

MILIEUX INSTITUTE FOR  
ARTS, CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

**2020-2021**



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## Territorial Acknowledgment

The Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we carry out our activities. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal 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.

## Table of Contents

6 Director's Message

8 About Milieux

### 10 THE PAST: Looking Back on 2015-2020

12 So you want to start a new research institute...

14 In the beginning there was Hexagram

18 Milieux Launch

22 What ever happened to...

24 Event Milestones

### 34 THE PRESENT: The Year in Review – 2020-2021

36 Research in the time of Covid-19

38 Research Highlights

50 Hands-on Teleworkshops

52 Disrupting Zoom Protocols

### 58 THE FUTURE: Looking Ahead – 2021

60 Future Imagined Project

68 Looking to the Future

70 Where are they now?

76 By the Numbers: Fun Facts & Data

80 Who are we: Staff and Steering Committee



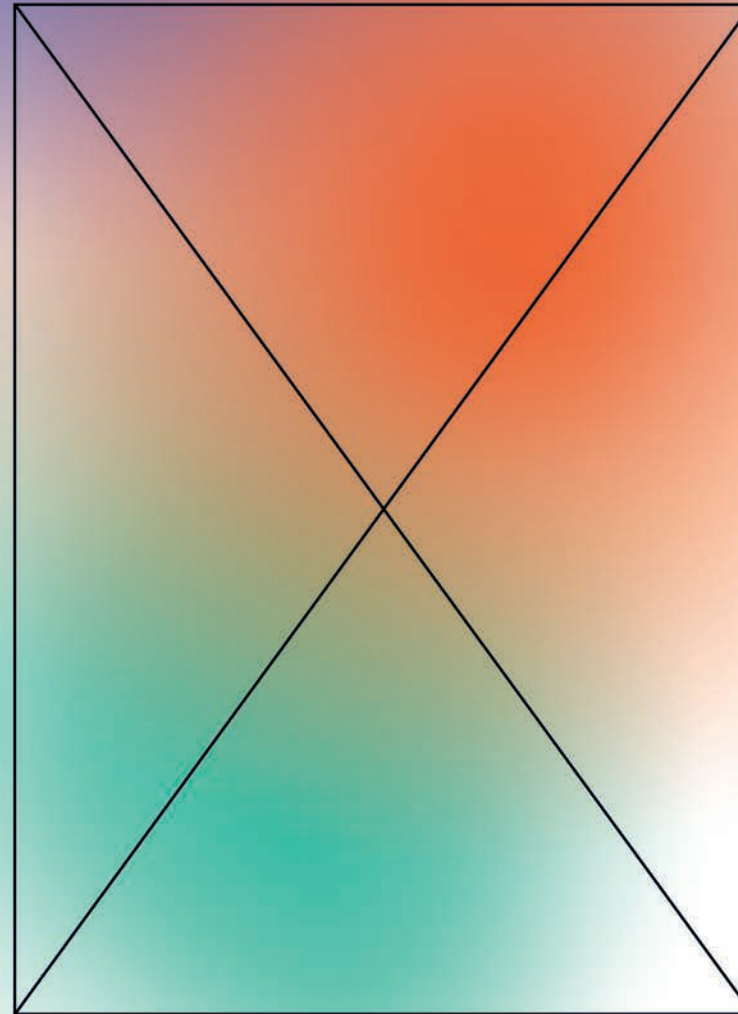
# Message from the Director



We certainly did not want to spend our fifth year of operation away from our studio-labs and from each other. It was not what we were made for, but another year of pandemic waves from September through August 2020-2021 taught us that there is more to Milieux than our spaces. While students and faculty alike struggled to keep their work on track, the resilience of the local cultures we have been so patiently building started to kick in. Slowly, and in patches, conversations and collaborations continued using all the new online tools we could muster.

COVID has highlighted Milieux's role in providing both the opportunities and excuses for members to break out of their pandemic-exaggerated silos and engage with one another if for no other reason than just to engage. From Zoom-based international speaker series to intense research group meetings and workshops; from sprawling Discord conversations to Gather-town parties, we continued the mission of the Institute. Our research did not stop, and we have arrayed the story of our unanticipated year in these pages.

At the same time, we had an anniversary of sorts. Our fifth year brings confidence in our organizational and management model which has now been stress-tested through major shifts in membership, the creation of new clusters and centres, several major grant applications and numerous



large and small projects and events. Our fifth year also marks a turning point in our reputation as word about our institutional efforts continued to spread, bringing a record number of 11 Postdoctoral fellows from around the world, and increased interest in visits from international students, scholars, and artists. Even with the pandemic we managed productive collaborations with the Goethe Institute, The Hexagram Network, The International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA) and the Ars Electronica, Printemps Numérique and MUTEK Festivals.

For this annual report, to celebrate our fifth year of operation, we have decided to raid our archive and look back to remind ourselves of the people and ideas that got us here, all the while looking forward — especially during the pandemic — to think about the students and faculty who have yet to inherit what we are building. It might seem like this is an exercise worthy of a more significant anniversary, perhaps 10 or 20 years, but since part of our mission is to continually change and evolve, looking backwards and forwards in shorter cycles will help maintain some sense of institutional integrity and legacy over the long term.

As always, the annual report is about putting our year's work into perspective. For all the many individual accomplishments and milestones, it is our collective project that matters most; building and maintaining a research culture that both supports a diversity of research and artistic trajectories while enabling each of us to magnify the impact and reach of our work in the promise of a more just and equitable future.

