



“Vivre avec le trouble” – Trouble in Oral History and Storytelling
12th Emerging Scholars Symposium (Friday, March 14) |
12e Symposium des chercheur.e.s emergent.e.s (vendredi, 14 mars)

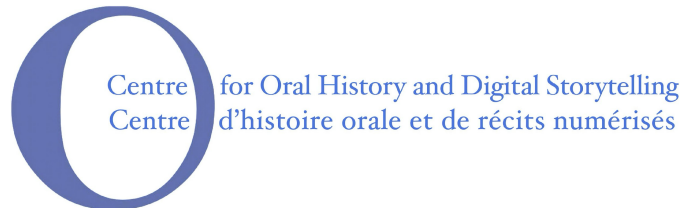
1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. | 1400 boul. de Maisonneuve Ouest (LB-1019 & LB-1042)

8:30-8:45	Arrival & Registration Arrivée et inscription
8:45-9:00	Words of Welcome Mot de bienvenue Sunroom – LB-1019
9:00-10:15	Session 1: Ways of Knowing Histoire orale et savoirs pluriels Sunroom – LB-1019

Chair | Présidence: [VK Preston](#), History

Eve Garnier, The Mobility of Trouble: Exploring Methodologies and Practices in Oral History through Moving Body Practices (MA INDI, Concordia)

My master research/creation *The Flesh of the brain* is a multidisciplinary approach to memory and identity. This project examines (auto)biographical retells grounded in movement practices as the primary form of expression. It aims to explore the unique forms of knowledge created, recorded, transmitted and archived through moving bodies. I am committed to exploring generational lineage and transmission through practices derived from dance and oral history. Particular attention is directed to listening, receiving and the feeling of legitimacy of the second and third generations who are evolving and developing across different cultures. Both dance and oral history grapple with a common challenge: the body. A presence that, as we recount our life experiences, encompasses certain embodied acts, witnessed by others or by the observing self. The *trouble* lies in the interaction and its inherent messiness between presences, human and more-than-human, each animated in their own way. How can we become “artisans of trouble,” moving away from being detached observers by sharpening our receptiveness and embracing the productive tensions that emerge from the collusion of lived experiences as sites of possibilities and transformation? The participatory presentation of today* engages in bodily practices, drawing inspiration from Sheets-Johnstone’s proposition that movement is at the root of our sense of agency, that moving is a way of knowing, and that movement



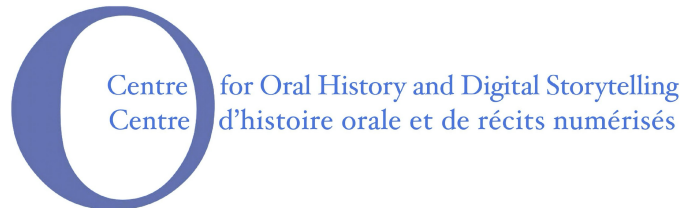
structures our knowledge of the world. What can movement teach us about how we relate to ourselves, and to those things we consider outside of ourselves or inanimate? In-the-flesh kinesthetic experience captures the ecology of micromovements, touch sensations, body politics, body systems, and the profound entanglement with our surrounding. By treating space, objects and materials as agents of reenactment, we can access sensory avenues that trigger memories and deepen connections to stories beyond words. Playing with our habits and beliefs can underline the need for a more holistic and kinesthetic approach to the act of transmission and reception of knowledge.

* The participatory presentation is adaptable so participants may approach based on individual curiosity, energy, and experience.

Born and trained in France, it was however in Scandinavia and Canada that **Eve Garnier** built a career in dance as a performer, assistant to creation and teacher. Centered around the relational and experimental potential of the living body in movement, her artistic and pedagogical reflections are nourished by artists from varied generations and aesthetics. Eve is Part-time professor at UQAM where she teaches technique and interpretation classes. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in the INDI program at Concordia University.

Jad Orphée Chami, Pedagogy of Witnessing: Oral History Performance in the Classroom Amidst Trouble Times (PhD Études et pratiques des arts, UQAM)

In times of uncertainty and change, storytelling and performance serve as powerful tools for reflection and transformation. This presentation examines how oral history and theatre-based storytelling methodologies create meaningful learning experiences in primary and high school drama workshops. By integrating Theatre of the Oppressed, dance-theatre, and oral history performance techniques—such as verbatim theatre and contemporary performance methods—students engage with personal and collective narratives, using theatre as a space for witnessing and reimagining their histories. I teach theatre at a private French school in Montreal to primary (ages 6 to 9) and high school students (ages 15 to 17) within a multicultural student body that possesses notable cultural capital from an early age. A significant number of my students are of Lebanese descent, many of whom—particularly the younger ones—have experienced loss and grief following the war of fall 2024. Having briefly attended this school myself in 2015 when I immigrated from Lebanon with my family, I bring a contrasting methodology that emphasizes storytelling, embodiment, and cultural memory. Theatrical engagement deepens through movement-based practices such as dance-theatre (Butoh) and body awakening techniques (Gaga/People). Land-based dramaturgy, as theorized by Algonquin Anishinaabe dramaturge Lindsay Lachance, guides students in sensory explorations, enabling them to craft dramaturgical landscapes rooted in imagined notions of home and belonging as young immigrants living on unceded lands.

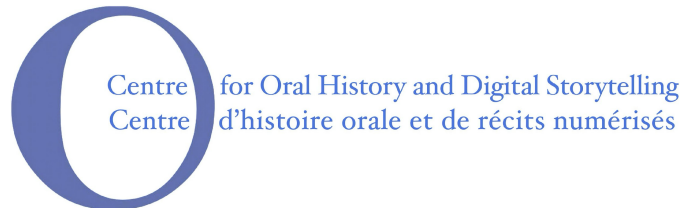


At this symposium, I will engage in storytelling by presenting some of the oral history performance methods I have been adapting to the classroom amidst the troubled times we live in. I will illustrate how students respond to these methods—what resonates, what challenges them, and how oral history performance transcends traditional academic frameworks. This work demonstrates how oral history methodologies, often reserved for university-level research, can serve as transformative tools within contemporary classrooms. Oral history performance shifts the role of the teacher to that of a dramaturg, fostering direct democracy within the classroom. This transformation creates a dynamic space where narratives are co-created, perspectives are shifted, and alternative modes of expression emerge in a pedagogy of witnessing.

