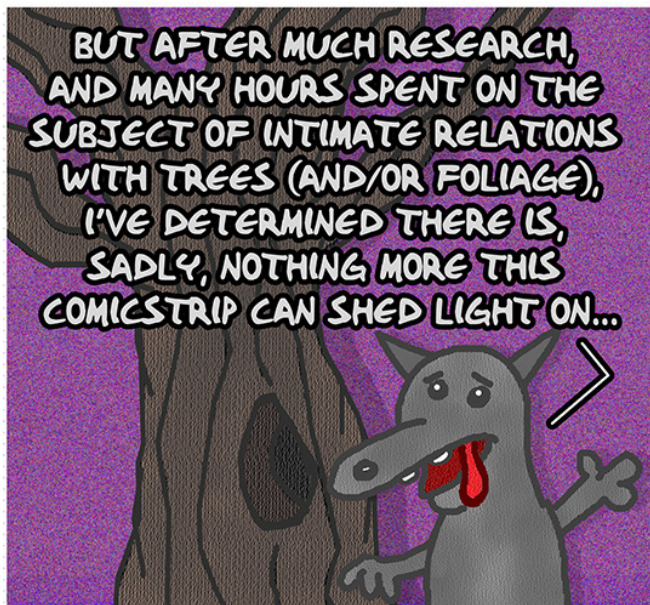
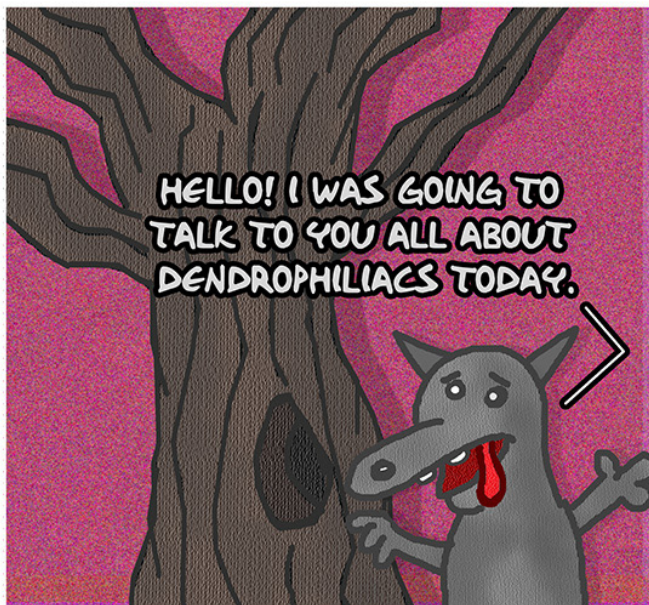
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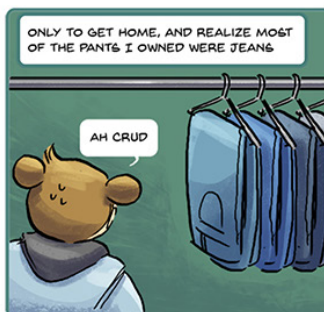
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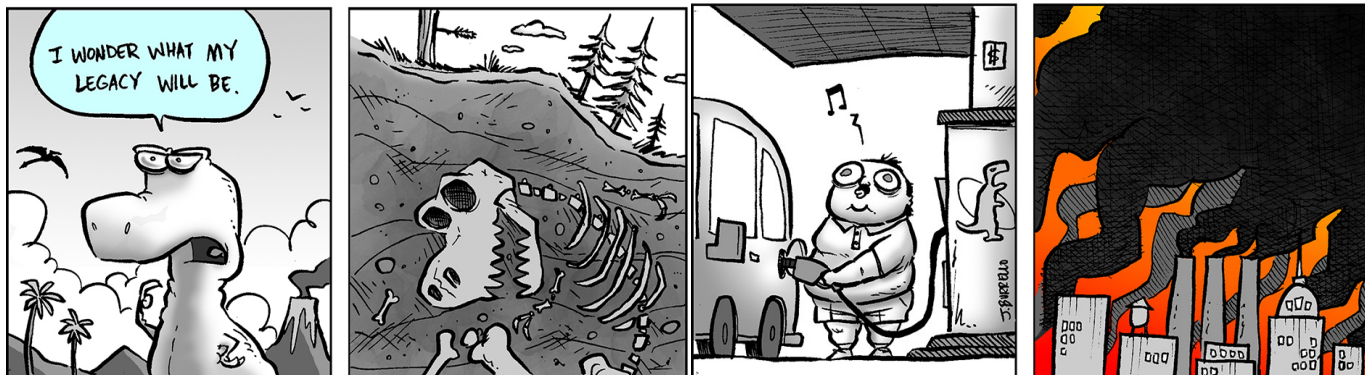
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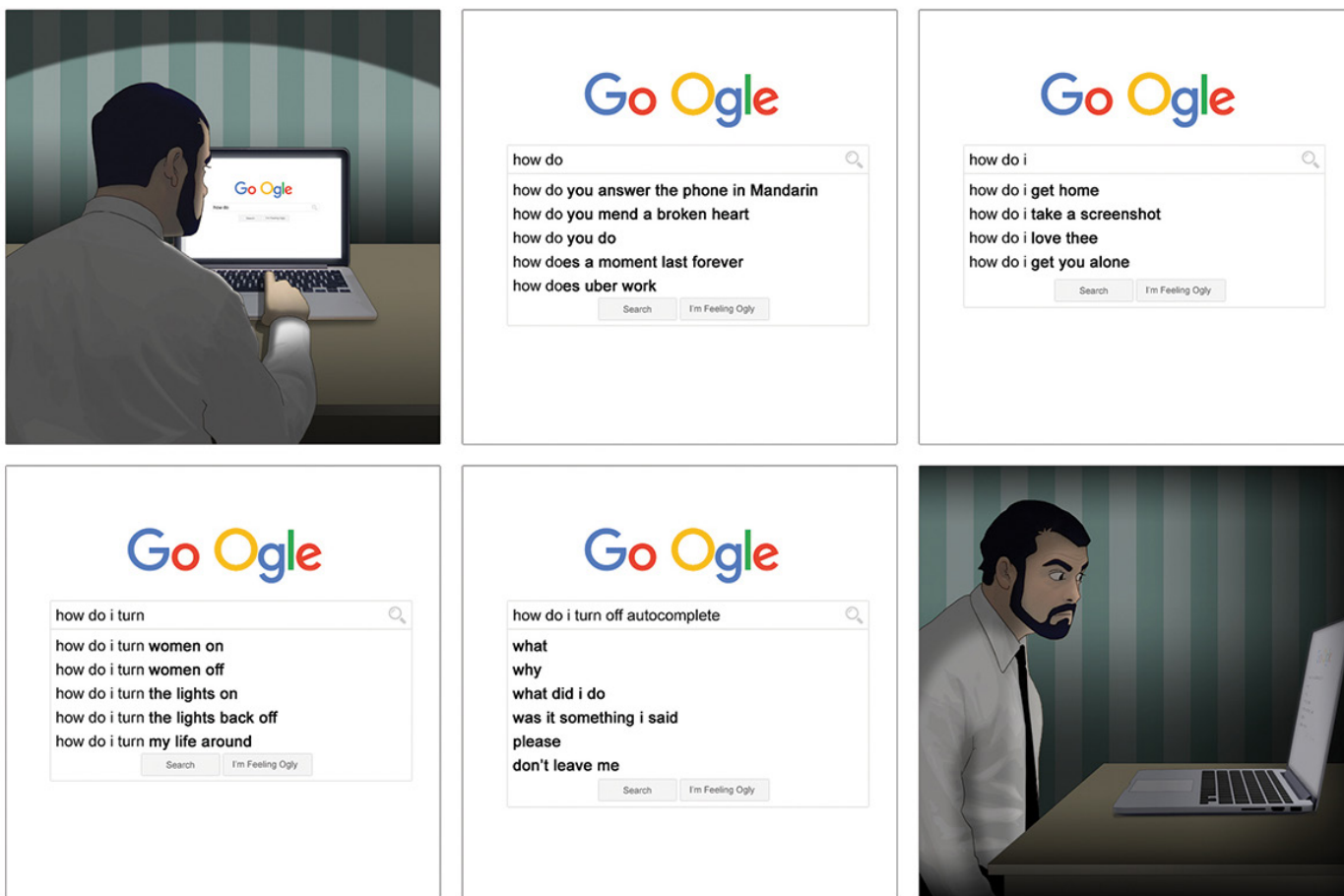
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DON'T BE A DRAG, JUST BE A QUEEN