Bart Simon  
Montreal, August 2021



# About Milieux



Milieux is an interdisciplinary graduate research institute for new media arts, digital culture and information technology at Concordia University in Montreal. Comingling ambitious students and faculty together in a shared space, the exchange of ideas and perspectives is inevitable. These encounters often take place at Milieux's many diverse events, community gatherings, and workshops. However, the kinds of encounters Milieux excels at fostering are unexpected, serendipitous.

Each of Milieux's eight research clusters has a specific research mandate, and the encounters between them are continuously producing new special projects. Collaborators, from undergraduate fellows to post-doctoral students to visiting partners from around the world, are always bringing in fresh ideas and opportunities that give way to ground-breaking research-creation.

**Speculative Life** works at the intersection of art and the life sciences, architecture and design, and computational media. Its emphasis is on fostering science and technology studies, a focus on ecology and environment, interest in scale and networks, and finally, a commitment to futurity and imagination as critical to design, art and scholarship.

**Post Image** focuses on creation, production and reflection around current and future image-based practices in our contemporary world. Their work investigates the many aspects of visual representation, photography, post photography and image making, around diverse themes.

**Textiles + Materiality** brings together research creation expertise from textile arts and material culture. The cluster explores technical innovations and diverse forms of social interaction, investigating new ways that materials and wearables can change how we relate to one another and to the world around us.

**LePARC** focuses on performing and temporal arts, with research interests in the creative process, new collaborative practices, sound and music, and intermedia performance.

**Media History** focuses on understanding historical developments in media technologies and communication, ranging from the ARPANET to the ZX Spectrum. Theory and methods of media historiography are central, with a focus on emerging but robust subfields such as media archaeology, variantology, new materialism, circulation theory, and technology writing.

**Participatory Media** is concerned with questions of social justice and accessibility. Members are committed tinkerers and makers who develop prototypes, devices, workshops and outreach events that bring people together through participatory methods in creation, discussion and dissemination.

**Indigenous Futures** explores how Indigenous people are imagining the future of their families and communities by employing art- and technology-making, coupled with scholarly analysis and conceptual development, to illuminate how the challenges of the present can be addressed, in part, through concrete, constructive, and critical dreams of the future.

**Technoculture, Art and Games (TAG)** studies digital games as exemplary objects for cultural research, artistic creation, technical innovation and social mediation, all in the context of an expanding information society and the changing fabric of everyday life.



# THE PAST

# So you want to start a new research institute...

*From an interview with Milieux's 2015-2016 Head of Coordination and Operations Lauren Osmond and the then and current Head of Technical Support and Infrastructure Marc Beaulieu.*

All great things begin with an idea, and it is during this time that this article takes place—the moment of the intellectual incarnation of the Milieux Institute! The year is 2015, and the Institute is at its beginnings, nameless and without definite form; but, as Lauren Osmond tells us in a recent interview, “Milieux started incredibly quickly, and a lot of people were very excited about this new opportunity, this thing that was percolating in the hallways.” Lauren’s position, as she recalls, was “basically to say yes to everything;” to facilitate any and all projects and inspirations, and to negate any obstacles that should arise... all the while operating within a university. This, among many other originary and defining features, set Milieux apart and set it up for what it is today.

To begin, why the name? Milieux, after all, is just a place (with an x that marks the spot!), but it’s a word that best defined what the Institute was envisioned as—a meeting ground for people from diverse disciplines and practices—and was dreamed up by our very own Lynn Hughes, who came up with it after rigorous and long meetings with every single member to find a name that best suited everyone (another important part of the Milieux ethos); and then, the x was added “to make it kind of sexy,” which we’d like to interpret as also maybe mysterious, and to which we are flattered.

Next, the space had to be created from the ground up. Located in what had essentially been the Concordia branch of Hexagram, Milieux made decisive changes in layout (for instance, it no longer had a reception or check-out desk, but a meeting area that soon became the core of the Nerve Centre), and in approach—the all-important “open-door policy” instituted—radically changed the space both physically and conceptually. Milieux was henceforth a place for meeting and a place of exchange, where researchers and practitioners from divergent backgrounds and approaches could have conversations and find these nodes of commonality and inspire each other’s work. As Lauren says, “It was really hard before Milieux to know who was part of anything until after the fact, until after the project was done or the research was published.” The motto, following this, was: “Let’s break down the walls and make these spaces really transparent.”

Marc Beaulieu remembers playing ‘movers’ post-5 PM: “After a workday, we would get together and just move furniture around to new cluster spaces in order to kind of concretize these imagined places, try to coax it and set it up: “Look, it’ll be good!” It was a lot of pushing the idea and helping form it.” All the while, these very same clusters were attempting to find their identities and names as we assisted in the physical manifestations of them—what became operative in this is the White Board Wall in the Nerve Centre. Here, clusters were able to name, rename, and define themselves, with members invited to write their names wherever they saw fit. As years have gone by, the Board has had revisions and reconstructions, but remains a permanent fixture (in flux) in the Centre, the cluster anchor to the Institute’s meeting grounds and a testament to our work model and ethos.