Jad Orphée Chami (he/him) is an artist-researcher and composer based between Tio'tia:ke/Montréal and Paris. Specializing in oral history performance, he composed the original score for the feature film *Antigone*, Canada's submission for the 92nd Academy Awards, and the TV documentary *Dorchester: In the Midst of the Fray*, featured on Radio-Canada and CBC. An Iris Prize nominee for Best Original Score, Orphée received a grant from the Quebec Arts Council for his first project as a singer-songwriter, produced by Lewis Lines. He was also commissioned by Montréal, arts interculturels – MAI, collaborating with Angelina Guo, Kimura Byol-Lemoine, and in dialogue with Moe Clark, Soleil Launière, and Maya Cousineau Mollen. Currently, he is pursuing a research-creation Ph.D. at UQAM under the supervision of dance dramaturg Guy Cools and intermedia artist Éric Letourneau. His research focuses on the act of witnessing as lamentation in the context of exile. Alongside his practice, he teaches theatre and facilitates youth workshops on the act of witnessing. He was recently awarded the Antje-Bettin Intercultural Fund Prize.

Warsame Isse, Materiality of Oral Histories: Experimenting with Interactive Wearable Sound and Haptic Technologies to Feel Sonic Archives (MA Media Studies, Concordia University)

How can intangible cultural heritage become more tangible? The answer can be found through Black technopoetics. Black technopoetics is a term coined by Louis Chude-Sokei that refers to the intersection between creative expression, technology and Blackness¹. I am implementing this concept as I utilize guitar pedals and haptic transducers to hear, feel and shape the technological excess of language. The voice is seen by some theorists to be the excess of language and meaning, the substance that is left after language². Furthermore, having the voice go through technological mediation can create technovocalic bodies. This is a mediated version of oneself expressed through the manipulation of sound technology³. This ability to shape and haptically feel my technovocalic body through media containing Somali language and art allows me to embody my Somali intangible cultural heritage. I can fuse the sounds of Somali media with the sounds I generate from my guitar pedals with a passive ring modulator. The sound that comes out of the passive ring modulator is an uncanny hybrid of the Somali



language and the noisy static I create through my interactions with the Guitar pedals. All the technology acts as a new voice for me to speak through. The static that comes through asserts the technology's presence and represents all the ineffable meaning and excess in the media and my affect towards it. I am harnessing the excess of Somali language and media to create a technovocalic body that I can simultaneously manipulate, hear and feel. Thus, I am materializing my intangible Somali cultural heritage and expressing ineffable thoughts about my culture through interactive sonic and haptic technology.

1 Louis Onuorah Chude-Sokei, *The Sound of Culture: Diaspora and Black Technopoetics* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016), 11.

2 Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher, eds., *Radio Fields: Anthropology and Wireless Sound in the 21st Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 71.

3 Jaimie Baron, Jennifer Fleeger, and Shannon Wong Lerner, eds., *Media Ventriloquism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 20.

Warsame Isse is a Somali Diasporic Multimedia artist and researcher based in Tiohtià:ke/ Montreal. He holds a BA in Communication Studies, and a BA in Western Society and Culture from Concordia University. He is currently pursuing an MA in Media Studies at Concordia University. He focuses on the process of remediation and interactivity to counter-archive stories in the Somali Diaspora in a more immersive and embodied manner. He aims to see how various forms of media can empower people to express the more ineffable aspects of memory, language, and the Black Diasporic experience.

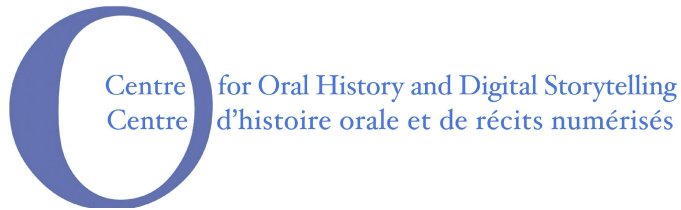
9:00-10:15

Session 2: Oral Histories on the Ground | Histoires orales sur le terrain
Moonroom – LB-1042

Chair | Présidence: [Steven High](#), History

Kari Valmestad, *Oral History as Urban Planning: Troubling Development and Urban Space in Winnipeg's Downtown* (MA Public History Graduate, Carleton)

Downtown Winnipeg is historically and presently a complex, multifaceted, and highly dynamic urban space. Its origins as an urban environment lie in Winnipeg's predecessor city, the Indigenous city of Red River. Its history of settler colonial urbanization and city building stems from a century ago when the city was an epicentre of settler trade, transportation, and migration across so-called Canada. More recently, Winnipeg's downtown has been shaped by many diverse urban forces and factors. Much of these processes continue to uphold settler urban space in current civic development, prompting gentrification in and around the downtown neighbourhoods. The Exchange District and Chinatown are two neighbourhoods experiencing immense change due to the



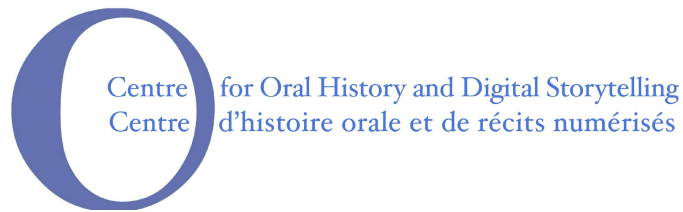
impact of new development on residents and community members, many of whom are not considered stakeholders in the urban environment. To contend with the historical and present-day issues facing Winnipeg's downtown, I conducted oral history interviews with directors of houseless-centred organizations, community centres, and non-profits that operate in or adjacent to the Exchange to demonstrate how recent and new development in the area is affecting the communities and clientele with and for whom they work. This presentation examines more acutely how these oral histories disrupt and contest how Winnipeg's downtown urban environment is presently being imagined and constructed by city officials and urban developers. Additionally, I show how oral history functions in re-spatializing urban areas, troubling the space and highlighting a different kind of urban planning needed to accurately represent and reflect the communities to whom the urban space serves as home.

Kari Valmestad is a researcher and writer interested in historical geographies, settler colonial urbanism(s), and the politics of urban heritage development. She holds an MA in Public History from Carleton University and a BFA in Art History from Concordia University. Kari currently works at the Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture, and Technology in research and operations support.

Camille Robert, [Les vraies révolutionnaires sont celles qui racontent leur quotidien: l'histoire orale face à l'historiographie syndicale](#) (FQRSC Post-doctoral Fellow, Department of History)

En 1980, l'historien Fernand Harvey remarquait que les grèves, en tant qu'événements historiques, sont révélatrices des tensions qui existent de manière latente dans les structures sociales. Au Canada, l'historiographie du syndicalisme a accordé une importance prépondérante aux conflits de travail et les grèves sont devenues, en quelque sorte, des « indicateurs » de la combativité du mouvement ouvrier ou de l'état des rapports de force. Lors de la conception de mon projet de thèse, je me suis conséquemment intéressée aux grèves des travailleuses du secteur public québécois dans les années 1980. Toutefois, les entretiens réalisés avec ces dernières ont révélé que ces événements n'avaient pas autant d'importance que je ne l'avais anticipé. Ce constat, après avoir troublé ma problématique, m'a d'abord poussée à réexaminer l'historiographie syndicale entourant les grèves des fronts communs ; ensuite, à saisir le travail quotidien (salaré et gratuit) des femmes comme fil conducteur pour évaluer l'impact des réformes néolibérales ; enfin, à comprendre comment les luttes pour « améliorer le quotidien » étaient déterminantes dans une période de ressac (backlash) pour les mouvements sociaux. Cette communication me donnera l'occasion d'élaborer sur ces réflexions en considérant à la fois les conflictualités historiographiques, méthodologiques et au moment même des événements.