LOCAL DRAG QUEENS CHALLENGE GENDER NORMS

By Erika Morris @thing.jpg

The world of drag and genderfuck has long been a subculture of the LGBTQ+ community, beginning with pantomime dames in the 1800s and drag men in 1920s speakeasy bars.

Traditionally, drag queens are men who dress up as exaggerated versions of women, but there are also drag kings, women who dress up as exaggerated versions of men. People of all gender identities and sexualities participate in the performance art. There are hyperqueens, women who dress up as caricatured women, and hyperkings, men who dress as exaggerated versions of men.

Whatever goes, drag performers work on challenging our preconceived ideas of gender.

Having faced discrimination from police during raids, drag performers along with trans folk were at the heart of protests like the Cooper Donuts Riot in Los Angeles in 1959, and the pivotal Stonewall riots ten years later in 1969.

In the 1980s, drag became a mainstream cultural phenomenon, and drag performers started featuring in movies and on television.

Today, Montreal's drag scene is alive and thriving, with performers like Mado, Crystal Nebula, Lizzy Strange, and Will Charmer exploring their craft and changing the game.

Mado You may know Mado Lamotte as the most famous drag queen in Montreal and the owner of the only drag cabaret in the city, which is named after her. A Montreal icon, she even has a life-sized statue of herself at Montreal's wax museum.

However, Luc Provost never imagined

that he would ever enter the world of drag.

"[I started drag] by accident," he said. "I started out in theatre without knowing that I would become a drag queen."

Provost started doing drag when he was exploring the gay nightlife scene in the '80s. Sometimes bars would have theme nights when they went out. The first time he ever put on a dress was for one of those nights.

He reminisces about that night in July years ago. He and his best friend went out to a "business woman" themed night. His friend was dressed as the business woman and Provost as his secretary.

"I was following him around the club, ordering drinks for him and saying 'my boss wants this, my boss wants that,'" he said laughing. "It was very funny."

After that, the owner of the bar had asked them if they wanted to do a show because he found them so funny and they accepted. That propelled Provost into the world of drag and so Mado Lamotte was born.

Their drag was inspired by New York drag, and is more of a parody performance rather than a cabaret or fashion performance.

When Mado first emerged, she was the "nice aunty who makes dirty jokes at Christmas parties." Now, Mado has evolved into a very eccentric model in haute couture. She describes her style as "diva extravaganza."

"She went from a Verdun woman to an Outremont woman," Provost said jokingly. "She's bigger than life and

TOP: Kelly Holzmuller applies rhinestones while getting ready as Will Charmer at a Drag Moi performance at Cabaret Mado.

BOTTOM: Holzmuller loads the brush with makeup to draw on some abs.

Photos Daren Zomerman
@zomerman.photo

**"It's a relief
to see that we
can still have
fun without
respecting
the codes of
society"**

**Luc Provost
a.k.a Mado Lamotte**



this way people understand that she's not a real person. They see a character."