# In the Beginning, There Was Hexagram...



*The Hexagram Archive Project by Professor Emerita Barbara Layne  
(Former Textiles & Materiality Cluster Co-Director, founding member of Milieux)*

Before Milieux — a space — there was Hexagram — a shape. This first project had aims that were, in some senses, similar to that of ours: an institution that would serve as a connection point for researchers and artists, in this instance from different institutions (notably Concordia and UQAM). It all started in the year 1999, when Barbara Layne (Associate Dean of Research at the time) had started sketching out the ways that the fine arts could be approached with the same academic rigor normally applied to the sciences. The result was a research-creation approach (a term that was not *de rigueur* in Canadian academia as it is today), with a proposed form of experimentation, adopted aesthetics and deliverables.

*"We were late at getting digital technology here at Concordia, and there wasn't funding to be able to outfit new labs through existing educational budgets. Dean Christopher Jackson asked me to investigate research avenues that could support new technologies in the Fine Arts. [...] Research-creation was a new language and a new arena for most of us."*

Layne started bringing together faculty that was also interested in taking part in the development of a digital arts/research centre for the University. The Quebec government heard about the plans, and let Concordia know that UQAM was also developing something similar, and that they would not fund two projects that were so similar. It was suggested that Concordia and UQAM work together, and from this was born Hexagram.

Hexagram's first physical space on the Concordia side was in the former storefront bank of the GM Building, as captured by this iconic image of Layne, Ingrid Bachmann, Lynn Hughes and Bill Vorn in "The Vault" taken for Concordia Magazine. This originary space housed the first steps of the institution, working with minimal stores while trying to concretize the conceptual. Things sped up when Hexagram moved to "Hexota" (Hexagram above the old Toyota dealership on Saint-Catherine Street), where the institute welcomed additional researchers and technicians. With more hands on deck and more resources at hand, projects began receiving funding through the institution, which led to a serious expansion of innovative research capacities.



The final form of Hexagram was in the two top floors of the at the time brand-new EV building in downtown Montreal, chock full of bewilderingly impressive technology, labs and an experimental Black Box space in the basement, all of it fertile with the promise of ground-breaking approaches to cutting-edge ideas.

Several years ago, Hexagram was reimagined to become a large Research Network, and continues to be a joint project of Concordia and UQAM, along with the collaboration of several other universities. The recently retired Layne has been tying up loose ends before her departure, and has assembled and organized important historic Hexagram documentation that she felt needed to be preserved. Layne said:

*I created the archives since I had been so deeply involved with the organizational meetings and development of the original Hexagram project... I was the Principal Investigator of the CFI Grant and supported other funding initiatives that helped establish and operate the institute through its early years. I had collected three metres of file folders and as I was packing up my studio at Concordia, I thought, "I have to do something with this!"*

In the archive itself, Layne writes:

*This archive does not propose to be a comprehensive history of Hexagram, but consists of notes and documents I collected since the early discussions of a research centre at Concordia [University] beginning in 1999 until approximately 2007. They reflect the experience and perspective as one of the founders and as an active member of the Institute [...].*

A brief description accompanies the Hexagram archive outlining the 46 appendixes—documents related to events, pronouncements, contracts that were written between different universities and agencies, promotional material—that detail the absolute breadth of Hexagram as it was in its previous iteration. These documents are those that were only in Layne's possession, those that she intuitively held onto over the years, and are now a huge boon to us, documenting the history of what laid the groundwork (both conceptual and physical) for the Milieux Institute to come into being.





# Milieux



# Launch

*Excerpts from Bart's speech at the Milieux Launch Tour & Party*

What is Milieux?

So what is this thing? Maybe it is not immediately clear. You can look around you and see familiar faces who have been working together for years and you are standing in familiar spaces where so much outstanding scholarly and artistic production has taken place already. What is new of course is that the world is changing more rapidly than ever, and universities must engage at a pace and in ways shaped by many different external forces. Universities worldwide are finding new ways to intervene, and we are part of this. We should all continue to debate and fight about the terms of these interventions, but Milieux is first and foremost a Concordia University-based organizational structure designed for intervention by the researchers, artists, designers, scientists and engineers that compose it. We are going to make a difference not just with our research productivity but with how we engage others in what we do.

Ed Cowen had a nice little piece in the Globe and Mail yesterday talking about the importance of Canada's creative industries and the need to facilitate and support public sector R&D in this area. "While we are just 15 years into the digital millennium," Cowen writes, "it is crystal clear that creative and innovative uses of technology are essential to our future sustainable economic success. That much we all know already (even if the support is hard to come by) but it is the non-economic benefits of R&D in arts, culture and technology that will help secure long-term prosperity for diverse populations." I am not sure why no one will say it exactly but one thing we all need to take very seriously is that someone needs to be making things that are not for sale. On purpose. This is a key part of a proper entrepreneurial ecosystem for university research. We must be able to pursue the riskiest of ideas and projects in permeable but supportive and protected spaces. The spaces have to be permeable so that researchers can respond to changing conditions in the world, but our spaces should be supportive to encourage our students and faculty to collaborate and try new things and they should be protected from socio-economic forces which condition R&D in other sectors. This crowd does not need to be sold on this idea, but we have some work to do in developing organizational structures that can respond to, and interface with, the rest of the cultural economic ecosystem.

