

CONCORDIA

# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

[concordia.ca](http://concordia.ca)



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We would also like to recognize our former colleagues Charmaine Lyn, Sandra Margolian, Jennifer Dorner, Marcus Bankuti, and Alicia Prosser whose contributions were a valuable part of our work this year.

## LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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Facebook: [@ConcordiaCommunityEngagement](https://www.facebook.com/ConcordiaCommunityEngagement)  
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### Satellite sites

The OCE is committed to basing its work out of community. As such, you can also find us at:

**Bâtiment 7**  
1900 Le Ber Street  
Montreal, QC, H3K 2A4

If you would like to meet us at this location, please get in touch beforehand.



*Vicky Boldo, Concordia In-House community support worker performing a song with a co-worker.*

## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Office of Community Engagement acknowledges that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters we now call Montreal. Tiohtiá:ke (Montreal) is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

This territorial acknowledgement was adopted on February 16, 2017.

For more info: [concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement](http://concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement)

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# THE YEAR IN REVIEW



I come to the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) with an appreciation of its work – an appreciation that has only grown as I learned about the dedication behind the undertakings. A dedication to earning and preserving the trust of community stakeholders in the OCE's desire to engage in genuine partnership, and to foster lasting relationships. A next-generation university is one that is anchored in its community, but also one that is receptive to community leadership, and the spirit that drives our work. We are proud to present our Annual Report for 2019-2020 and hope that our commitment to fostering and supporting change that is led by our communities finds you reflecting on the ways in which we can all change our ways of thinking and doing, and make space for meaningful relationships with community partners.

The University of the Streets Café remains a steadfast way in which we seek to create space for, and highlight the importance of, the expertise that is held outside of academia. Coordinated by our Programs and Communications Coordinator Alex Megelas, these public conversations are an opportunity to convene across differences and to dig into questions of shared importance, while also hearing from individuals whose work has them directly engaged with addressing and answering some of these questions. Go to page 8 to learn more about what kinds of conversations emerged last year under the theme "Our Communities."

The OCE is committed to the decolonization and Indigenization of Concordia. Through the leadership of our Indigenous Community Engagement Coordinator Geneviève Sioui, we seek to align our work with Concordia's Indigenous Directions, through activities such as hosting the Canadian Roots Exchange and supporting the transmission of traditional knowledge to young Indigenous artists and our students. We are proud of the connections that we build with Indigenous communities and acknowledge that the work of decolonization is ongoing. You can read more about our Indigenous Community Engagement activities, and the youth focus that they took on in 2019-2020, on page 10.

We continue our anchored presence at Bâtiment 7, a project that, like the University of the Streets Café, inspires us to think about how we can take our work outside the confines of the university. We are happy to be able to work and learn alongside the various actors who convene at Bâtiment 7 and we are honoured by the openness with which our presence is received

there. You can see how our work with Bâtiment 7 has evolved on page 14.

As the OCE completes its first year in the Office of the Provost, the strength of that fit can be found throughout our work, and our collaboration with the Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) Network in Park-Extension. Bringing together opportunities for experiential learning, engaged research, and inter-institutional collaboration, CBAR leverages Concordia's academic activities in support of community-led efforts to have a local impact. You can consult page 16 to learn more about the work of CBAR in Park-Extension.

Community engagement takes many forms and art can be an important mediator, stimulating dialogue and creating connection through shared appreciation. We have been inspired by the work of Sandra Margolian with Concordia's Public Art Collection

and the Max Stern Art Restitution Project. As she makes the transition from the OCE team to the Library, we look forward to finding new and exciting ways to collaborate on art-based community engagement. You can read about Sandra's art-based work on page 18. This year, the OCE also extends best wishes to Jennifer Dörner, and Charmaine Lyn, who leave Concordia for roles as Executive Producer of POP Montreal and Director, Changemaker Education at Ashoka Canada, respectively.



The occurrence of COVID-19 has been the

defining event of 2019-2020, and its impact will reverberate for years to come. As community organizations worked at the front lines, the OCE partnered with Concordia's Experiential Learning Office to support community work through remote student internship placements. We are privileged to have been able to contribute to the efforts of local organizations, and look forward to seeing where these new connections can lead. To learn about where Concordia students did their placements and about some of the other OCE initiatives, go to page 22. The OCE's activities from 2019-2020 have set a strong foundation for the work of the year to come. Community engagement is iterative, patient, and inherently aspirational. We hope that you share in our enthusiasm for what we can accomplish together, and look forward to working with you in 2020-2021.

Andrea Clarke  
Senior Director, Office of Community Engagement



# THE OCE AND WHAT IT DOES

The Office of Community Engagement (OCE) positions its work and mandate in relation to community-engaged teaching, research, and action stemming from Concordia University's commitments to Montreal communities.

Our work is grounded in equity, accessibility, inclusivity, reciprocity, and social justice.

As a bridging initiative, the OCE supports, connects, and promotes mutually beneficial partnerships between the University and larger communities. The OCE contributes to Concordia's Embrace the City strategic direction and strives to connect Concordians to a broad slate of community resources. We spearhead a number of initiatives, including the University of the Streets Café series of public conversations, the partnership with Bâtiment 7, and other emerging collaborations held in conjunction with both internal and community-based partners. We also assist community stakeholders, be they local non-profits or informal citizen coalitions, in accessing University resources—our researchers, engaged students, and facilities.