In 2002, Cabaret Mado opened. There was an empty space in the Gay Village which was meant to be a drag cabaret. Mado was approached to own it and have it be named after her as she had become a drag icon in the city.

"I was like, 'Oh my god, my own theatre!'" said Provost. "It's very tempting to have my own space to do what I want and not have to keep proving myself after 15 years of doing drag."

"I don't work to be the biggest name, but to be recognized is a good feeling after struggling all those years," Mado said.

The cabaret has been running for almost 16 years now and has even hosted **RuPaul's Drag Race** star Courtney Act. However, with the rise of the

show, selling tickets has become harder as people want to see drag acts for free.

He admits that there are advantages to the show as people are understanding more and more that drag queens are performers.

When people come to the shows, Provost knows that they're in for a treat.

"You had a bad day or a bad week, you go see a drag show and you forget about everything," he said. "You laugh and you see that these [people] don't take themselves seriously. It's a relief to see that we can still have fun without respecting the codes of society."

He explained that drag is about performance and that it takes talent to be onstage.

"For us it's a show we're putting on," he said. "It just so happens that women singers are more eccentric, it's more fun to perform as a woman. It's also fun to see a bunch of girls dressing up as the Backstreet Boys and having fun with it."

"A lot of people still think that drag

queens are men making fun of women, but why would you want to do that?"

Despite the growing acceptance of drag performers, Provost says that the queens are still stigmatized. There are also a lot of people in the LGBTQ+ community who hate drag queens, he says.

"They see drag queens as the reason straight people see gay people as feminine [or as a negative part] of the community," he said. "I feel sad because they don't know the history behind it. I understand if you don't like drag, but you don't have to bash it."

He wants people to realize that the Stonewall riots, started by drag queens and trans folk, are the main reason the gay movement is where it's at right now.

"That's why they've been part of the community for so long and have been spokespeople for the community," he said. "We're always judging what's different from us. Less and less, but hopefully one day we won't have to explain ourselves."



Crystal Nebula

Student Christos Darlasis studies set and costume design at the National Theatre School of Canada, where he gets to design small plays and help designers. But in his spare time he's Crystal Nebula.

As an emerging drag queen, the highlight of his drag career so far has been opening for singer Allie X.

"It was super cool and I got to do something that was just *me* for once," he said. "She wanted us to be creative and portray our character how we wanted."

Lots of drag shows have themes, and the queens have to morph themselves to their specific audience.

For this show, Darlasis wanted to pay homage to his Greek heritage. So he dressed as an ancient Greek goddess.

"I was thinking, 'I'm just gonna go wild. I'm gonna rip off my dress and be in my underwear. I'm gonna feel like Lady Gaga.' It was super cool," he said.

While he was growing up in Greece, seeing men dressed as women was

taboo. When it was shown on television, his grandparents would change the channel or cover his eyes. When he came to Canada, he discovered his sexuality and started exploring the local scene. He also started watching RuPaul's Drag Race.

"I was so inspired! It's such a beautiful subculture," he said. "There's people like this that exist and they are normal, kind, and they express themselves in such a different way. I thought if they can do it, I can do it."

Darlasis said that his icons, idols, and the family that raised him were all women.

"With my sexuality, it's like a metaphor for [my being] a man who's attracted to men and deemed a little more feminine, [which] is so taboo in our society," he said. "I looked up to these women who stood up to men in that way."

He loves to showcase his love for women through drag, and says he never uses negative stereotypes that degrade women in his acts.

"I always do it with utter respect, I never make caricatures of women or speak against them," Darlasis said. "For me drag is my way of embodying these women in my life that I love so much."

Darlasis is happy drag is becoming more mainstream, because people are able to learn what drag really is. He wants people to realize that it's not a joke, it's not just a man in a dress making fun of a woman. It touches different facets. There's art, comedy, fashion, and theatre. People do it for many reasons. Sometimes it's not even for entertainment. It's an artistic form of expression that plays with gender.

"Representation is so important," he said. "Gender is a social construct. It

Lisa Morrison put on a wig and applies makeup for a performance as Lizzy Strange at Cabaret Mado.



doesn't exist, and drag challenges that. It challenges the preconceived ideas of what a man or a woman should be and makes fun of that, not the person or the identity of a woman or man."

Dressing up takes Darlasis a minimum of four hours.

"I love playing with historical silhouettes from the 16th century to the modern era," he said. "I love mixing and matching things. That's why I do costume design. I love art, theatre, fashion, and garment history. Being a drag queen also helps with that."

Lizzy Strange

A painted woman is on stage. She's in full drag; hip pads, wig and all. Alesia Cara's "Starving" starts to play, and a pizza boy comes onstage to bring her what she's ordered. As the song plays, she eats the whole pizza.

Lizzy Strange definitely lives up to her name. She dresses like a pop-princess but her style is also very campy and audacious. She doesn't take herself seriously, although at first glance you'd think she would.

Her performances are rooted in theatre, and put a spin on pop that most won't catch right away.

Lizzy is a character portrayed by Lisa Morrison, a hyperqueen. Being a cis woman who does femme-presenting drag, Morrison says she had a hard time getting the people around her to take her art form seriously.

"I would hear lots of whispers behind my back saying that my drag wasn't really drag," she said. "It was really hurtful because I tried to make it to the best of my ability."

"Sometimes it's hard because you don't have the money, drag is expensive, but I've come to the point where I have all the things you need to check off the list to be a drag queen except for duct tape between my legs."

Morrison feels that entering the world of drag has helped her accept her femininity.