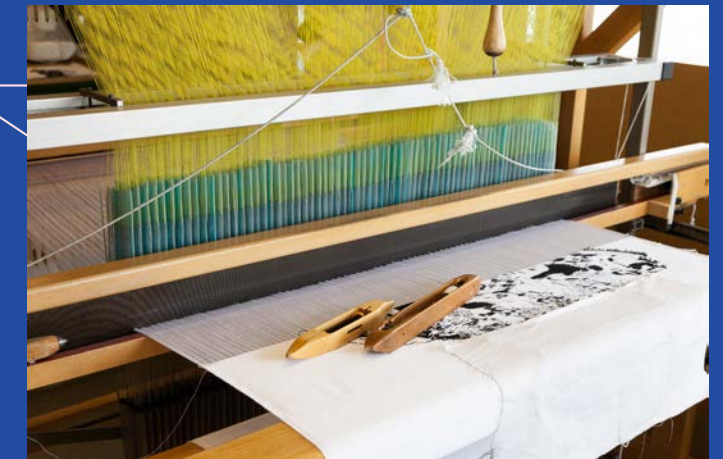




Milieux is our own homegrown model for doing research-creation in arts, culture and technology at scale. We are rigged to engage with diverse publics, digital media and creative industries, arts and culture organizations, policy institutions and business strategists while also facilitating a diversified portfolio of dynamic projects bringing new ideas, technologies and experiences into the world. I am a sociologist by training but there is a truism I learned from designing digital games with my colleagues. No matter how brilliant an idea is for a game, no matter how critical or innovative the design, no matter how perfect the demo, none of that potential can be realized unless the game is played (not sold; played). All the meaning, and all the value rests in the shared experience of the thing. If there is a motto for Milieux to start with perhaps that is as good as any other.

Thank you all for coming. It's an exciting time and I look forward to finding out what we will all be able to do together.

Let's do this!



# What ever happened to...

## A quick Q&A with Marc Beaulieu

### **The Performance, Immersion and Interactivity cluster?**

One too many letters — PII? The thing about Milieux research clusters is that they can fail. They are transient. As interests shift, cluster populations decrease, they will go under, so to speak, and from here new ones will emerge with new research interests. This is at the core of the institute model of Milieux.

In this case, however, the cluster was perhaps too large with interests too divergent to work? Or maybe it was just the wrong mix. The cluster did not survive the first year and was disbanded, and a new cluster was formed by Tagny Duff & Orit Halpern with about half the PII cluster membership. Within a year this new cluster, Speculative Life, emerged with a new focus, and many of the remaining ‘orphaned’ researchers from the defunct PII cluster that did not join other existing clusters would later form LePARC, the Performing Arts research cluster.

### **Ok... So what's the deal with Hexagram?**

Which one? No, but seriously – to clarify... Hexagram of the late 2000's was a Fine Arts research institute at Concordia, which housed researcher and equipment labs and facilities. Within that was the Hexagram Research Centre, which is now essentially the four research clusters; Textiles & Materiality, Post-Image & Speculative Life and LePARC. Hexagram has been reinvented several times over the years to secure new funding (as grants run their course), and to suit ever-evolving research goals. In 2011, Hexagram was renewed as a multi-university Research Network, and has continued its evolution in this form. Full details on the history of Hexagram, can be found on their website: [hexagram.ca](http://hexagram.ca).

### **What about the laser cutter (& other equipment)?**

The laser cutter, 3D printers and scanners that were part of the old Hexagram spaces live on as part of the Fine Arts CTC shops on the 8th floor of the EV building in the DigiFab Lab. No new cluster emerged in the formation of Milieux that had this type of fabrication as a core need. The only equipment that remained from Hexagram when Milieux was created was what was crucial to a specific cluster's research. All other equipment is managed by faculties, who maintain staffed equipment depots. The Textiles & Materiality cluster & the Post Image research clusters both maintain their own equipment from the early Hexagram grants as they are highly specialised tools vital to the clusters' research goals.

### **Ok last one, so what about Pause Button?**

Oh – Pause Button? I really want to see that one picked up again! Pause Button was a quarterly-ish online publication of curated student-written articles about the research at Milieux. Students & researchers writing about their peers' work and other research interests and was a great success. I think it's the time-commitment for the editor that got it in the end. I don't know, I guess I'd like to think it's just on hold (pause – ha!) until someone is able to commit to helming the project.

# Pause Button

*We are called upon now, more than ever, to engage diverse publics with our scholarship. This is not simply a neoliberal boondoggle or a call to make ourselves accountable, but a renewal of the vocation for public engagement, dialog and critique. A renewal of the idea of the public university and of the desire to be public.*

So begins the introduction to Pause Button, the short-lived online journal produced by the Milieux Institute that had as its core motive to disambiguate academic language and act as a bridge between institution and everything beyond its bounds. With topics ranging from the Abject in dairy, the Uncanny in fabric, and the Archive in the social (media), Pause Button loosened the linguistic grip on research-creation and made its appeal to graduate students to speak their minds online and in the slideshow format.

*At the core of this renewed desire is the need to speak and to be heard. To communicate, not for the sake of our academic disciplines (for which we require specialized languages), but for the sake of dialog across disciplines and engagement beyond disciplines.*



The hybrid journal ran for two years, and produced a total of four editions, becoming the harbinger (as it promised) of “hybrid careers, public scholars and graduate sustainability,” with researchers and founders/organizers such as Eileen Mary Holowka embodying the review in their ongoing pursuit and development of ideas posited first in Pause—with, for example, her article Participatory Making indicating the importance of community and online word-of-mouth later pursued in What is endometriosis? Patients turn to social media for information and support (published on The Conversation, and part of Holowka’s PhD research).