The OCE draws on critical pedagogy and decolonization theory as we approach our work through a commitment to mitigating unintended impacts by understanding how our actions carry implicit power dynamics and are situated in complex contexts. In that regard, our actions are first and foremost informed by community leadership and our commitment to neighbourhood-based engagement. Our team leads social impact projects, engages in popular education, and brings together people from different backgrounds to enable powerful and reflective actions.

## OBJECTIVES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Office of Community Engagement's mandate is to develop and support meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships between the University and the diverse communities of Montreal.

## HOW WE WORK WITH COMMUNITIES

**We connect** faculty, staff, and students with members of the wider Montreal community.

**We promote** community-led initiatives and community-based knowledge through our networks and media platforms.

**We support** new and ongoing community engagement efforts with financial assistance, award applications assistance, and discounts on campus space rentals for non-profit community events.

**We build** partnerships by taking part in the planning and design of community engagement projects. This can include financial support, promotion, facilities discounts, and making strategic introductions.

**We experiment** by co-creating and developing ambitious and innovative programs with community-led organizations and groups.

**We also place a concerted focus on the cultivation of relationships**, including with Indigenous communities. In this respect we are fully engaged in Concordia's Indigenous Directions.

## CONCORDIA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION #7:

**Embrace the City, Embrace the World**  
**Achieve public impact through research and learning**

Community and public engagement are deeply rooted in the Concordia identity. In addition to the impact of our ongoing commitment to providing accessible advanced education, Concordia faculty, staff, and students affect the city and the world by mobilizing around important contemporary issues, bringing their understanding, expertise, and commitment with them.

By identifying specific domains for intervention, developing appropriate partnerships, and then focusing our research and teaching on the targeted issues, we can amplify our impact and become a more effective agent of change with respect to the major challenges of our times.



Photo: Participants at a University of the Street Café conversation. Photo credit: Alex Megelas

# UNIVERSITY OF THE STREETS CAFÉ

University of the Streets Café organizes bilingual, public conversations in community spaces across Montreal, allowing us to embed ourselves in local work and organizing efforts.

Since its inception in 2003, the program has focused on creating welcoming spaces where diverse groups of citizens can gather to share their unique experiences and perspectives on issues they would like to address or have experienced firsthand. To date, we have organized close to 500 public conversations in cafés and community spaces across Montreal.

We believe that the simple act of talking with one another provides an incredible opportunity for growth, empowerment, community-building, and social change. With this in mind, the programming we offer is about real-time, people-centred, face-to-face, public conversations. As a flagship program of the Office of Community Engagement, the bilingual events organized by University of the Streets Café are free and open to participants of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of education.

The 2019-2020 season of public conversations flowed from the theme of "Our Communities" and considered the range of dynamics that contribute to, or impede, community agency at a local level.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic saw us abruptly shortening our winter series of conversations, we nevertheless held a total of eight events, bringing together seven moderators, 26 guest speakers, and hundreds of participants.

Our season was anchored in three spaces across Montreal that all stem from neighbourhood-based community organizing. Each was actively involved in determining the scope and topics of the conversations showcased in their space. The conversations were positioned in relation to: expressions of collective autonomy at the Pointe-Saint-Charles community space Bâtiment 7 and as an extension of the work of participatory economy advocates from the Ground Up; the for-and-by arts mandate of Montréal Nord's Librairie Racines 2.0; and with the Corporation de développement communautaire Solidarité Saint-Henri.

Coordinated by Alex Megelas.

Date	Question-Topic	Venue	Moderator	Guests
Tuesday, Oct. 1	Social Exclusion, Secularism, and Racism: How can we fight the rise of Islamophobia in our communities?	Bâtiment 7	Nafija Rahman	Fatimah Ahmed, Jennifer Guyver, Kat Ying
Tuesday, Oct. 15	Green Control: How does urban agriculture change our cities for the worse?	Bâtiment 7	Mauricio Buschinelli	Mitchell McLarnon, Heather Elliot, Jenna Elliot, Christian Scott
Tuesday, Oct. 29	Women's Leadership, Empowerment, and Co-ops: How is gender justice reflected in the cooperative movement? (Co-presented by From the Ground Up // À nous les quartiers)	Bâtiment 7	Myriam Zaidi	Beatriz Hoffmann-Kuhnt, Kavitha Culasingam, Marie-Lise Bergeron
Tuesday, Nov. 12	Inclusion, Diversity, and Justice: How is the community sector a different kind of ivory tower?	Bâtiment 7	Élise Ross-Nadié	Liz Singh, Idil Oumalker Kalif, Margot Silvestro
Tuesday, Nov. 26	The Right to Stay Put: How can we resist getting forced out of our neighbourhoods? (Co-presented by From the Ground Up // À nous les quartiers)	Bâtiment 7	Mickey Watchorn	Mary Antico, Louis Rastelli, Andy Williams
Tuesday, Dec. 10	The Politics of Property: How can collective ownership lead to community resiliency? (Co-presented by From the Ground Up // À nous les quartiers?)	Bâtiment 7	Mubeenah Mughal	Claude Trépanier, France Labrecque, Eunbyul Park, Shannon Frenssen
Tuesday, Feb. 18	Racialized and Gentrified Neighbourhoods: How can we hang on to the neighbourhoods that we have built?	Librairie Racine	Idil Oumalker Kalif	Ted Rutland, Gabriella Garbeau, Bochra Manai
Tuesday, Feb. 25	From Consultation to Genuine Participation: What's preventing communities from truly controlling their urban planning?	Centre Récréatif, Culturel et Sportif (CRCS) St-Zotique	Elise Ross-Nadié	Sonzalo Lizarralde, Shannon Fransen, Jocelyn Bernier