"I feel a lot more comfortable with myself in the last two years than I ever have," she said, beaming. "When I first started drag I remember going to a

show and I remembered thinking that this is where I belong, this is my corner of my queer world and it's where I fit in."

Morrison has always been in the world of theatre, dancing, and singing. So when she found drag, which combines all of these things together with queerness, it was a perfect fit.

"It's what I need to do and it's helped me become more comfortable and grow as a performer, and as a person and gave me a lot of opportunities," she said.

Lizzy Strange is a hyper-feminized version of a female. Morrison pulls a lot of Strange's performances out of her personal life. She also likes to subvert gender norms by pulling everyday things, like being catcalled or told how to look, and mimicking those experiences in her own performances,

Morrison hopes that the more she does this, the more people will begin to realize how ridiculous these experiences are.

"Drag for me is an expression of gender and an opportunity for people to really dissect gender in their own way," she said. "It's a tool for people, queer or just allies, to take gender in their own hands and really think of what it means and then present that on stage."

Morrison moved to Montreal from Halifax because of the city's reputation as a hub for creative arts. The drag community here is very vibrant and accepting, she said.

But even here, Morrison admits that the drag community faces a lot of stigma. Morrison has witnessed people trying to push her peer's limits and boundaries, as they aren't taken seriously. People tend to think that all drag queens are alcoholics and drug addicts, which is untrue, she said.

Lots of people also have a hard time understanding the differences between drag and gender identity.

"Anyone can do drag no matter their gender identity, how they present, or what kind of drag performances they chose to do," she said, adding that gender identity and performance aren't always linked.

Although Morrison's career is only beginning to blossom, this queen has big plans. She hopes to someday start a theatre troupe composed solely of drag performers.

"I don't think it's gonna happen for a

few years but it's something that's always in the back of my mind," she said.

For now, she's focusing on her smaller goals like participating in Mado's Drag Moi event, a contest show where novice drag performers compete while learning the fundamentals of drag.

"I want to show [the community] more of what I got," she said. "I think that by doing that I'll get to do my drag in this city."

Will Charmer

Will Charmer is that guy that your parents love but your friends all know is a freak. He seems like a good boy. He charms all the teachers and everyone around him, but he'll also throw the biggest party of the year and flirt with everyone. He is the best bad influence you'll ever have.

Offstage, Kelly Holzmuller is a lot more shy and adorable. Holzmuller is a drag king and currently a part of the Drag Moi competition.

They discovered drag as a part of the exploration of their gender identity. After going through a bad breakup, they realized they had the chance to be who they wanted to be, but had no idea who that was yet.

"[I had] a dysphoric sense of not being in my body," said Holzmuller.

They wanted to cut their hair and start wearing baggier clothes, and would even sometimes dream of the body they wanted, only to wake up and be startled by their appearance the next morning.

Holzmuller started doing some research about being trans, transitioning, and how people came to realize their identities. When they started binding their chest, they learned about binding with duct tape, which is a method specific to drag kings.

Being a theatre kid, they loved the idea of these performances. Holzmuller decided to explore that side of themselves through drag, and started to come to high-school dressed as a guy named Calvin.

They came to realize that they didn't want to transition but that they wanted to project as a more androgynous and masculine person.

"I got into drag because I thought I wanted to transition. It was the best way for me to dive into that world and express

certain things and see where I wanted to go without actually getting into the medical side of it," said Holzmuller. "Having this output in drag I'm even happier because I can express this side of me."

Drag helped them become comfortable with their identity as a gender-fluid person, and helped them accept their physical appearance as well. Holzmuller can sometimes be feminine and other times very masculine, constantly flowing between one and the other and never being in a set place.

Will Charmer's audition for Drag Moi was his first time leaving the house. It

was the first time Holzmuller performed in drag in front of anyone. Actually getting into the competition was turning point for them.

Drag Moi has different themes or challenges every week which pushes the performers' creativity and resources.

"It's a lot of effort, more than I had imagined," said Holzmuller, laughing. "I love that. It's not a competition first and foremost, it's a learning experience."

Holzmuller brings their theatre background into each performance, making Will a versatile character. For one performance, he dressed up as

Quasimodo with a very big face and built himself a hump. For his audition, Will performed Link Larkin's "Ladies' Choice" from *Hairspray*, and ran from one side of the stage to the other, ripped his shirt open, and did a typical drag show.

Will doesn't have a trademark style, so he gets to play around a lot more. Holzmuller's favourite performance was dancing dressed as a bellboy with a dress propped onto a suitcase. They like to push boundaries and think outside the box.

"Sometimes going way out of your comfort zone is the best," said Holzmuller.

To Holzmuller, drag is more of an artform.

"[Drag] is like painting. Anyone can paint. Anyone can paint on a face, create a costume, and wear it," they said. "It's the art of performing this specific kind of over-exaggerated gender expression. If you can pull that off, you can do drag."

Drag plays up the extremities of gender. Holzmuller's mentality is that if they're going to be a guy, they want to be the most flirtatious, most sexual-energy-driven guy as they can be. It's a caricature.

"You don't have to look super believable, but the attitude that you hold changes everything," they said. "The energy that you present on stage will mask any kind of makeup flaw that you have. It's not about the aesthetic, there's a lot more than that."

In a caricature, everything is disproportionate, as if Tim Burton got ahold of your face. They take everything that is truly you and exaggerate it tenfold. Drag does the same.

"A girl can be this masculine, a guy can be this feminine and still be themselves," said Holzmuller. "The goal of a performance is to make people think. For gender, my goal is to get somebody to think of what masculinity really means."

Kelly Holzmuller wooed the crowd while doing their Will Charmer routine at Cabaret Mado.



PLATO'S CAVE

By Antigoni Dimopoulos

Shadows sway tales
Flickering Babylon candles
Along lonely walls.