*Pause Button is an experiment that aspires to reclaim public scholarship as a core function of the university. It works through our desire and need to collectively speak and be heard, as well as to listen. Pause Button is an experiment in creating something more than just another communication platform, something that breaks free from being just another blog and has the potential to evolve beyond its current platform.*

Though Pause Button, is no longer, the ethos continues within, without and through the walls of the Milieux Institute, a place that strives to look outward and bring together; as PB underlines: “It will not do to Speak to Ourselves.”



# Event Milestones

July 1st, 2015 is when it all began. Months of working to get things organised, restructuring lab spaces and organizational ideas. In early 2016 an external consulting group came onsite and started in-person interviews with all researchers and students already involved to begin the process of learning about who we were collectively, to generate exercises and to stimulate discussion to create a unifying name for our new institute.

We launched in March 2016 with the name Milieux, a name developed to emphasise the sense of community and space for encounters (both physical and metaphorical – and now too virtual). The opening tour and launch party attracted a lot of interest from Concordia and the larger community.

Milieux's first high-profile guest event was the Massimo Banzi Making Event on September 29, 2016. Massimo conducted a masterclass for a small group of applicants and gave a talk to a larger general audience followed by a reception.

In September 2018 the campus exhibition Taking Care at Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria, was organised through Hexagram and a large group of students from Milieux were involved in the setup and exhibition of works and talks. Later, in October, we held our first large-scale on-site exposition of work, the Sights of Feeling Expo.

That November, after a solid year of planning, Milieux hosted the Montreal Mini MakerFaire, though it was hardly mini. Spread out on several floors, taking over the atrium and the black box, the faire saw over 70 exhibits, and estimated attendance of over 3000 and hosted a conference in the following days. Kid Koala even DJed a robot-dance party in the Black Box too.

In 2019 our big event was the milieuXbauhaus Festival, held from November 5-14, where we hosted a book launch, talks, workshops and group events including members of all research clusters.





The magic of Milieux is when there is enough going on that interactions and encounters happen all on their own – people and ideas meet.

I can still recall a few years back on a snowy Wednesday, there were three separate exhibits onsite. Maya Hey from the Speculative Life Cluster presented 'Engaging with the Microbial Other' in the Atelier, where she had ferments and prototypes to see and taste. Participatory Media's Darian Stahl was exhibiting pieces from her work 'VITAL' in her Cluster's commons. And Post-Image's Matt Soar's Intermedia class took over the 11th floor Atrium and Lounge to set up their end of term exhibit.

Later, at 4pm, Renée Tursi held an open interdisciplinary conversation looking at 'What's at Stake in How We Talk about "Intelligent" Machines & the Human' in the Resource Centre. Then, just after that at 6pm the TAG 'level-ups' continued with a Unity Workshop in a quickly transformed Resource Centre, and a full-house of Makers came out to the MilieuxMake Space for the 3D Design workshop given by the Participatory Media Cluster's Education Maker group.

On top of all of this, regular activities were happening in other spaces, including a meeting of members of the ethnography group in the Speculative Life Commons and the very first meet-up for the Textile and Materiality Cluster's newest seed-grant recipients to plan out their project 'The Bactinctorium' in the Milieux Speculative Life BioLab.

December 6, 2017. Planned events, spontaneous conversations all coming together in our space – Milieux.