Camille Robert (elle/she/her) est chercheuse postdoctorale au département d'histoire de l'Université Concordia, où elle mène des recherches sur les



mobilisations des infirmières d'origine caribéenne et philippine au Québec. Son projet de thèse, récemment terminé, portait sur les expériences des travailleuses de l'éducation et de la santé face au tournant néolibéral de l'État québécois. Ses recherches précédentes, sur le travail invisible des femmes, ont été publiées aux Éditions Somme toute (2017) et aux Éditions du remue-ménage (2018). Elle est également membre du comité éditorial d'*HistoireEngagée.ca* et du comité de rédaction de la revue *Labour / Le Travail*.

Autumn Beals, “Bad Girls”: Reconstructing Histories of Women’s Mobility, Criminalization, and Incarceration in Toronto’s Liberty Village (MA History, Concordia)

In 2022, as part of Heritage Toronto’s Equity Heritage Initiative, I developed a walking tour and online-map tour called “Bad Girls”, which explored Toronto’s Liberty Village through the lens of women’s mobility in late 19th- and early 20th-century. As more women entered the workforce and city life, public officials increasingly restricted their agency, often through legislation and moral policing. Many women faced accusations of criminality and deviancy, often leading to confinement at the Andrew Mercer Reformatory, the first all-women’s prison in Canada, which occupied much of what is today’s Liberty Village. The Reformatory (1880–1969) was framed as a site of rehabilitation but became infamous for its abuses. Despite its central location, its history remains largely unexamined, especially in relation to race.

Building on this public history work, this presentation expands into my MA thesis research, which interrogates the historical and archival silences surrounding Black women’s experience while incarcerated at Mercer’s. Informed by Saidiya Hartman’s critical approach to fragmented histories and Christina Sharpe’s ‘wake work’, my research examines how Black female inmates were doubly marginalized—within the prison system and the archive itself.

My presentation engages the Symposium’s theme “Vivre avec le trouble,” through exploring troubles within storytelling methods and practices, first, focusing on the creation of the “Bad Girls” tour and the limits of storytelling within the context of public-facing outcomes produced for general audiences. Then, I would like to shift focus by exploring how working on the tour, and the problems and questions that arose during my research, informed many of the questions and ideas that will guide my MA thesis research. Specifically, how Black critical thought and theory can be used to disrupt historical and archival erasures, and how “good” or “necessary trouble” (Lewis) can help challenge dominant narratives of justice and reform, and centre decolonized historical practices.

Autumn Beals is a public historian and visual artist. She holds a BA in Honours Public History and Minor in Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality from Concordia University. Her interests and work explore incarceration, migration, and intergenerational memory through oral history and public storytelling. Her research highlights the intersections of gender, race, and criminalization in Canada’s past, advocating for more inclusive historical narratives.



10:15-10:30

Coffee and Tea Break | Pause café et thé

10:30-11:45

Session 3: Challenging the Archives | Confronter les archives
Sunroom – LB-1019

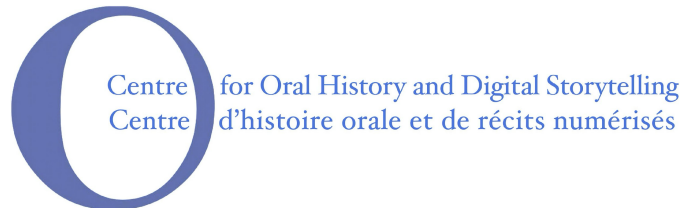
Chair | Présidence: [Anna Sheftel](#), School of Community and Public Affairs

Eleni Polychronakos, Troubling the Oral/Textual Divide in Oral History Transcripts from the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange (PhD Humanities, Concordia)

My grandmother was born in 1905 on the Aegean coast of the Anatolian Peninsula (also known as Asia Minor) which now belongs to Turkey. Though ethnically Greek, she was a subject of the Turkish-run Ottoman Empire. In 1922, the empire fell. Borders solidified around two nation states, Greece and Turkey. A massive population exchange forced one million Greeks residing in Turkey to relocate to Greece. They never returned to their Anatolian “homelands.”

Part of my dissertation, a research creation project that combines oral history, literary criticism, and creative writing, attempts to reconstruct my grandmother’s childhood in Anatolia. To this end, I consulted oral history interviews archived at the Centre for Asia Minor Studies (CAMS) in Athens. They were conducted between the 1930s and 1970s with Anatolian refugees resettled in Greece. CAMS’s goal was to collect geographic and demographic data with a view to creating maps of the lost homelands of Anatolian Hellenism. The CAMS interviews were never audio-recorded but transcribed by hand. Each participant’s “voice” comes to us through the researcher’s text, which risks “flattening” the orality of the interview. These top-down methodologies seem antiquated to contemporary oral historians. Today, we invite participants to “share authority,” making space for holistic “life stories” to emerge. I argue that, paradoxically, the textuality of these transcripts can reveal the narrators’ individual experiences hidden in CAMS’s data collection mandate. Close attention to syntax, diction, repetition, and paradox tunes us into traces of the narrators’ attitudes. Irony, joy, grief, and other emotions emerge despite CAMS’s taxonomical questions. Thus, I trouble the oral/textual divide, as my literary analysis restores some measure of “shared authority” and “voice” to these transcripts.