This cave entraps
The neglected cracks
My longing,
An unquenched thirst
To create shadows too.

CARNIVAL MIRROR

By Antigoni Dimopoulos

The window of my prison
I'm the reflection
A distorted goal
-maybe
-almost
-not quite

My trapped body
In the glass of the Carnival Mirror
Everything I am,
But the flaws I am not.



BOY OR GIRL?

By Shelby Thevenot @shelby_thevenot

Are you a boy or a girl?
What I really want to know is...
Do you have a penis or a vagina?
If you were to bleed for five days...
would you die?
Or do it again next month?
And when you sit down...
Do you spread your legs?
Or pee?
This is a very important question...
For I am your teacher...
And however you respond will determine what I think you can and cannot learn.
And I am your employer
And however you respond will determine what I think you can and cannot accomplish.
I am also your bully.
And however you respond will determine how I call you, "bitch."

ANOTHER BLOOD MOON

By Shelby Thevenot @shelby_thevenot

Strange folk come through our little town in the woods,
But none as strange as the Man Who Murdered Men.
He seemed to take such joy in drawing.
Blood, that is.
I saw him once.
The night he took his thirteenth victim.
He looked me in the eye.
But he did nothing.
And I asked him,
"Why don't you kill me?"
"Because," he said, "you are full of period blood."
And he left.

POETRY

Graphic Jenn Aedy



SCORPION

By Diane Dollison @dianedollison

Make no mistake: in the beginning, you were made for them.
Babe in marigold skin—just as they promised

and you had so much promise.
Memorized every ballad and every belt
in church basements and in odd kingdoms. They could not stay angry at you
when you cried
and every aunt and every uncle called you a Woman
before you met the scorpion's kiss.

You were just a secret, they said.

//

This is how you survive: in the meantime, you play the game.
Scorpion girl in fevered armor—just as they prayed for

and you prayed for more.
Wished for hellfire and the seventh seal
in blue bathrooms and in poisoned woods. They could not stay angry at you
when you touched them
and every father and every mother called you a Burden
before you could show them how.

You were supposed to be good, they said.

//

Make no mistake: in the end, you are reborn again.
Woman gilded by time—just as they feared

so fear nothing.
Adjust your stingers and rewrite the scripture
above and below. They can hold on to anger
while you swallow their dead girl
and every angel and every demon can call you a Monster
because that suits you just fine.

They said you were made for them.
You were made for no one.



THE SOUND OF SILENCE: GENDER IM- BALANCE IN ELECTRO ACOUSTICS

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS
BEGIN TO CHANGE

By Miriam Mokrusa

Less than five per cent of existing sound producers and engineers in the recording business are women, according to the Women's Audio Mission, a recording studio built and run by women.

Similar to the gaming world, electroacoustics—a field that involves the creative practices and processes in electronic music, computer music and sound art—is considered to be yet another boys club. Women who work in this field tend to continuously try and prove themselves, while men don't necessarily trust their technological abilities.

In a domain that is dominated by the male gender, can anybody hear these women?

Canadian electronic music composer Freida Abtan points out that there are very few female artists visible in the

experimental electronic music scene. Abtan describes that most electronic music social networks tend to privilege male inclusion and success.

"For most, there is a significant social component, not only in learning how to produce electronic music, but also in the performance and marketing of it," Abtan says.

Social situations, such as band practice or musical experimentation, will often exclude women unless they are vocalists or a band member's girlfriend. As a result, women in the electronic music genre are then limited to roles that ultimately prohibit their capability of expanding their skills in an electronic creative practice, Abtan says.

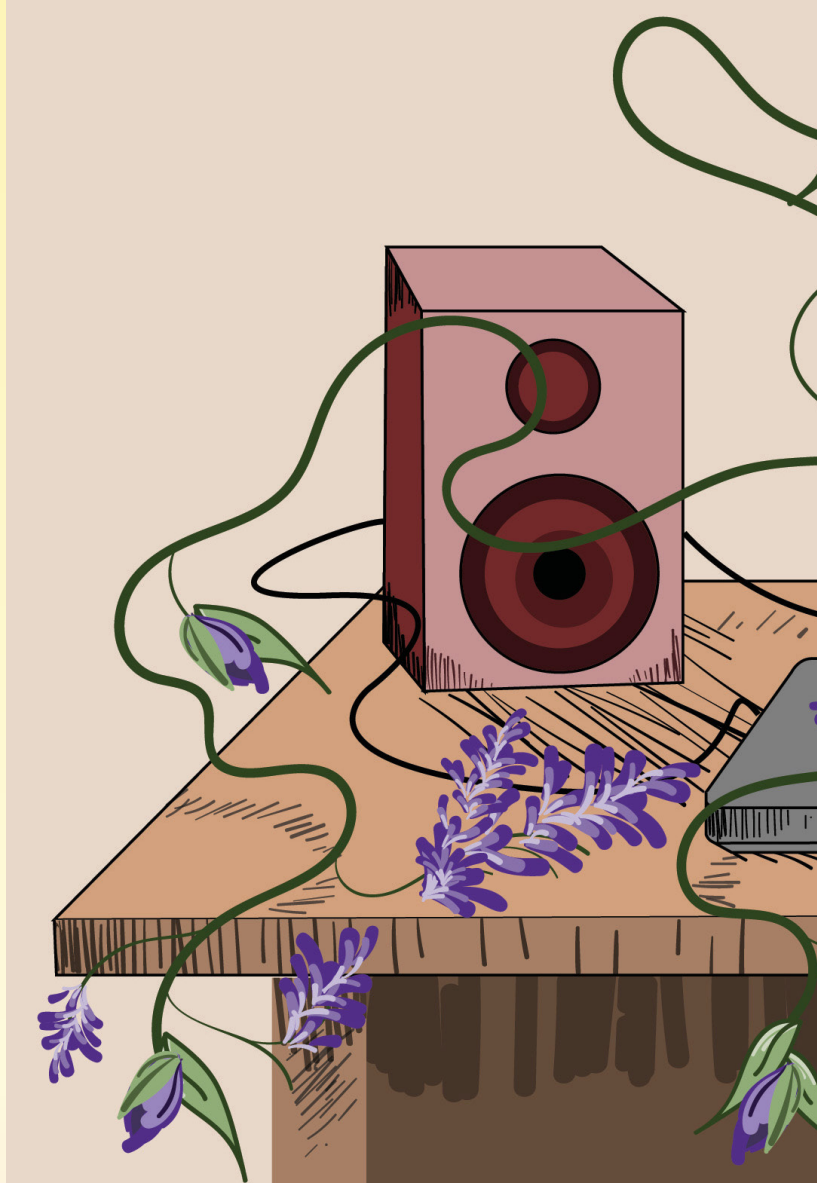
Electroacoustics is a DIY culture, Abtan explains, and the necessary skills to be successful in the field are passed around