**The following talks were cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic:**

- Tues. March 17 Racism and Labour Movements: How can we advocate for labour rights for racialized workers in precarious employment?
- Tues. March 24 Progressive policing and making homelessness invisible: Is the urban left failing to co-exist with the urban poor?
- Tues. April 14 Ethnocultural Entrepreneurship: How can we challenge the systemic barriers to Black community entrepreneurship?
- Tues. April 28 When innovation simply isn't: How do capitalist approaches to social innovation limit the creativity and freedom of community movements?

# INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Group photo at the end of CRE's Gathering.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

### CANADIAN ROOTS EXCHANGE - FOR(A)GING OUR PATHS YOUTH GATHERING (FEBRUARY 22-24, 2020)

The Office of Community Engagement (OCE) hosted this large event on campus where 350 Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth came together to reflect on the meaning of reconciliation. This year's theme, "For(a)ging Our Paths," was chosen by the youth committee to symbolize self-determination in choosing one's path and the resources we collect as we go along our personal journey of growth. The Gathering, as the event is known, is a space for learning, debate, celebration, and connection, enhancing knowledge of cultures and histories, and teachings to youth.

Sessions took place in classrooms throughout the Hall and Library buildings at Concordia's downtown campus. Youth offered lectures on Indigeneity, language revitalization, climate change, food sovereignty, decolonization as well as training on media activism. In addition, the conference featured curated speaker presentations with established

leaders from across the country such as Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, MP for Nunavut and Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, an Innu poet, acclaimed author, activist, and actress.

As partners, the OCE took on a leadership position, mobilizing resources and soliciting local partnerships for the benefit of the participants' experience. Concordia's Centre for Gender Advocacy provided peer support, the Centre for Oral and Digital Storytelling hosted an immersive installation by Anishinaabe artists Faye Mullen and Craig Commanda, and Vicky Boldo, cultural support worker with the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre, was on site alongside Elders.

The Gathering was an opportunity for the OCE and Concordia to take concrete actions and reaffirm our commitment to decolonization and reconciliation work.



Photo: Participants after workshop at CRE's Gathering. Photo Credit: Canadian Roots Exchange

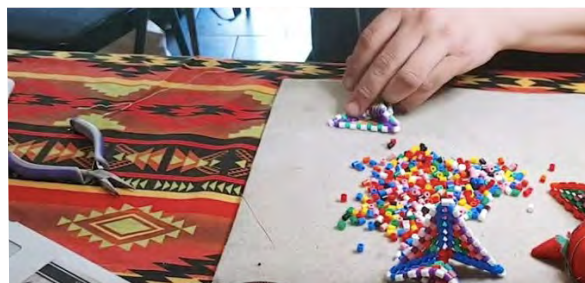
# NATAKANU

Natakanu logo. Logo credit: UHU Labos Nomades

## UHU LABOS NOMADES & WAPIKONI MOBILE NATAKANU PROJECT (SEPT. 2019-OCT. 2020)

The Natakanu Project (Visiting each other in Innu) is an initiative of Wapikoni Mobile and Uhu Labos Nomades, and supported by the Office of Community Engagement, to forge new collaborative approaches to creation. Inspired by virtual mobility, the partners built a collaborative multimedia platform to create, disseminate, enhance, and share projects and audiovisual resources (data, sound-images, videos, code, etc.) amongst Indigenous artists. Launched on July 15, 2020, the platform addresses issues of digital accessibility by creating a network capable of operating off-grid (in a situation of a weak or no Internet connection)--a common case in communities across the country. Natakanu's intention is to increase the accessibility of tools for the sharing, collaboration, and transmission of Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and artistic expressions.

Some of the events organized by the Natakanu team this year include:



**Beading workshop + tutorial:** with help from Concordia's 4TH SPACE, we held our first virtual activity on June 30, 2020. Participants were invited to attend a live session with Anishinaabe artist Craig Commanda, moderated by Innu artist Carole Bérubé-Therrien. Craig taught a contemporary beading technique to create three-dimensional forms. A tutorial was also made available to the public and is accessible online.

**Photogrammetry tutorial:** the second activity was photogrammetry, a technique that allows 3D reproduction of a physical object into a digital object. Participants transformed their beaded project into a virtual object in order to test out the Natakanu platform.

All our activities are intended for young Indigenous artists, and prioritize the transmission of Indigenous knowledge, such as beading, from peer to peer.



Workshop participants with mural. Photo credit: Geneviève Sioui

## WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS DECOLONIZATION (NOVEMBER 23, 24, 30 & DECEMBER 1, 2019)

With partners Press Start, the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK, and the Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE), the OCE offered intensive training on decolonization and youth leadership to 15 participants, between 14 and 29 years-old. The objective was to create a space to build relationships of solidarity, to learn about and discuss the harmful impacts of settler colonialism, and to increase cultural awareness as part of the work towards decolonization.