## Coming To Terms:

What's at Stake in How We Talk about "Intelligent" Machines & the Human



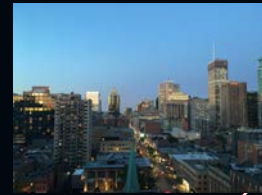
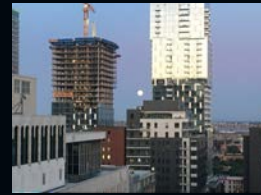
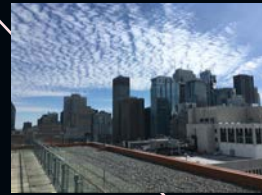
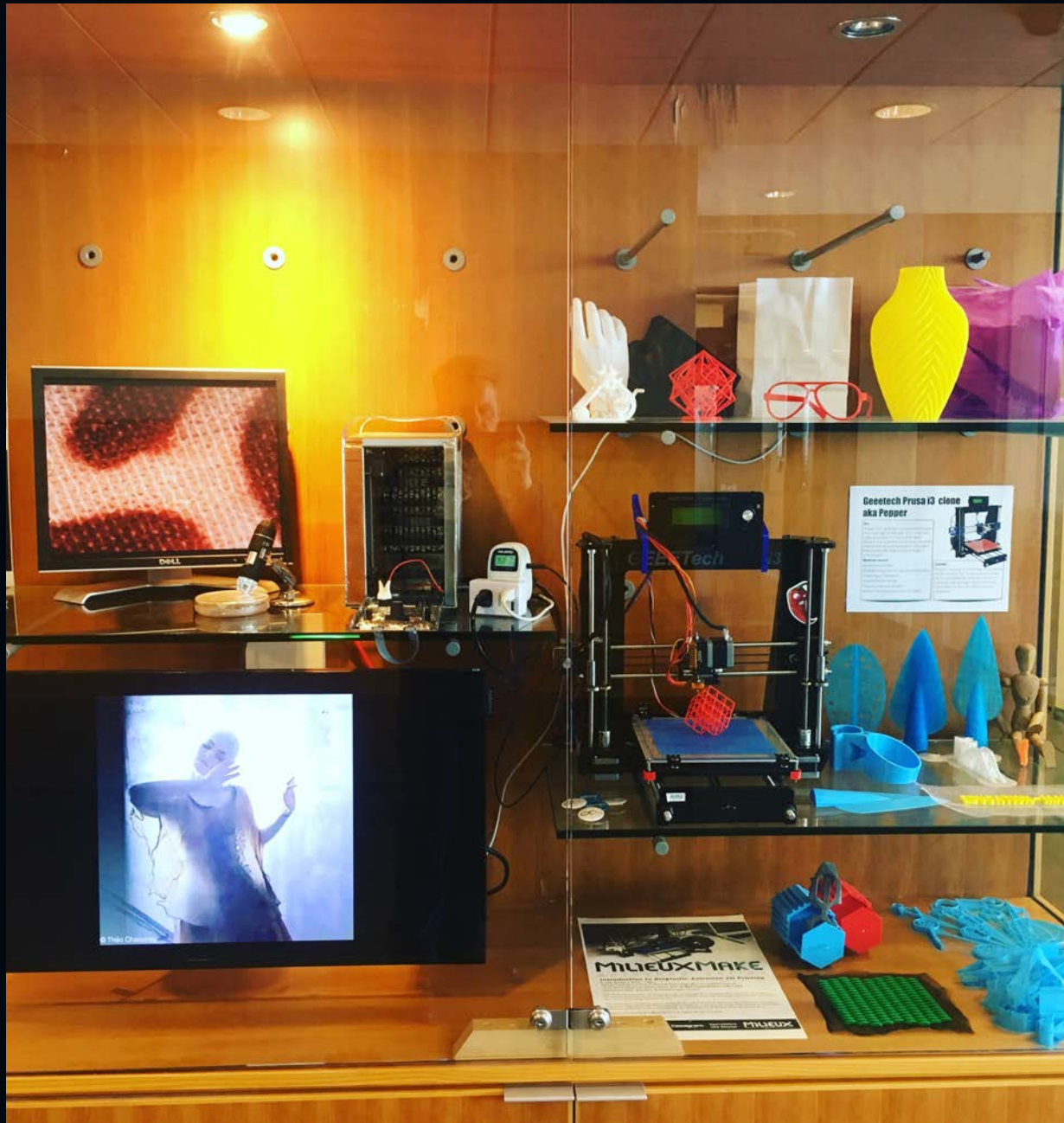


# Then



# now...







# **THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2020 - 2021**

# **THE PRESENT**



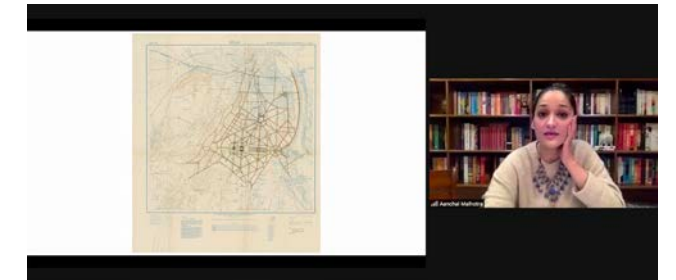
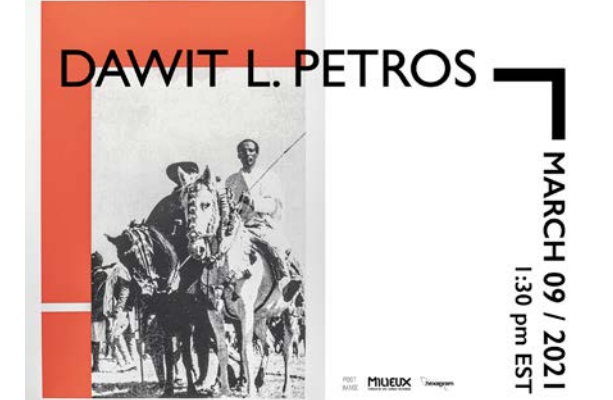
# Research in the time of Covid-19

The ongoing pandemic moved research from within the physical walls of the Institute to the virtual plane, beyond local spaces, time zones and other constraints. Members of the Institute continued to evolve their research methodologies, innovate their means of dissemination and found other means to community-make despite the contemporary challenges.

Though the Indigenous Futures cluster's AbTeC Gallery had existed as an art space on the virtual AbTeC Island for years, the pandemic saw it repurposed to become a site for group exhibitions for the research group. The gallery's inaugural exhibition 'Reformatted', curated by Skawennati, assembled artworks not necessarily intended for Second Life, so they had to be "imported, uploaded and sometimes digitally coaxed and cajoled," the works often becoming "reformatted versions of their original selves."

At the Post Image cluster, in-person artist talks that would have a regular draw of 20 to 30 people would bring in up to 100 people as online virtual events. This new format also facilitated hosting international artists and researchers as seen in Machine Agencies's AI Governance & Governmentality Speaker Series.