closed communities and friendship networks which are often predominantly male. As a result, solo female electronic artists have difficulty acquiring the skills needed to be able to market themselves and perform onstage.

The problem remains as women are consistently closed off by figurative gender barriers and social structures. Moreover, they are unable to join a skills-sharing network that has long been established as predominantly male.

"For many young women, entering an electronic music DIY network is as awkward as trying to make friends with the school yard boys in first grade," Abtan says.

Women have to rely on either independent learning, skill-sharing networks, and workshops amongst other women and gender nonconforming individuals,





Graphic Zoë Gelfant @zoegelfantart

or academic training—which tends to fosters an electroacoustic boy's club through exclusion.

Montreal's four universities include different electroacoustic music programs. Yet the problem remains in its equal representation of women in their courses. In fact, the ratio is about one female student to about 10 male students.

For Joanne Mitrovic who graduated from the electroacoustics program at Concordia University, being the only woman in a classroom of 50 was a common theme.

"In class, you have to prove what you know even though you're still kind of learning," Mitrovic says.

Yet when a female classmate and friend of hers dropped out of the program in her third month because of verbal harassment from other male students, Mitrovic knew

that something had to change.

"I ended up going to the teacher asking if they could do something about this because she clearly [didn't] feel comfortable in class," Mitrovic said. "They didn't do enough."

In fact, Mitrovic's friend wasn't the first student who dropped out of the program for similar reasons without support from fellow professors.

She reached out to then-music chair Liselyn Adams to try and organize a meeting with the department. Together, Mitrovic, Adams, and professors not only discussed possible solutions to get more women enrolled in the electroacoustics program, but also ways to get them to stay.

It was clear that affirmative actions were needed to influence the curriculum which would hopefully in turn influence

the field. They discussed inviting more women and racial minorities as guest speakers, as well as making changes to the syllabus that would help expand the world of electroacoustics beyond the dominantly white male territory.

That same year, Mitrovic organized Loudspeakers, a conference focused on gender and race in audio technologies and music production. Speakers included Julie Slick of the Adrian Belew Power Trio and Kathy Kennedy who is the co-founder of Studio XX, a feminist artist-run centre for those marginalized in the digital arts.

Having the conference helped administer a workshop that pushed for an inclusive environment, while providing a safe space for women and visible minorities to share and gain skills in sound engineering.

Mitrovic's campaign for gender balance in electro acoustics would then

inspire a larger project for the principal of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia, Kimberly Manning. This year, Manning is continuing Mitrovic's work in her Critical Feminists Activist group, C-FAR, through her six-credit course called the Feminist University. Students enrolled in this course use social action research methodologies—a problem solving technique in a group or with the community to try and tackle a specific problem or issue.

"The project is special for a couple of reasons. First, it's pretty much the first pilot project involved in [C-FAR]," Manning said, underlining that the effect was really launched by Mitrovic, thanks to her Loudspeakers conference. "Another reason is Eldad [Tsayary] himself [and] his willingness to support [Mitrovic] and for taking a look at what's missing in the curriculum."

Eldad Tsabary, an assistant professor of music at Concordia was inspired by Mitrovic to expand his research on the gender imbalance and misrepresentation of women in the electroacoustic industry.

"This problem [is] like a feedback loop. It started because of gender roles in history," Tsabary said in an interview with Concordia University News. "Men were better positioned to establish and grow [in] this field, but women made important contributions right from the start. The shortage of visible role models made it less inviting for many women."

Tsabary is also co-editing the first book for the curriculum on the history of women in audio—a missing piece to the solution puzzle.

And while changes are slowly taking place within the department and university, the results are gradually moving forward as more women are enrolling in the program.

"More recently, the [dynamics] have been changing a bit," Mitrovic said. "When I was [at Concordia], I think there was about five per cent. Now it's up to maybe 15-20 per cent so it's definitely improved. Not much, but it's improved."

It may seem that little progress is being made, but progress all the same continues from the bottom up through

collaborative youth groups like Rock Camp for Girls Montreal.

Rock Camp for Girls Montreal is a space for young girls and gender nonconforming youth to learn and teach each other skills in music production and direction. It's a skill-sharing network that fosters a safe, open, inclusive and empowering platform for learning and performing.

"[We] create these workshops where we teach these girls and gender nonconforming youth about sound, about how to use the system board just to get them really into it," explained Taharima Habib, who is involved with the camp.

For Habib, Rock Camp for Girls Montreal is a small stepping stone towards balancing race and gender dynamics in the music industry.

"When campers come in every day, the first line they see or communicate with is the organization committee that is built by women, gender nonconforming, queer and most of them, 80 per cent of them, being people of colour."