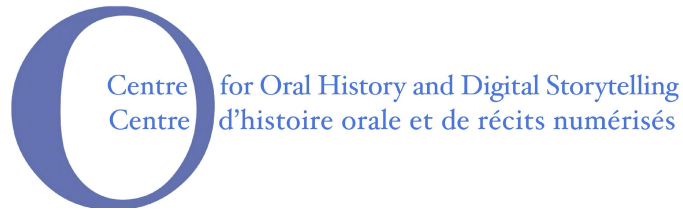
Eleni Polychronakos is a PhD candidate at Concordia University’s Department of Interdisciplinary Humanities. She is also a writer and teacher. She holds a Masters in Literature (McGill, 2000) and one in Journalism (UBC, 2007). Her short fiction appears in *The Puritan*, *The New Quarterly*, *The Bath Short Story Award Anthology 2019* and other literary publications. One of her stories was long-listed for the 2020 CBC Short Story Competition. From 2011 to 2015, she was a member of the collective that edits and publishes *Roommagazine*, a longstanding Canadian



journal of feminist literature. Eleni has worked as an intern producer on CBC Radio One's The Sunday Edition. As a freelance journalist, she has reported and written articles for The Tyee, rabble.ca, The New Westminster Newsleader, Kyoto Journal, etc.. She volunteered for two years as a co-producer on the The F-Word, a weekly feminist program on Co-op Radio Vancouver. Eleni is currently finishing her dissertation, which is tentatively titled "Girl's Name: Seeking Narratives of Feminist Genealogy in Twentieth-Century Greece." This SSHRC-funded research creation project uses oral history and literary criticism as both theory and methodology to collect, create, and analyze stories by and about women who came of age during Greece's turbulent twentieth century. At its core is "Girl's Name," a novella based on family history and told in three inter-linked short stories that investigate major historical events from the intersection of political unrest, interpersonal relationships, and individual dreams and desires.

Marie-Odile Samson, The Story is Everywhere: Polish Jewish Children and Adolescents in Soviet Central Asia during the Second World War. (MA History Graduate, Concordia)

Close to 80% of all Polish Jews still alive in 1945 survived the Holocaust outside Poland, either deported to or exiled in Soviet territories, yet these journeys across the Soviet Union have been overlooked in much of Holocaust historiography (Goldlust, 2012). My Master's thesis studied the personal experiences of child and adolescent survivors of exile in Soviet Central Asia through an analysis of oral histories from the Montreal Holocaust Museum (MHM). That being said, this presentation rather seeks to expand on the methodological considerations and questions that stemmed from my research, where I sometimes wrestled with established oral history practices. It may go without saying that large institutional oral history collections often standardize their interview methods. With regards specifically to Holocaust collections, many North American projects like the MHM or Steven Spielberg's Visual History Archive, for example, work towards creating a linear and chronological life narrative through questionnaires that divide a survivor's life into three sections - before, during, and after the war (Clifford, 2020). Yet this standardisation of the interview process, including the addition of reflective end-of-interview questions looking towards the future, can lead to what sociologist Diane L. Wolf describes as the "creation of a partial and simplistic Jewish post-memory and Jewish identity, reflecting more of a Hollywood ending than the complexities confronted by these survivors" (Wolf, 2007, see also Adler, 2017). Across my research, I personally observed interviews become more heavily structured from 1994 and 2016, the earliest and most recent interviews I used. This institutionalisation of the interview process (see Kushner, 2006) sometimes proved not only inadequate with regards to the complexity of these stories of displacement, but perhaps most importantly, unadapted to those who were children during the Holocaust (see also Clifford, 2020). My presentation will address such concerns surrounding Holocaust oral history databases and interview processes through clear examples drawn from my thesis, including comparison to other victims, emphasis on linearity and interview structure, as well as tensions between institutional and



personal goals.

Marie-Odile Samson (she/her) recently obtained a Master's degree in history from Concordia University (2024). Her research is anchored in oral history testimonies from Holocaust survivors, and explores their intimate experiences of displacement and exile in the Soviet Central Asian Republics during the Second World War. She holds a BA in public history from Concordia University (2021), where she focused on histories of genocide and violence, and has completed a year in the Master's in museum studies at UQàM (2022), where she studied the intricacies of museum practice.

Richenda Grazette, Addressing the Ghost: Fictionalizing the Oral Histories of Activist-Workplaces (MA INDI, Concordia)

In this research on how “activist-workplaces” attempt to build utopias through their governance and labour practices, hauntology will be used as the nexus that draws out the links between trauma, diasporic nostalgia, futuring, and organisational behaviour. Even if not really “real” (as in: there is a poltergeist knocking over the dishes) and instead only metaphorical, ghosts are “a constituent element of modern social life” that help us build understandings of our surroundings (Gordon 2008, 7). To that end, the spectre and the haunting can act as a connective force in the analysis of our relationships: to colleagues, to ancestors, to home, to land, to the future.

This paper proposes a research methodology based in an alternative oral history that asks participants to engage with storytelling as a way of exploring not just their own lived experiences, but the experience of living with ghosts. More specifically, participants will join in a weekend-long writing workshop that will coach research participants through telling “ghost stories” about the histories they draw from in imagining the future (particularly ancestral and political memories), and stories about their organizations themselves. This research asks, how can ghost stories challenge the [white] traditional idea of the “archive” and instead act as a creative practice of non-linear and collective/communal remembering? By proposing an alternative pathway to oral history, both in practice and in theory, the project invites participants to share with one another a history that extends beyond their own lifetime.

Richenda Grazette has worked in Montreal's nonprofit sector for 10 years, in both community and philanthropy, before her current position as Coordinator, Community Leadership & Capacity at the SHIFT Centre for Social Transformation. In her role, she leads SHIFT's participatory granting program and the governance system. Her passions centre around exploring transformative, iterative, and creative approaches to organizational behaviour, resources (re)distribution and evaluation.

Julien Lehoux, Faire un don de sa mémoire : un processus entre la transmission et la conversation. Une étude de case au Musée de l'Holocauste Montréal (MA Museology, UQAM)

Depuis sa fondation, en 1979, le Musée de l'Holocauste de Montréal (MHM) accueille des centaines d'objets et de témoignages provenant des survivant·es de la Shoah et de leurs familles. À l'intérieur du Musée, ces objets agissent comme vecteur d'un passé révolu et des personnes ayant disparues durant celui-ci. Conservé au sein d'une même famille durant des décennies, les objets récoltés dépassent alors leur utilité première pour prendre des dimensions beaucoup plus significatives pour ses propriétaires. C'est ainsi la mémoire associée à l'objet qui lui donne sa valeur. De fait, lorsque l'un de ses objets est donné au Musée, il est primordial pour ses employées d'en saisir aussi sa valeur mémorielle à travers la récolte des témoignages.

Cette présentation se penche sur le concept de la conservation de la mémoire des survivants en étudiant les pratiques d'acquisitions et de préservation des objets menées par les employées du Musée. Nous avançons ainsi que le processus d'acquisition de l'objets est indissociable de celui de la mémoire du survivant·e. Ce que nous désignons donc comme la « conservation mémorielle » se trouve alors à être un ensemble de pratiques formelles et informelles menées par les professionnelles du Musée afin de retranscrire fidèlement la valeur de l'objet durant et après son acquisition.