Over two weekends, the participants attended workshops and conversations guided by Indigenous collaborators and allies on various topics:

- Blanket Exercise on Indigenous Histories by Vicky Boldo and Faye Mullen
- Two-Line Workshop on Colonization by CRE
- "How to Be an Ally to Indigenous Peoples?" by Brooke Wahsontiostha Deer and Leilani Shaw
- "Creating Spaces for Youth by Youth" by Press Start Co-op

The training culminated in the creation of a mural at Bâtiment 7 inspired by the participants' vision and guided by the Kanien'kéhà artist, art educator, and therapist Megan Kanerahtenha:wi Whyte. The mural brought participants together as a community in a collaborative and creative way, and symbolizes the collective effort required to create change.

Coordinated by Geneviève Sioui.





Adventure skate ground at Bâtiment 7

# ANCHORED PRESENCE AT BÂTIMENT 7

## ANCHORED PRESENCE AT BÂTIMENT 7

In August 2018, Concordia finalized a partnership with Bâtiment 7, a resident-led initiative in Pointe-Saint-Charles. This partnership takes the form of a three-year anchored presence to facilitate the emergence of a broad range of community-university collaborations.

Located on former CN lands, this heritage industrial site has been reclaimed and is now emerging as a unique model of collectively governed, citizen-led community organizing. Home to 16 locally led initiatives, Bâtiment 7 includes a broad range of community-run cooperative businesses and arts and non-profit organizations.

Bâtiment 7 is an integral aspect of a neighbourhood that has been a crucible of resident-led community initiatives. As a successful, large-scale project, Bâtiment 7 inspires ongoing reflections on the role and impacts of such institutions in evolving urban spaces.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

The anchored, on-site presence at Bâtiment 7 has presented opportunities for research and programs through which the University can apply its city-based educational commitment.

In 2019-2020, the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) supported the emergence of a number of strategic initiatives at Bâtiment 7, including:

- A community-arts residency program co-led by the Art Vault initiative in the Concordia Faculty of Fine Arts (FOFA), which saw three projects led by FOFA graduates commit to a fixed arts-based presence in the studio spaces at Bâtiment 7.
- A Living Labs initiative co-funded by the OCE and the Concordia Sustainability Action Fund, as part of which 14 social and environmental sustainability initiatives, led by 24 students, were activated at Bâtiment 7, addressing a number of issues, including decolonization, land decontamination, nutrition, and popular education.
- A shipping-container-based permaculture and urban farm initiative that is now emerging as a successful example of local food security organizing.
- A blue-green alley pilot project, which will apply ways to retain and use rain water on site.
- A local for-and-by employability development strategy for racialized youth, spearheaded by Press Start, a youth-led co-op located at Bâtiment 7.

*Coordinated by Alex Megelas.*



Living labs ideation session at Concordia's Centre for Teaching and Learning

# ACTION RESEARCH (CBAR) NETWORK IN PARK-EXTENSION

Park-Extension is a dense, culturally diverse area, home to some 33,000 Montreal residents. This past year, the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) continued its collaboration with Park-Extension residents, community organizers, and researchers from various universities through the Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) Network, which seeks to apply resident engagement, equity, and social justice commitments to research-anchored undertakings.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

During the 2019-2020 year, OCE staff supported the drafting of analytical pieces, participated in conferences relating to the Park-Extension context, and contributed to a range of CBAR initiatives. These included an ongoing documentation of the sources and effects of gentrification in the neighbourhood in collaboration with the Comité d'action de Parc-Extension (CAPE), documenting the experiences of displacement of local residents, and positioning students and researchers as contributors to a range of local efforts led by organizations such as Park-Extension women's organization Afrique au féminin, housing collective Brique par brique, and the Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et les services sociaux (ACCÉSSS). The OCE coordinated and facilitated seven CBAR meetings last year, including three at the William-Hingston Centre, one at the Maison Parent-Roback, and three online via Zoom as a result of constraints resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Coordinated by Alex Megelas.*



Snapshot of CBAR participants

# CONCORDIA'S PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

Concordia's Public Art Collection was brought to life over 50 years ago with the integration of painted glass windows by Jean McEwen into the newly built Henry F. Hall building at Sir George Williams University, one of Concordia's founding institutions. Today the collection features over 40 artists and is presented across Concordia's two campuses on building facades, city sidewalks, in tunnels, and in numerous atria.

The eclectic collection is a compilation of donations, commissions, and works created during the rapid expansion of the University since 2000, thanks to the Ministère de la culture et des communications and the *Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture* program. From First People's artwork and mid-20th century stained glass to renowned contemporary artists, the collection is open to the public for free year-round. This project promotes open access to arts and culture and is a natural extension of the OCE and its mission.