However, one thing the camp struggles with is finding these individuals to represent the visible minorities in the industry.

"None of us are well versed—we don't have a lot of sound technicians that are women or gender nonconforming," Habib said. "So, the aspect that is really important to music, especially today, is something that we really put our energy into and finding someone who really fits in to being a role model."

Habib hopes that the girls are inspired by the people who teach them the music and technical skills and that it will encourage them to continue outside of camp or even in school.

"Afterwards, they can become a sound engineer and not think that [this position] is still for guys."

Between the women and men involved in trying to break these barriers, change in the gender dynamics is getting stronger, louder, and hopefully stays constant like lyrics that get stuck in your head.

Like the lyrics that is often in Habib's head from "For Me, For Her, For You," a song by a group of campers who called themselves The Wild Witches:

"We're not fighting you
We're fighting all the things you put us through

Why do you need so much space in the room?" ●

**"For many young women, entering an electronic music DIY network is as awkward as trying to make friends with the school yard boys in first grade."
Freida Abtan**

A COWORKING COMMUNITY FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN

THE JOURNEY OF TWO WOMEN TO CREATE A SPACE WHERE THEY BELONG: ESPACE L

By Gabrielle Vendette @gabyvendette

As two young independent female workers, Yara El-Soueidi and Eliane Bourque had trouble finding appropriate workspaces where they felt completely at ease in their environments. The places they went to either felt male dominated or were too expensive for what they wanted to spend.

They decided to fix that by creating Espace L, a women-only coworking space and social club that encompassed everything they wanted in a workspace.

Having just opened its doors on Saint Laurent Blvd. on Oct. 18, Espace L is where anyone who identifies as female or non-binary can come find comfort and community in a space that is all their own, tailored to their needs and that believes in the power of a group of passionate women.

Bourque laughed as she remembered how desperately she needed to leave the house when she used to work from home.

"Often, as self-employed workers, we are isolated in our homes," she said. "We really wanted [the space] to be open, that people had a good energy, could communicate together and meet each other."

A coworking space is where individuals can rent a desk space for a specified amount of time to work. While some resemble traditional office spaces where everyone works at their desk and discussion is kept to a minimum, for El-Soueidi

and Bourque, the two cofounders of Espace L, it was important that their space encourage collaboration and communication between women.

Not just an open-air office, Espace L also organizes different activities and conferences offered to both members and non-members, to foster a sense of community within the space.

They vary greatly in theme, from profound discussions on what it means to be a woman in male-dominated work environments, to bring-your-own-wine parties where women can mingle and meet.

The goal of these activities and conferences is to give women different types of situations in which they can network and hopefully learn a little bit about themselves along the way.

"I think we're missing positive experiences here as women in Montreal, and Espace L wants to answer to this sort of experience," according to El-Soueidi.

"We really wanted to create a sisterhood, a place where people could discover new things, meet each other and create," said Bourque.

For El-Soueidi, a decisive incident caused her to realize that there was a problem in the workspaces being offered in Montreal. While in a bathroom in a shared office space she used to frequent, she realized that she had started her period and that there were no tampon

or pad dispensers in the bathroom.

"Oh fuck, I need to go back home," El-Soueidi remembered thinking. "And there was no one to help me. I had already paid my day, and I was really mad."

After doing some research, she realized that a lot of coworking spaces had the same problem.

El-Soueidi then spoke to Bourque, who enthusiastically agreed that this was something that was needed. The two women presented their project to the Service Aide Jeunes Entreprises, which provides aid to young businesses, at the end of November 2016, and it was approved.

Throughout the process, El-Soueidi and Bourque faced setbacks that they believe occurred because they were women.

"Having yourself taken seriously when you're a woman, when you're young and when you really want to start something is very difficult," explained El-Soueidi.

Describing their project as a femi-

nist start-up has provided them with many dismissive and aggressive comments, the co-founders said. While both women were expecting some push back, the reality of it was still hard for them to face.

Bourque explained how, while renovating the space for Espace L, they needed to get the assistance of a man to ensure that their project was up to speed.

"It's really frustrating to see that for your feminist project, you need to delegate to a man for it to move forward. It's like a slap to the face," Bourque said.

Despite the setbacks, El-Soueidi and Bourque embodied their feminist project.

They worked with female entrepreneurs to develop their logo, web design, and decor. One of these women is Niti Mueth, a graphic designer based in Montreal, who helped create four unique works of art to be featured in the space. Mueth explained that El-Soueidi approached her during one of her exhibits and presented her the project proposal.



LEFT: Yara El-Soueidi (left) and Eliane Bourque (right) created Espace L to meet the need for a female-oriented workspace and social club in the city.

BELOW: Female-identified folks can use the workspace for \$20 a day and participate in workshops and events that foster a sense of community among women.

BOTTOM: At the front of the space is Café Thérèse, a shop selling coffee and vegan treats to everyone regardless of gender.

Photos Gabrielle Vendette



"I think we have essentially the same values and the same subjects, so it was easy to relate to the project and to work on it together," said Mueth. The graphic designer worked with El-Soueidi and Bourque to develop art works that illustrated women and diversity, but that would also fit in the comfortable and beautiful work space they wanted to build.

While Espace L is a female-only coworking space and social club, it is also fulfilling a need for budding entrepreneurs and independent workers. In many coworking spaces, you have the option of either renting a desk space day by day, which could cost you upwards of \$20 a day, or getting a monthly pass with a reserved desk space that can cost you anywhere from \$150 to \$300 a month.

At Espace L, \$45 gets you access to the coworking space four times during the month and it only costs you \$10 per extra day as opposed to \$20. For \$100 a month, you get access to the space three times a week, as well as two hours of conference room time.