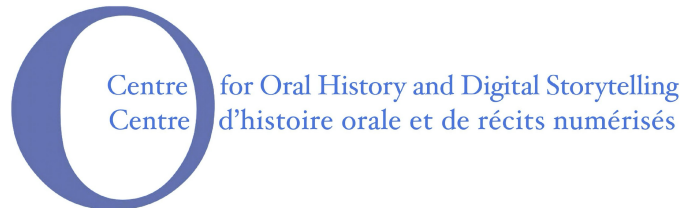
Notre recherche se bâtit donc sur une étude de cas menée au MHM durant l'hiver 2023 et 2024. À l'aide d'une série d'entrevues semi-dirigées parmi six employées, nous avons pu décortiquer leurs pratiques au quotidienne vis-à-vis de la collection. Plus que de simplement opérer selon les normes du milieu, nous avons découvert que chaque personne interrogée opère informellement selon le principe de rendre service à une communauté qui gravite autour de l'institution depuis de nombreuses années. De ce fait, la conservation de la mémoire devient une pratique à la fois partagée par le MHM que par ses donateur·trices.

Julien Lehoux est détenteur d'une maîtrise en histoire et d'une seconde maîtrise en muséologie à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Ses spécialisations se portent sur la participation canadienne durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et les enjeux mémoriels. Déposée dernièrement, sa thèse en muséologie, dirigée par la professeure Jennifer J. Carter, porte sur le processus de la conservation de la mémoire des donateurs au Musée de l'Holocauste à Montréal. En-dehors de ses activités académiques, il est aussi présentement coordonnateur du programme éducatif Je me souviens.

10:30-11:45

Session 4: Rethinking Crises | Repenser les crises
Moonroom – LB-1042

Chair | Présidence: [Zeina Ismail-Allouche](#), COHDS



Lucy Brown, Scrolling Through Troubled Times: Autoethnography, Oral History, and the Digital Traces of Student Life During Covid-19 (BA History, Concordia)

This project emerged from an autoethnographic exploration of my digital archives from 2019-2020, when I lived in the Grey Nuns Residence. Using geotagged images, social media posts, emails, and group chat messages, I reconstructed my engagement with the space. This deep dive surfaced forgotten memories and reframed my own retrospective narrative—revealing how my digital footprint primarily documented positive moments while masking struggles with mental and physical health. It also unearthed compelling documentation from the early days of COVID-19, such as a time-lapse video of packing up my dorm and fearful exchanges with friends about the uncertain future.

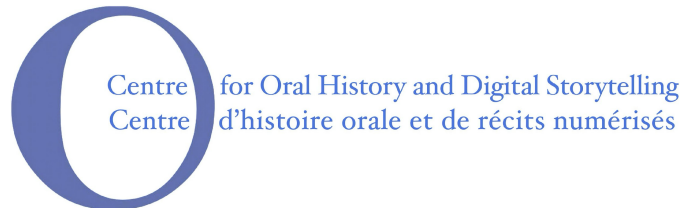
Motivated by this personal archival process, I conducted seven oral history interviews: three with students who lived in Grey Nuns in 2019-2020 and four from the 2021-2022 cohort when the residence reopened. These interviews revealed how students navigated the disruptions of COVID-19, highlighting systemic issues exacerbated by the pandemic. They also demonstrated how oral history serves as a necessary troublemaking tool—amplifying voices that might otherwise go unheard and troubling assumptions about whose experiences are deemed historically significant.

This project also explores how we construct and preserve memory in troubled times. While digital archives offer deeply personal, fragmented glimpses into the past, oral history provides space for meaning-making and reflection. In the next phase of this work, I aim to merge these approaches by inviting participants to excavate their own digital worlds—engaging in an autoethnographic process before participating in oral history interviews. This approach builds on how individuals interact with their personal archives, integrating digital traces with oral storytelling to create a dynamic interplay that challenges conventional notions of historical documentation and self-representation in moments of crisis.

Lucy Brown is a third-year undergraduate student in the Department of History at Concordia University. Her research explores the intersection of family history, personal identity, and memory, focusing on domestic photography and personal digital archives as tools for historical understanding. She is interested in how individuals construct narratives of the past through visual and digital media.

Avishi Gupta, Mobilizing ‘with’ Women: A Study of Consciousness-Raising and Formation of Feminist Protest Spaces in Post-Emergency India (1978-2005) (MA History, McGill)

I am interested in sharing insights from my summer archival research at the Sound and Picture Archives for Research on Women in Mumbai for my master’s thesis. My research explores the formation of feminist protest spaces and community networks, particularly the liminal space for ‘how’ in political organising within the Indian Women’s Movement following the National Emergency (1978-2005). The



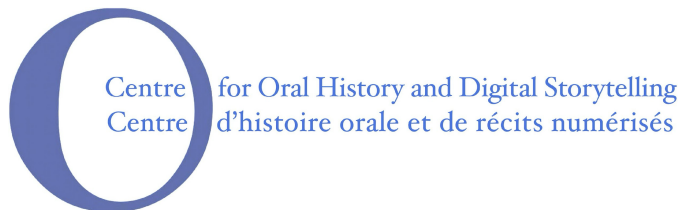
historical literature on socio-political movements tends to jump from what (trigger) to who (actors) and why (rationale). The how (process) is either lost in this equation or discussed solely within the confines of strategy and method for spontaneous mobilization. We often omit the question of how one organizes when there is no physical space where the masses can be brought together in the first place. Women's movements, particularly in the Indian context, have had to tackle the dearth of social contact between women. Therefore, studying the process of consciousness-raising can help answer this question and reorient inquiries into social movements towards the creation of a starting point for mobilization. My research will explore the question of temporal boundaries in historical scholarship. Particularly, the complexities of using oral records of active political organizers, activists, and union leaders for historical research. These testimonies are not merely reflective of a bygone political ecosystem but are also shaped by its aftereffects, which continue to inform their current organizing work. Studying movement building through oral testimonies problematizes the expectation of "watershed moments", "breaks" and "definite timelines" in history and makes room for imagining continuities between the past and the present. Therefore, in this discussion, I will explore the following questions: How do we situate experiences of political organizing in a historical timeline? Further, can the Indian Women's Movement be classified into waves like the one in the United States?

Avishi Gupta is a master's student in the Department of History and the Institute of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, at McGill University. Her FRQSC-funded research focuses on the formation of protest spaces and community networks within the Indian Women's Movement (1978-2005). She holds a Bachelor's degree in History from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, where her undergraduate thesis studied the enslavement of women under the 18th-century Peshwa Rule in Maharashtra. More broadly, she is interested in the histories of spatial organization, particularly how social spaces embody and shape community identity and socio-political movements.