*Coordinated by Sandra Margolian.*

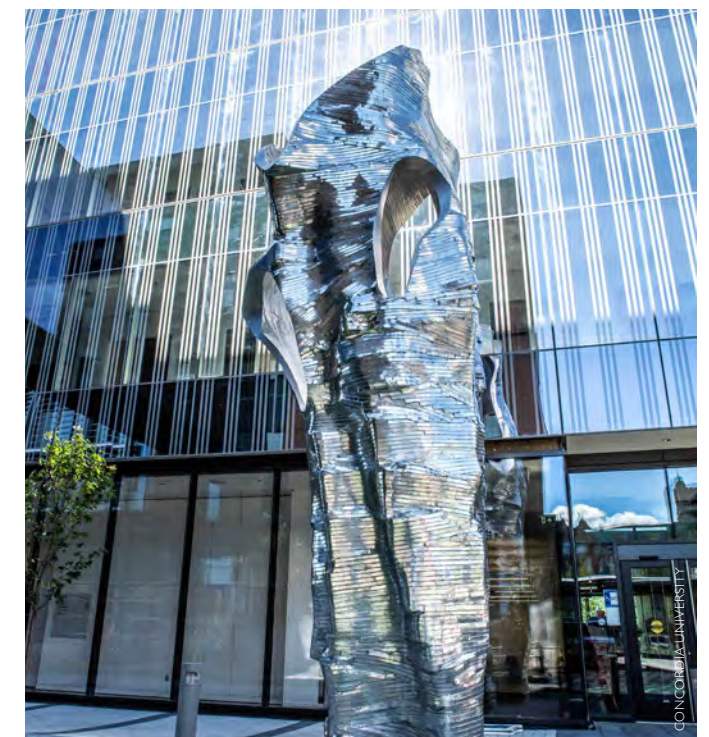
To see our entire collection online and plan your visit, consult our Public Art website at [concordia.ca/arts/public-art](https://concordia.ca/arts/public-art). For a city-guided tour, see Art Public Montreal [artpublicmontreal.ca](https://artpublicmontreal.ca). Take the Montreal, City of Culture and Knowledge tour in the Golden Square Mile and its museums.



EV Building, SGW Campus; *Untitled*, 2003 by Nicolas Baier and Cabinet Braun-Braën



Di Octo Statue outside the Hall Building, SGW Campus; *Di-Octo II*, 2017 by Anthony Howe



Applied Science Hub, Loyola Campus; *Montre-moi par où on commence. Dis-le-moi au creux de l'oreille*, 2020 by Marc-Antoine Côté

The Claude Théberge artwork, *Untitled*, located outside the GM building was first proposed by the Montreal transit system, then commissioned by the Bank of Montreal. The abstract concrete relief, which covers an air vent, is currently protected from vandalism during the demolition and construction of an adjacent building.



*Ulanen auf dem Marsch* by Hans von Marées  
(Germany, 1837-1887).

# MAX STERN ART RESTITUTION PROJECT

Concordia's Public Art Collection was brought to life oA social justice project at its core, the Max Stern Art Restitution Project, which had its beginnings over 12 years ago, continues to be internationally renowned. It is a coordinated effort of government agencies, educational institutions, museums, collectors, and members of the art trade who are committed to resolving the injustices caused by Nazi cultural policies forced upon the Jewish German gallerist Max Stern during WWII. After being forced to close his art gallery and sell the contents at Auktion 392 of Lempertz Auction House in 1937, Max Stern was able to flee and resettle in Canada, where he rebuilt his life and opened the Dominion Gallery in Montreal.

During the archiving of his estate documents, it was learned that he sought restitution of artworks from his private collection seized by the Gestapo. While he had some success in recovering a few pieces, the majority of his property was never returned.

Committed to continuing where he had left off, the executors of his estate and university beneficiaries (Concordia University, McGill University, and Hebrew University Jerusalem) established the Max Stern Art Restitution Project. It was agreed that the moral and financial imperatives underlying this cause were worth pursuing as long as necessary.

Twenty-one artworks have thus far been recovered. This year's most recent recovery is *Ulanen auf dem Marsch* by Hans von Marées (Germany, 1837-1887).

*Coordinated by Sandra Margolian.*

# COLLABORATIONS



## BEAT THE ODDS

The OCE supported the placement of Concordia students through Beat the Odds, a program of the Office of Experiential Learning that presents internship opportunities for students experiencing a range of systemic barriers during their postsecondary education.

During the summer 2020, we had the pleasure of welcoming a student who contributed to our communication strategy by featuring our various partners on social media. The student also conducted a series of interviews with fellow Concordia students who interned in Montreal community groups. These interviews can be found on our Facebook page.

## CONCORDIA COMMUNITY PROFILES

The OCE worked with journalism student Marcus Bankuti who wrote a series of articles for Concordia's Community Engagement web hub. As part of this series, the following initiatives and individuals were profiled:

- The role of Concordia students as part of the StartUP Nations Indigenous youth initiative held on campus in May 2019
- Prof. Felice Yuen (Applied Human Sciences) and her work with Indigenous inmates.
- Prof. Elizabeth Fast (Applied Human Sciences) and her work with the Land as Our Teacher initiative, which looks at the impacts of land-based teachings for Indigenous youth, their families, Elders, and Indigenous postsecondary students.
- Concordia doctoral candidate Fred Burrill and his work towards housing rights advocacy in the Montreal South-West.
- The work conducted by Dave McKenzie and the John Molson School of Business Community Service Initiative, which supports student involvement in the community.

## INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS SUMMER 2020

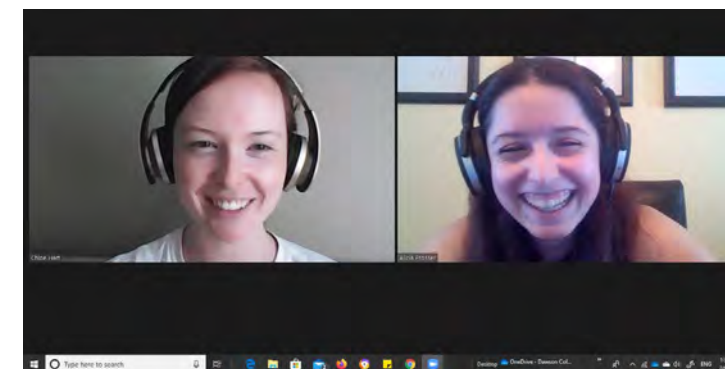
When the COVID-19 pandemic forced people to adopt social distancing measures in March 2020, hundreds of students' internships were cancelled as businesses closed and adopted a remote work calendar.

In parallel, some nonprofit organizations saw an immediate increase of demands to provide basic necessity goods and care for community members while others experienced financial precarity for having to stop or decrease their regular activities. Most were seeking coordination support, or financial or human resources, to be able to continue to offer needed front-line support to affected communities Montreal-wide.

The OCE, who has been collaborating with many of these community groups for years, was able to establish a direct link between them and Concordia students who stepped in and took on responsibilities at a distance. As of June 2020, the OCE had established effective collaborations with University colleagues in the Institute for Cooperative Education and the Office of the Provost in order to place students in the following 30 community groups across Montreal:

- Afrique au féminin
- Alliance des communautés culturelles pour l'égalité dans la santé et les services sociaux (ACCÉSSS)
- Amal Centre for Women
- Association des locataires de Villeray
- Black Mental Health Connection
- Black Rose Books
- Brique par brique
- CARE Jeunesse
- Chantier d'Afrique du Canada
- Face à face
- Head & Hands
- Le Détour
- Librairie Racines
- Loyola Centre
- Mikana
- Milton Parc Citizens' Committee
- The Montreal Indigenous Community Network
- Nipivut - Southern Quebec Inuit Association
- Parole d'Exclu.es
- Spectrum Productions
- Transit secours
- Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre
- Wapikoni Mobile
- Yellow Door
- Youth Stars Foundation

Students came from various undergraduate and graduate programs such as Communication Studies; Computer Science; Community, Public Affairs and Policy; Journalism; and Political Science. As part of their internships, they contributed to design communication strategies, animated online support activities for community members, designed new accounting systems, analyzed research data or made recommendations on the best information management system to use.



Snapshot of students during their internships. Photo credit: Alicia Prosser

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## SPACE-SHARING POLICY

### WELCOME TO CONCORDIA

Through its space-sharing policy, the Office of Community Engagement is proud to partner with Concordia's Hospitality team to offer discounted rental rates to small, not-for-profit community organizations as well as students, staff, and faculty members who engage external communities in their activities. During the past year, \$10,000 of fees were waived under this policy towards the fee accessibility of Concordia spaces to community groups.

Events held at Concordia-affiliated spaces as part of our space-sharing policy include LEARN Quebec's Remix Ed unconference (November 2019), Vie autonome's Journ e internationale des personnes handicap es (December 2020), the Basketeers' Annual Event "Assisting Women in New Beginnings" (December 2019), and Canadian Roots Exchange's 8<sup>th</sup> National Youth Gathering (February 2020).

*Coordinated by Sandra Margolian.*

## EVENTS AND COLLABORATIONS

The Office of Community Engagement (OCE) is regularly approached to support and take part in a variety of community engagement initiatives invested in promoting positive social change. These initiatives are diverse in nature and require different types of involvement on the part of the OCE and/or Concordia. In 2019–2020, we were proud to support the following:

### WESTHAVEN - SUMMER CAMP TRAINING (JULY 2019)

Led by a Concordia student, this training was intended for Westhaven Summer Camps staff to gain knowledge about adequate camp programming for youth with special needs. The OCE covered honorarium for hours spent preparing and delivering the training.

### BAKLAWA: THE CONCERT (AUGUST 3, 2019)

The OCE provided financial assistance towards the organisation of this multidisciplinary cabaret show put on by the Abjad Howse collective, which presents public performances by Montreal artists of Arabic descent. The event took place at the DB Clarke Theatre and was held in partnership with the Concordia Refugee Centre.

### VENT DE CHANGEMENT - INM  COLE D' T  2019 (AUGUST 14-17, 2019)

The OCE provided support for this annual event organized by the Institut du Nouveau Monde. This four-day event unfolded primarily at Concordia's John Molson School of Business and brought together approximately 350 young participants. In



*Young participant at LEARN Quebec's Remix Ed unconference.*

addition, Charmaine Lyn offered mentorship to participants registered for the "Mentorat sur le profil entrepreneurial social (Inclusion et diversit )" workshop.

### BITE ME! - PANEL TALK (SEPTEMBER 26, 2019)

The OCE provided funding to cover honorariums for Gisele Yasmine from Food Secure Canada and Bonnie Soutar from The Depot Community Food Centre to participate in the Bite Me! week-long activities at Concordia's 4TH SPACE. This event, organized by the Concordia Food Coalition, consisted of presentations on food practices from environmental, economic, ethical, nutritional, and cultural perspectives.