Onsite PPE mask research projects green-lit at the start of the pandemic, began to wrap up as Barbara Layne continued working with Ali Bahoul from Engineering and with the MITACS-funded project 'The Facemask Challenge' with Ann-Louise Davidson and several graduate students. With an exhibition on the horizon, Alice Jarry set up in the Speculative Life Commons to construct a large biomaterial membrane with her research team, and other projects involving air filtration and graphene resumed onsite in the biolab. In the Textiles + Materiality cluster the hum of machinery has resumed.



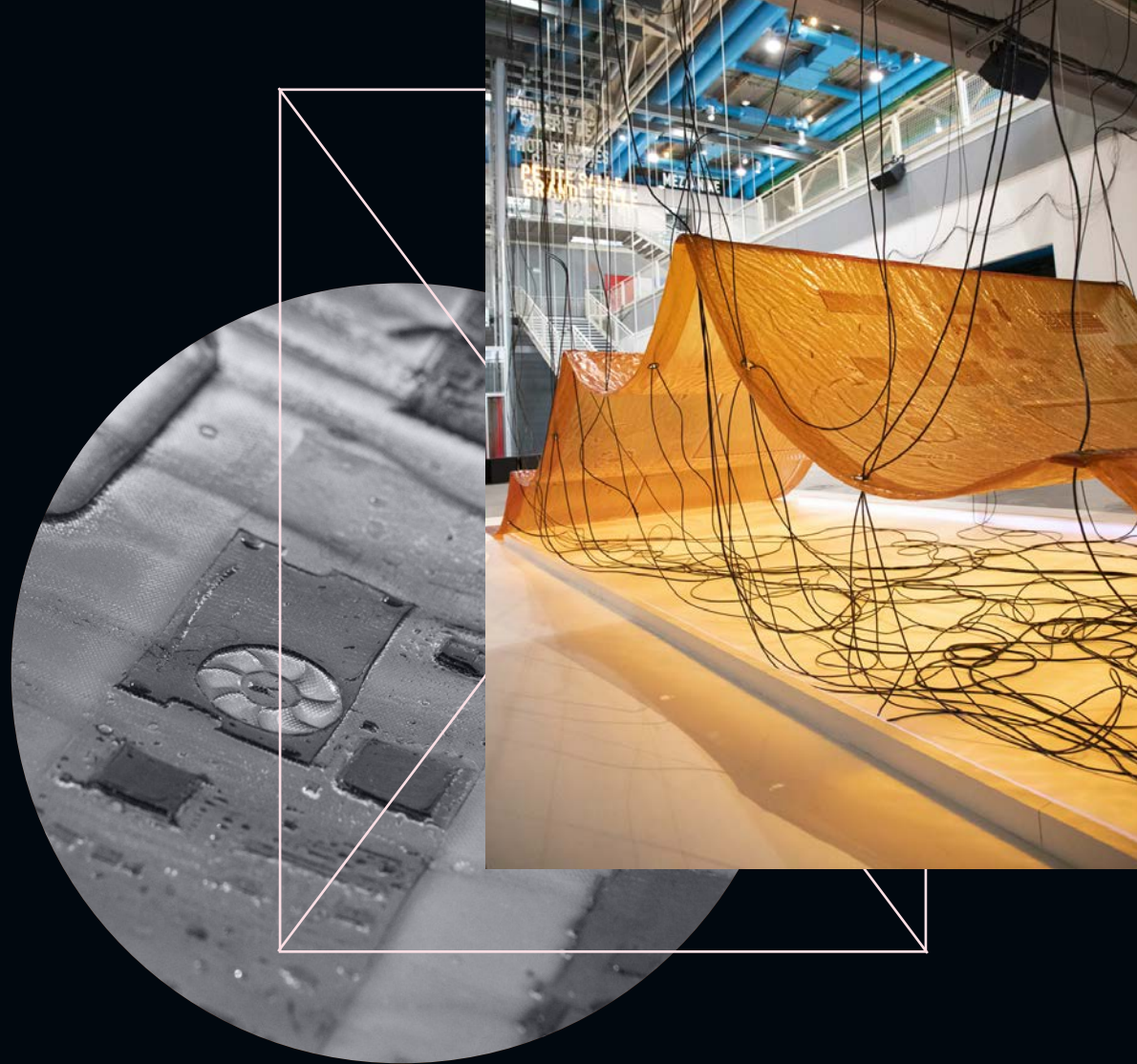
With research being reclassified an essential activity by the Québec government, more and more onsite research activities have resumed. Though zoom conferencing, webinars and discord servers remained a primary means of interaction for so much of the research within the Milieux community, the slow migration back into the research spaces slowly accelerated, with the beginning of more hybrid-style events on the horizon.

There are signs of life coming from all corners as researchers and graduate students begin to re-emerge and engage within the Milieux infrastructure as September approaches.



# Events

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



One of the high-profile projects to come out of the Milieux Institute was the SSHRC-funded *Fossilization*, led by Bio Lab Director (and Concordia's Research Chair in Critical Practices in Materials and Materiality) Alice Jarry. Project collaborators included: Marie-Pier Boucher, Samuel Bianchini, Alexandra Bachmayer, Maria Chekhanovich, Vanessa Mardirossian, Brice Ammar-Khodja, Didier Bouchon, Matthew Halpenny, Raphaëlle Kerbrat, Asa Perlman, Philippe Vandal, Annie Leuridan, Louise Rustan, Lucile Vareilles, Théo Chauvirey, Corentin Loubet, Joséphine Mas and Simon Paugoy.