Sona Pogossian, Corporalités des femmes arméniennes en phénomène de guerre (PhD Études et pratiques des arts, UQAM)

Mon travail intitulé « Corporalités des femmes arméniennes en phénomène de guerre » s'inscrit dans une méthodologie de recherche-crédation territoriale, explorant des récits peu répondus, voire cachés de femmes dans des cultures militarisées en conflits armés. Ce projet est né suite à la guerre d'Artsakh de 2020 - territoire ayant capitulé en septembre 2023, gouvernement dissous en janvier 2024, 120 000 personnes déplacées de force et des deuils incommensurables.

Dans ce thème complexe, ma proposition présente s'attarde sur la relation de présence dialogique, tant féminine qu'académique. En effet, durant mon parcours, ce sujet a perturbé diverses instances pédagogiques, me suggérant de changer de



communauté ou d'approche méthodologique pour éviter les problèmes du «terrain», afin d'être assurée de terminer et d'obtenir le doctorat conformément au cadre établi par l'université. Je considère ces conseils comme une répétition des mêmes thèmes de recherche sûrs et confortables, ancrant la visibilité et le pouvoir de ceux qui les possèdent déjà. Selon moi, ce qui est difficile à étudier a des conséquences politiques majeures, car le sujet devient inexprimé et l'objet déjà invisibilisé disparaît totalement.

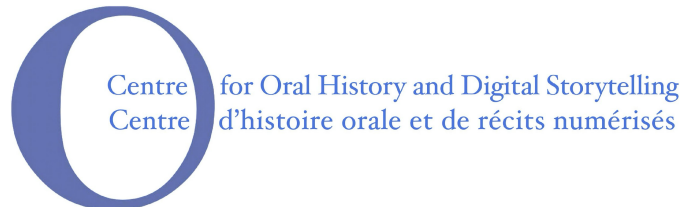
Les conflits étroitement liés au potentiel de violence extrême font de la présence de toute personne un acte exceptionnel et singulier. Ma présence dans les zones militarisées active une éthique de l'imprévisible (Shesterinina, 2019). Aucune démarche ne peut être précipitée. Chaque proposition doit établir en amont une relation de confiance et de responsabilité qui se réactualise jour après jour, heure après heure. Cette relation crée une narration dilemmatique. Le dilemme est un problème pour lequel aucune solution ne semble ni satisfaisante ni n'admet aucune issue confortable, mais qui doit être vécue (de Laine, 2000). C'est à partir de cette notion de dilemme que je propose d'observer la présence comme une perturbation essentielle permettant d'entendre une oralité silencieuse, dont l'écho et la réverbération peuvent parfois être les seules traces visibles du partage narratif.

Née en Arménie, **Sona** s'est formée à la danse classique et contemporaine au conservatoire de Lyon et au sein du Jeune Ballet de Genève. Elle a complété sa formation à l'Université d'État de Moscou d'Art et de Culture, ainsi qu'à l'université Paris 8 où elle développa des connaissances en anthropologie de la danse. Sona a collaboré à des oeuvres interdisciplinaires telles qu'avec Klaus Karlbauer en Autriche, Ivola Demange en France, Mikhaïl Mourachko en Russie, Ani Javian en Arménie, Bhrunno Henryque au Brésil et Andréanne Leclerc au Canada. Elle a aussi pris part à des initiatives socio-culturelles avec l'ONG Maliba, U-man Radio et UWC Dilijan. Outre son travail en danse, Sona explore dans le cadre de sa recherche-crédation doctorale (UQAM) le dialogue entre l'expressivité des femmes et les cultures militarisées. Ses recherches lui ont permis de recevoir la bourse d'excellence du Réseau québécois en études féministes, ainsi que celle de l'Armenian International Women's Association.

11:50-12:50

Keynote | Conférence d'honneur: Lea Kabiljo – Negotiating Authority in Participatory Research-Creation: A Case Study of Oral History x Photography Sunroom – LB-1019

Dr. Lea Kabiljo, assistant professor at Université Laval, is a multidisciplinary researcher whose expertise spans the fields of the arts, education, and oral history. She has a particular interest in integrating photography and oral history into her research-creation process. Holding a PhD in Art Education from Concordia University, Lea's research highlights her multidisciplinary approach by exploring the educational potential of oral history and photography in art education. Having taught in school, community, and university settings, Lea is actively engaged in teacher training, with a special focus on the



development of socio-emotional skills. She is also recognized for her expertise in oral history and has led numerous research projects in Canada and internationally.

12:50-13:50 Lunch | Dîner

13:50-14:00 Award for Excellence in Oral History | Prix de distinction en histoire orale
Sunroom – LB-1019

14:00-15:15 Session 5: Love and Care: Intergenerational Conversations |
Love and Care: conversations intergénérationnelles
Sunroom – LB-1019

Chair | Présidence: [Barbara Lorezkowski](#), History

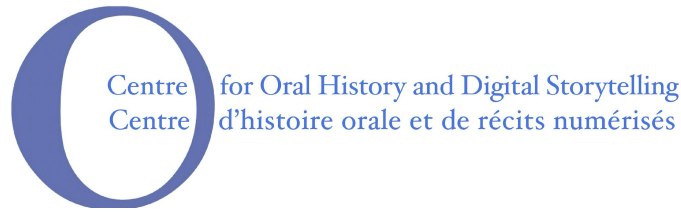
Tyra Maria Trono, *Whispers of Home: Gossip, Memory, and the Architecture of Belonging* (MFA, Studio Arts/Photography, Concordia)

Oral history is often framed within formal archives, recorded testimonies, and structured narratives. Yet, in many cultures, storytelling flourishes in the informal, through whispers, kitchen-table conversations, and the quiet or loud circulation of gossip. This research-creation project repositions gossip as both a binding and divisive force, an intimate form of oral history that carries the weight of collective memory, belonging, and intergenerational conflict.

Rooted in my personal experiences navigating Filipino diasporic identity, this project troubles conventional understandings of oral history by foregrounding gossip's dual nature: its ability to foster closeness and sustain cultural knowledge while also creating fractures through exclusion and misinterpretation. Like oral history itself, gossip is an act of transmission, a negotiation of trust, intimacy, and power. It preserves histories, sustains diasporic ties across distance, and reinforces the architecture of familial and communal life. Yet, as Karen Barad suggests, it also has the power to "trouble time," continuously reshaping narratives in nonlinear and contested ways.

This work engages with the symposium's theme of staying with the trouble, as proposed by Haraway, by embracing the contradictions and tensions in oral history. Through spoken word performance, immersive storytelling, and digital archives, I engage in necessary troublemaking by reframing gossip as a critical, feminist, and diasporic storytelling method. Often dismissed as unreliable, gossip is reimagined here as an alternative historiographic tool that unsettles dominant narratives of credibility, legitimacy, and linear memory.