*BAKLAWA Concert.*

## FILIPINO-CANADIAN FUTURES CONFERENCE (SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2020)

The Simone de Beauvoir Institute and the Filipino Organization of Concordia University Students (FOCUS) hosted a community-building conference for members of the Filipino community. The OCE supported this event during which community-engaged scholars, practitioners, and Filipino youth came together to create greater intergenerational capacity in research and organization.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SYSTEMIC RACISM (SEPTEMBER 28, 2019)

The OCE provided financial support towards the organization of this public consultation on systemic racism in the Park-Extension neighbourhood. The consultation was organized by the Table de quartier de Parc-Extension, in collaboration with community groups Brique par brique and the Tiger Lotus Cooperative. OCE staff also assisted with facilitating small group exchanges and drafting the report that emerged from the consultation.

## EXHIBITION MAZINIGWAASO / TO BEAD SOMETHING - CONCORDIA FOFA GALLERY (NOVEMBER 4, 2019)

The OCE assumed the artist's honorarium for this exhibition of Odawa Anishinaabe artist Barry Ace. Ace transforms floral and geometric beadwork patterns by incorporating reclaimed and salvaged electronic components and circuitry. Anishinaabe culture, history, and personal narratives are weaved into bandolier bags, an assemblage textile practice drawn from the historical arts of the Great Lakes region. The exhibition and artist talk were open to the Concordia community and the general public.

## CARVING MASTERCLASS WITH DEMPSEY BOB (NOVEMBER 11-15, 2019)

The OCE provided financial support to welcome Tahltan and Tlingit carver Dempsey Bob who was in Montreal to speak during a screening event of a short film on Northwest coast art and to offer a master's class to sculpture students. The event was organized by Concordia's Faculty of Fine Arts.

## WET'SUWET'EN SOLIDARITY GATHERING - FIRST VOICES WEEK (FEBRUARY 5, 2020)

This year, First Voices Week was held while the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en nation were protesting against the Coastal GasLink pipeline crossing on their lands. Solidarity protests were organized across Turtle Island and Concordia students as well as the general public were invited to a solidarity gathering organized by First Voices Week organizers. The OCE supported the event as a recognition of Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent.

## CONVERSATION WITH WAUBGESHIG RICE AND SKAWENNATI FRAGNITO - ENG 380 CLASS (MARCH 26 & APRIL 2, 2020)

The OCE assumed the artist's honorarium for this virtual conversation for the First Nations/North American Native Literature class at Concordia during the pandemic. Students and public were invited to attend the artist talks and interact with Waubgeshig Rice, author of *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Anishinaabe writer, and CBC broadcaster, and with Skawennati Fragnito, a visual artist who explores and creates Indigenous virtual spaces.

## PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

### PLANNERS NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY (JUNE 21, 2019)

Alex Megelas co-presented on a panel with Emmanuel Guay and Samiha Hossain on the work of the community-based action research network (CBAR) and its contributors. The panel was titled "Beyond and against the Ivory Tower: Community-Based Action Research and the Struggle against Gentrification and Displacement in Park-Extension".

### ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: REPOLITICIZING P/AR: FROM ACTION RESEARCH TO ACTIVISM (JUNE 28 & 29, 2019)

Two sessions presented during this conference held at McGill University included OCE staff and showcased the work of the Park-Extension CBAR Network. On June 27, a panel titled "City-Based Research: How Can Research Meaningfully Contribute to Community?" was moderated by Jayne Malenfant and featured guests Mitch McLarnon, Alex Megelas, Maxim Goulet-Langlois and Naomi Nichols. On June 28 a panel on community-based research was moderated by Naomi Nichols and Alex Megelas with guests Rose-Anne St-Paul (Brique x Brique), Michelle Duchesneau (Press Start), Andrea Clarke (Head & Hands), Pascual Delgado (ACCESSS), and Will Beauchemin and Bianca Laliberté from Exeko.

### RÉINVENTER LA VILLE: DES PAROLES À L'ACTION (OCTOBER 25, 2019)

Alex Megelas co-presented alongside Bâtiment 7's Judith Cayer on Concordia's anchored presence at Bâtiment 7. The panel was held as part of a conference co-organized by French publication *Le Monde*, NewCities, and in partnership with Concordia University.

## SCREENING OF FOOD COOP DOCUMENTARY (JANUARY 30, 2020)

The OCE supported the screening of the documentary film *Food Coop* (2016, dir. Tom Booth) about the Park Slope food cooperative in Brooklyn. After the film, Alex Megelas took part in a panel alongside Mubeenah Mughal (Bâtiment 7) and Marie-Claude Rose (Le Détour).



Marie-Claude Rose and Alex Megelas. Photo: Mubeenah Mughal  
**CLASS TALK ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY (JANUARY 30, 2020)**

Jennifer Dorner and Geneviève Sioui were invited by associate professor Hillary Kael to the Religion in the Public Square (RELI 639A/821A) class to encourage students to consider the possibilities and challenges of community engaged work in academia. The conversation was also meant to guide students in the production of their final projects.

## BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Members of the OCE team contribute their time to governance boards and standing committees in Montreal neighbourhoods and internally at the University. This participation is an important way for us to connect with stakeholders and community partners.

### INDIGENOUS DIRECTIONS LEADERSHIP GROUP (IDLG)

Geneviève Sioui is a member of the University's Indigenous Directions Leadership Council which leads the decolonization and Indigenization of Concordia.

### 4TH SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Geneviève Sioui serves as a member of the committee that advises on Concordia's 4TH SPACE programming.

### PARC-EXTENSION ANTI-EVICTION MAPPING PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Alex Megelas is a member of the advisory board of this initiative.

## COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

### THE (TED) LITTLE PRIZE For Community-Based Oral History Performance

The OCE and the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) at Concordia would like to congratulate Joyce Pillarella, the recipient of the 2019 Little Prize. The (Ted) Little Prize is presented annually to a community-affiliated researcher or artist and recognizes exceptional oral history research and research-creation work outside the university's walls.



Joyce Pillarella is a Montreal-based educator, oral historian, and core affiliate of COHDS. Much of Joyce's work has been inspired by the memories of the Italian-Canadian community. Her oral history exhibition "Les Italiens de Montréal", shown in 2013 at Montreal's Hôtel de ville, recounts the internment of Italian immigrants in Canada starting in 1940. Following the enactment

of the War Measures Act, about 600 Italian-Canadians were sent to internment camps. After years of lobbying, in June 2019 Joyce succeeded in persuading the Canadian government to issue a formal apology to the Italian-Canadian community for their treatment during WWII. This apology is a historic moment for both this community and for oral history. As Joyce puts it, "oral history turned me into an activist."

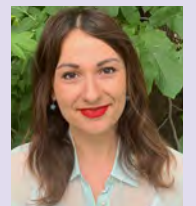
The Little Prize was awarded to Joyce Pillarella at the COHDS Annual General Assembly on September 19, 2019.

## ENGAGED SCHOLAR AWARD

The Engaged Scholar Award recognizes the collaboration and partnership between Concordia faculty/staff/student members and a community organization for their exemplary contributions to community-engaged scholarship. The Engaged Scholar Award is presented annually by the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Office of Community Engagement.

**Two Concordians were recipients of the award this year:**

**Constance Lafontaine**, PhD candidate (Communication Studies) for her work with non-profit Groupe Harmonie on the project titled "Ageing + Communication + Technologies: Redressing the Digital Divide in HLMs."



**Mostafa Henaway**, PhD student (Geography Planning and Environment Studies), for his work with the Immigrant Worker Centre through which he explored the employment conditions of migrants working in the logistics sector in Montreal.





There were amazing opportunities to connect with Elders and youth which is hard in everyday life. This is great knowledge to bring back to our organizations on Indigenous ways of teaching and connecting. Thank you!  
**Attendee, CRE Annual Youth Gathering**

# WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

I worked with Alex to host the University of the Streets Café series at Bâtiment 7. The topics covered a range of current social issues that are relevant to Montrealers. Some topics were: Bill 21, diversity, justice and social inclusion and how communities can fight gentrification. Many of the topics were not easy issues, but each event was well-attended and done in a way that made everyone feel welcome, and at ease. More importantly, it gave a platform to marginalized communities that do not always have access to space to speak and for my organization, it allowed people that do not normally attend events at our space a chance to come. Many had come to Bâtiment 7 for the first time and some have engaged with us since in other ways. I am responsible for community engagement and it really felt good to see communities we struggle to include attend events in our space.  
**Mubeenah Mughal, Bâtiment 7**

It was such a great experience presenting my story/idea and gaining feedback/perspectives on it from the audience, forming new connections, taking home some new inspiration/ideas and being part of the overall energy that was there.  
**Attendee, CRE Annual Youth Gathering**

I consider myself quite fortunate that my project on soil decontamination was selected as a Living Labs initiative at Bâtiment 7. The funding from the Sustainability Action Fund has allowed me to further my involvement in Pointe-St-Charles. As of today, I am an active member at B7, I am involved there in the Urban Farm committee and the garden circle, helping to develop in tandem with my doctoral studies at Concordia, a unique urban food system as well as workshops in partnership with organizations for refugee women with an agrarian background. Thanks to the Office of Community Engagement, I have been able to overcome many hurdles, and engage meaningfully and positively within the community at large.  
**Zeina El Omari, Individualized Program in Social Sciences, Concordia University**

Two years ago we excitedly opened our doors, a little project led by four youth and two adult collaborators with big aspirations. Beyond just surviving, our little project continues to grow as we build beautiful partnerships and projects. We have been so fortunate to receive the support of many other organizations that have allowed our community project to thrive. The Office of Community Engagement, namely Alex and Charmaine, have been tremendously supportive, by building relationships with our youth team and giving them opportunities to participate in learning and networking events, by connecting us to other organizations and community members and by providing financial support that has allowed us to live out our anti-racism mandate. For two years in a row, the OCE has helped us ensure that we can provide honorariums for the BIPOC artists at our Hip Hop as Resistance event as well as connecting us to rad folk to participate in our events.  
**Michelle Duchesneau, Press Start Co-op**

Thanks again for linking us to such awesome candidates through the Office of Community Engagement and providing resources for their work. As a small community non-profit in media production, we often recruit volunteers and interns to help us out in our programs, and we pride ourselves in providing an enriching and individualized experience for everyone, matching their career goals, skills, and interests. The work that interns put in is so valuable; their energy and fresh perspective are always appreciated, and they are both learning and giving so much. We are happy that their experience and contribution here will be supported through the sponsorship from your office, making it more sustainable for them.  
**Sonya Mladenova, Spectrum Productions**

Our Concordia summer intern made a valuable contribution to our organization as we scrambled to adapt to big changes in the local economy. Thanks to Neerujah's help we were able to provide support to our clients and make a difference in the community. A big thanks to the OCE for making this possible!  
**Faiz Abhuani, Brique x Brique**



# CONCORDIA

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