These packages are geared towards new workers who might still be in the development phase of their business and don't have the available income to spend \$150 to \$300 a month on a private desk, but still want a professional environment in which to work.

"It's not supposed to cost you a lot to be in a nice space and to work well," El-Soueidi says.

Espace L also offers a wide range of other services, such as a café at the front of their coworking space that is open to all, a small vanity where women can get ready on the go, as well as a small library and a newsletter called The Kegel.

But at the base of it all, Espace L is a space that Bourque and El-Soueidi would want to be in and be a part of, and they hope it is a space that other women want as well. What would their ideal takeaway be?

For Bourque, "My favourite reaction would be if someone let out a sigh of relief and said, 'Ah, finally, I feel that I belong.'" 🍷

KISSING BIPHOBIA GOODBYE

HOW I DISCOVERED, AND THEN STOPPED CARING ABOUT, BIPHOBIC BEHAVIOUR

By Flavie Duguay-le Borgne

Biphobia! An exciting and refreshing form of discrimination that targets people who are bi/pansexual. But here's the kicker: It's not just straight people who do it!

It's a discrimination that everyone can participate in, isn't that fun? That's nice and all, right? But what does biphobia look like?

Well, there are several negative stereotypes associated with bisexuality and pansexuality.

Most of the stereotypes about bisexuality or pansexuality revolve around the ridiculous belief that neither of them are real sexualities. The claim is that people who identify as bi or pan must be either confused, hiding their true sexual orientation, going through a phase, or just straight up greedy and want to bang everyone and anyone indiscriminately.

"I'm not going to pretend to be something I'm not in fear of negative reactions."

Bisexual guys are often assumed to be gay and don't want to admit it while bisexual girls are often accused of faking it to garner the attention of straight males.

There are a lot of preconceived notions about bisexuality. It can take different forms and can come from different people.

A couple of years ago, when I had started to explore my queerness, I vaguely knew that biphobia was a thing. I had heard people talk about it, but I had never encountered it firsthand.

As I delved deeper into the LGBTQ+ world, I had a couple of gay male friends, but I didn't know any queer women. So, naturally, I turned to the internet.

At some point, I found a lesbian YouTube channel and watched a couple of videos. At first, I was elated. She was so confident, so casual about her attraction to women, so comfortable in her own skin. I was so excited to explore this new world of possibilities. It looked great!

Scrolling through her channel for more videos to watch, I spotted one titled something along the lines of "What do lesbians think about bisexuals?" I clicked on it, thinking it would be a fun, tongue-in-cheek kind of discussion. Spoiler alert: I was wrong.

For almost ten minutes, I watched real people spout out all the negative stereotypes about bisexual women that I had only vaguely heard going around, and then some. More often than not, it was said with a sneer, or a dismissive laugh.

"I'd never date a bi girl, she'd end up cheating on me with a guy." "Just make up your mind! You can't just not know which gender you prefer." "They're just greedy. Or confused." "When an attractive girl is bisexual, that's just so

unfortunate." "It disgusts me, thinking she had a dick in her last week."

Watching this video at a moment when I was questioning my sexuality and my identity, at a moment when I was unsure of myself and trying to build confidence, was devastating. I felt ashamed, undesirable, unwanted. For some time after, I'd avoid bringing up my orientation around any gay and lesbian acquaintances for fear that they would respond to me the same way the people in that video did.

A couple of years later, I was working in a sex-shop two streets away from the Gay Village. The kind of place where open-minded and non-judgmental people would work. Or so I thought.

We sold a couple of books, most of which were grossly outdated. One of them was titled *Pour ou contre la bisexualité?* It struck me as the wrong question to ask. It was like saying, "Are you in favor or against the laws of physics?" You can disagree with the concept of gravity all you want, but that doesn't mean that you're likely to start floating any time soon.

Off handedly, I brought up to my supervisor that the premise of the book was perhaps a little bit dated and that the literature section could use an update. Instead of listening to my suggestion, she proceeded to condescendingly explain to me that genetic markers had been found for homosexuality, but not for bisexuality. Ergo, bisexuality is a choice influenced by culture, and not an actual sexual orientation. As proof, she cited her bisexual friends who were attracted to men but who sometimes chose to "fool around" with women.

I was stunned and furious. I wanted to shove the book down her throat. Unfor-



Graphic Deanna Hewitt @_decoma

tunately, I needed the money pretty badly, so I didn't do that.

After some arguing that went nowhere, I walked away before I started screaming at her. I didn't bring up the subject with the managers, doubtful that I would get much support from the them.

Although unlike the first time, I didn't feel so much shame as frustration. I was angry that I was constantly having to try and prove my existence. Worse, I was told

my sexuality was invalid, and that other people knew better than me when it came to my feelings and identity. I felt small.

Those two events made me wary of disclosing my sexual orientation to friends and coworkers, but that didn't stop me from doing it. And the good news was that, in the end, most people didn't care.

Sure, some do. But I don't want to let that affect me. I'm not going to pretend

to be something I'm not in fear of negative reactions. By being open about my identity, and talking about biphobia, I'm hoping those sorts of reactions will become increasingly infrequent, both in the queer community and outside of it.

I want to encourage people to reconsider what they think about bisexual people. And if I can piss off a couple of biphobic, closed-minded folks along the way, well, that's just an added bonus. ●

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Corrections: In the previous print edition, the article "Heads Clash, Make Cash" stated that Soroka said that concussions are not preventable, which he did not. The article "The Ins and Outs of Zine Making" misspelled Graeme Adams and Zoe Maeve Jenkin's zine, "Low Flying Star," as well as Sasha Tate-Howarth and Jordan Beaulieu's names. Gabriella Dobias's name was also misspelled in the table of contents. The Link regrets the errors.

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