By positioning gossip within oral history, this project challenges traditional notions of truth, rupture, and repair, urging us to embrace the messy, intimate, and troubled ways we remember, connect, and make sense of our pasts.

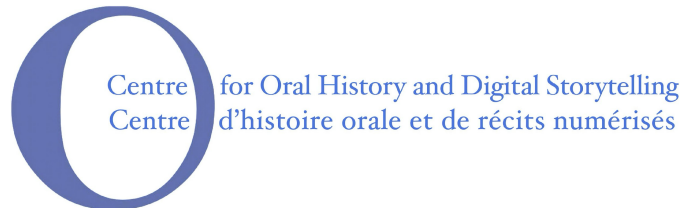


Tyra Maria Trono is a Filipina artist, cultural worker, and independent curator based in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. She is pursuing an MFA in Studio Arts (Photography) at Concordia University and is a recipient of the Lande Award and the 2023 Roloff Beny Fellowship in Photography. Her work explores embodied experiences, diasporic belonging, and cultural artifacts through archival research and oral histories. In 2024, she participated in MCAD Manila's Curatorial Conversations and the Creative Industries Management program at De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde in Manila, Philippines.

Annick Maugile Flavien, A Life Still Giving (PhD in Humanities, Individualized Program)

Mom's mind has changed over the years. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2020 but living with her, I'd seen the signs at least a decade earlier. I guess experience was on our side as I've seen her four older siblings move through dementia before her - in some ways being prepared for this stage has allowed us to lean into the unexpected beauties of her troubled brain. Non-linear narratives, blurry timelines, pops of tunes and hymns here and there, moments of crystal-clear clarity, friendly fibs, muddled memories and unfiltered commentary all weaving into a unique style of storytelling that is best understood through intimacy and context. A trail of seeds being planted as legacy for her dearest loved ones to nurture first before they share it with the world. So different from her decades of public participation as a passionately outspoken thinker, fearless activist and community leader, this chapter is smaller, often confined to the private realm of our home, unseen and uncelebrated by others but just as political as her presence has always been. An aging Black woman with a mental disability leaving her mark in the world. Calling myself her caregiver, though it recognizes the work I put into our family, implies that we've entered a dynamic where I give and she takes which doesn't well capture the inherently giving nature of the presence of Black elders in our families and communities. "A life still giving", is a mixed media exploration, tribute, or maybe more accurately a co-creation project with my mother that offer glimpses into the many ways in which her life with this progressively troubled mind is not only a life still worth living but also a life still giving. In the same way my mother has always taught me that the personal is political, I continue this work by mapping and weaving this intimate glimpse into a larger conversation about Black Aging, Disability, identity, and sense of place in Canada.

Annick Maugile Flavien is an interdisciplinary creative maker, researcher, and educator currently working on a PhD Research-Creation project that roots itself in Black Aging Studies and Black Geographies of Carework to explore the transmission of intergenerational knowledge and identity within "the Black home" as a crucial site of knowledge production for Canadian Black communities. She is also a mother and caregiver to her mother, both of which greatly shape her understanding of the world.



Maya Bonhomme, Deconstructing the Linear, Progressive Portrayal of Public Health Practices in Quebec Through Intergenerational Storytelling (BA Honours History, Concordia)

As Quebec's healthcare system continues to face significant challenges, I have turned to oral history and autoethnography as tools for both inquiry and reflection. My exploration of Quebec's healthcare evolution is deeply rooted in lived experience—as a disabled, chronically ill woman, I have navigated this system firsthand. My interest in intergenerational storytelling emerged through informal yet deeply revealing conversations with my 90-year-old paternal grandmother. In sharing our health concerns, past and present, we wove together narratives that span decades of political and social change, as well as medical advancements in Quebec.

During these exchanges, my grandmother recounted her childhood in rural Quebec during the early to mid-20th century, when the Unités Sanitaires des Comtés played a central role in public health infrastructure and community prophylactics. Her lived memories led me to archival research on these “Sanitary Units,” which operated in a transitional era—before the widespread use of antibiotics and amid shifting medical priorities from prevention to treatment. These oral histories complicate the dominant, linear narrative of progress in public health by revealing realities shaped by both institutional change and personal adaptation.

This project seeks to begin witnessing and amplifying the testimonies of those who recall a healthcare landscape that predates Quebec's contemporary system, established in the early 1970s, through the lens of my grandmother's and my intergenerational oral histories. Through this presentation, I aim to foster a dialogue that emerges from these interwoven narratives—examining how resilience, knowledge, and survival strategies are passed down through storytelling. By centering the lived experiences of my grandmother and myself as women, self-made historians, and artists in Quebec, I aim to challenge conventional narratives of medical progress and examine how they evolve to shape the complex realities of our troubled times.

Maya Bonhomme is an Honours BA student in History from Gatineau, Quebec, currently based in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. Her thesis, supervised by Dr. Shannon McSheffrey, employs historiography and oral history methodologies, including autoethnography, to delve into the history of medicine. She focuses on intergenerational interviews with her grandmother, whose experiences growing up in 20th-century Quebec uncover forgotten and untold narratives about care and medicine in the province. Maya is deeply committed to issues of accessibility in healthcare, particularly where they intersect with feminist and intergenerational perspectives.

15:30-16:50

Session # 6: Family Stories in Performance | Histoire de familles en performance
Sunroom – LB-1019

Chair | Présidence: [Anna Vigeland](#), COHDS

Ülfet Sevdi, Performing Motherhood (PhD INDI, Concordia)

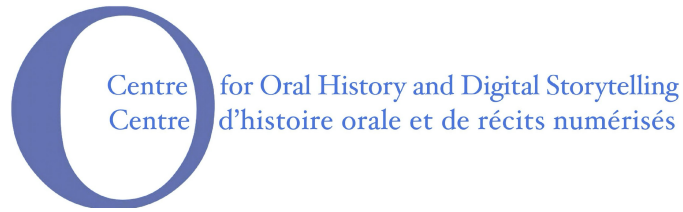
“Performing Motherhood” is a talk-performance exploring Performative Acting, a method I have developed that combines structured tasks with dramaturgically framed open structures to create a dynamic space for artistic exploration. A key aspect of this approach involves in-depth discussions with participating artists before, during, and after the tasks. These conversations focusing on the intersection of artistic practice and motherhood, and often on immigrant experiences, are recorded, archived, and incorporated into the performance itself.

Performative Acting functions both as a method for gathering oral histories and as a way of integrating these archives into live performances. In this presentation, my narration will interact with the recorded archives, forming a layered dialogue between past and present voices, interweaving personal and collective experiences. The goal of this talk-performance is twofold: to introduce a methodology that may inspire other artists and researchers, and to receive constructive feedback from peers to further refine the theoretical framework of my practice.

Ülfet Sevdi is a writer, theatre director, dramaturge, visual artist, and Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner based in Montreal, Canada. She graduated from the Department of Fine Arts and Theatre in 2001 (Türkiye), holds a Research and Creation Master in the INDI program (Concordia University), and is currently a PhD candidate in the same program. Her work deals with oral history and social narratives. Her approach is conceptual, experimental, and grounded in the critical social sciences. She was the co-founder and artistic director of nü.kolektif (2008-2014), an Istanbul-based collective of multidisciplinary artists, and of Thought Experiment Productions (2015-), Montreal. Her work has been presented in Austria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Türkiye, United States.

maddison litvinenko-schmitt, A Pedestal for Uncle Mack: Ramona Dance Song (MA INDI, Concordia)

maddison will present the piece *Ramona Dance Song*, consisting of a selection from their recent performance-creation, *The Cost of Living*, within the context of their INDI MA thesis research-creation performance project: *A Pedestal for Uncle Mack* – a series of conceptual performance actions that re-imagine a contentious monument site as an ancestral shrine. Archival ancestral research inspires their autoethnographic performance-creation methodological explorations.



maddison litvinenko-schmitt is an interdisciplinary performance creator. As a 2-Spirit, Red River Michif citizen, who was raised with their settler family, they are honoured to be currently on tour as Louis Riel in Infinithéâtre's *Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Stage Play*. maddison holds a BPA('14), from Capilano University, as well as a BFA in Performance Creation('23), from Concordia. their research-creation thesis project aims to mobilize awareness of urban 2-Spirit, BIPOC and/or migrant populations through site-specific performance creation.

Sue Proctor, *Cradle* (PhD INDI, Concordia)

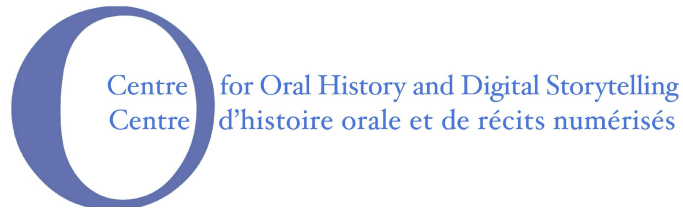
'Cradle' is a parable of a child who is abused by her mother. It is a difficult story told by a clown with puppets. The clown and puppets alleviate the seriousness of the mistreatment and allow the story to be told.

In this puppet performance, Agnes tells the story of the Mother's possession by a Demon that made her misuse the child until a Water Spirit protects the child, defeats the Demon and turns the Mother into a tree. For each of the characters Agnes uses a different puppet and as the Narrator directly communicates with the audience. The combination of clown and puppets allow a difficult, taboo story of maternal abuse to be told without overwhelming the audience and calls on archetypal personas that resonate within cultural concepts that the audience has absorbed over time. "Under the cover of the mask the licensed "fool" was always permitted to express that which would have brought persecution and even ruin to the critically-minded 'wise man'" (Oto Bihalji-Merin 1971, 9).

Sue Proctor, a doctoral candidate at Concordia University, coordinates programs and teaches creative drama for adults with intellectual disabilities at Arts Inclusion, creative drama at Manitoba Theatre for Young People, and independent mime and clowning workshops for adults. Sue has facilitated Art Hives at Concordia University, puppet-making workshops at Art City and taught with Manitoba Artist in the Schools. Sue is currently part of a playwriting group for seniors and performs at festivals, university presentations and cabarets. Her Master's thesis is available online - "The Archetypal Role of the Clown as a Catalyst for Individual and Societal Transformation" <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/977096/>
Check out her blog at <https://foolishpeacock.substack.com/>

Diego López Francia *Find the River* (PhD Humanities, Concordia)

Find the River is a work-in-progress testimonial play about a man searching for his absent maternal grandfather. By exploring the family origins, the intimacy of the family's troubles, and the performer's vulnerability, the play opens a dialogue about the plural constitution of masculine identities and the deconstruction of patriarchal and heteronormative hegemonic roles. It uses the unveiling of memories and the conflicts generated by confronting the truth as a method of Testimonial storytelling. Through the performers' revelations, spectators realize the conflicts of the



performers' lives and can imagine their personal stories on the stage by identifying themselves with the performers. Thus, *Find the River* uses trouble/conflict to tell the story and as a mirror to discuss personal identity.

Diego López Francia is a Peruvian vegan philosopher with a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the Catholic University of Peru. He is also a playwright, actor, and theatre director. He has created plays such as *Golosina*, *Sabotaje*, *Karaoke*, and *Madrugada*. He co-wrote the film *Viejas Amigas*, awarded by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture's Film Competition 2019 and released in May 2024; and *El Correcaminos*, to be released in 2025. He has taught Philosophy, Ethics, Academic Research, and Acting courses. As a Concordia Humanities Ph.D. student, his research-creation project explores Testimonial theatre as a performative way to reflect on identity. For that, he is creating the play *Find the River* as a case study. The play tells the story of a man searching for his family origins to understand his Peruvian and masculine identity.

16:50-17:00

Closing Remarks | Mot de la fin
Sunroom – LB-1019

The Program Committee | Le comité organisateur

Samia Dumais is a PhD student in history at Concordia University. A transdisciplinary researcher, she is interested in Afro-descendant and Black transnational discourses and their materialization in Quebec and Canadian educational structures. Member of the editorial board of *HistoireEngagée.ca*, Samia is the archivist for the afro-feminist community organization Harambec and a Scholar-in-Residence (2024-25) at the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS).

Varda Nisar is a mother, daughter, and sister. She is also a PhD Candidate in Concordia's Department of Art History and Public Scholar (2022-23). She is a Fellow at the Social Justice Center Fellow and a Scholar-in-Residence in the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University. Varda is also the co-founder of the Art History Decolonial Action Group (AHDAG), which actively challenges the silence around Palestine in academia. Her doctoral research draws attention to cultural production under military regimes in Pakistan, mainly focusing on museums and archives. She currently sits on the executive committee of the South Asian Women's Cultural Centre as the Vice-President of the Board and on Concordia University's Graduate Student Association Council as the Director of the Faculty of Fine Arts.

Anna Vigeland is a PhD student in Concordia's INDI program and a COHDS Scholar-in-Residence (2024-25). Her research is driven by overlapping interests in oral history, performance histories, translation, memory, and interdisciplinary forms of creation. Her approach also draws on over 15 years working in circus and on a translation practice that is increasingly interwoven with her research and artistic projects.