The work—sprawling in nature—was presented at the Centre Pompidou in Paris during the Hors pistes festival, as well as at the Reprises des vues Conference. In the presentation for the Centre Pompidou, *Fossilization* writes:

A large transparent canvas seems to hover horizontally over the ground. Its bright colour is slightly animated by the fluctuating lights that shine through it. [...] Like a fossil from our own era, the counter-form of bare components (flat screen, cables, computer and its peripherals) is printed onto matter. But, image after image, this imprint disappears like the scale model of an open-pit mine being gradually buried.[...] The membrane is not only attached to the ceiling, it is also connected to the building via a great number of sensors, their visible and hanging cables deployed like tentacles searching for food, for energy.

For the construction of the project, Alice's research group took over much of the then-empty Speculative Life research commons space to form and set the large canvases, and to properly care for and dry them, and to construct the final project to ship to Paris for the Exhibition.

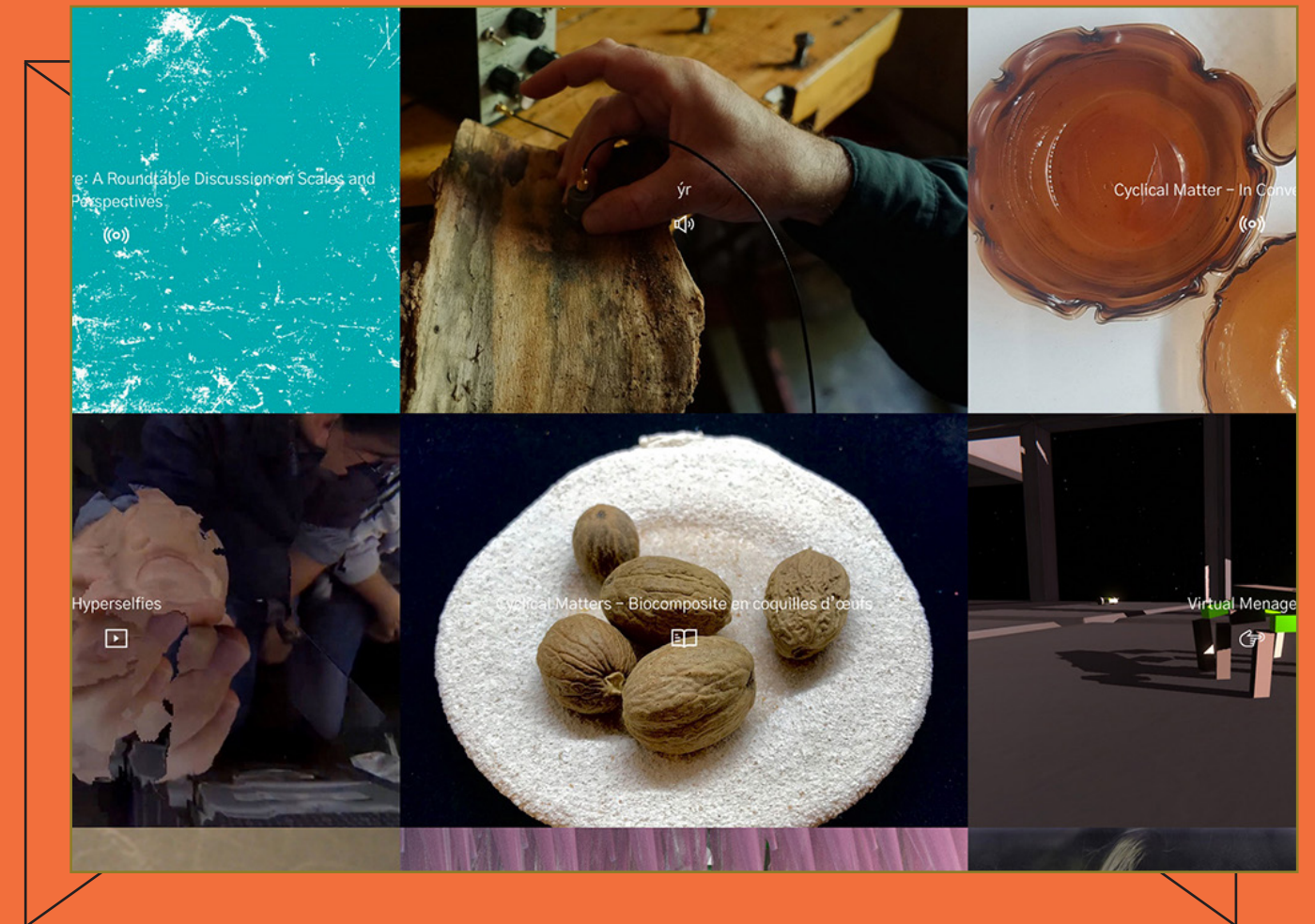


Another important event that Milieux members took part in was **ISEA2020: Why Sentience?** The renowned international festival called Montreal its home in 2020 and adopted a hybrid format, with conferences, workshops, artist talks, exhibitions and a mobile video art programming in person and online. The event brought together a rich and expansive array of artists, scholars, researchers, and those whose disciplines locate them at the intersection of all these approaches, many of which included our very own members.

Associate director Chris Salter was Academic Co-Chair of the event, Institute Director Bart Simon was a member of the Academic Committee & Indigenous Futures' Skawennati was a member of the artistic committee. Other participating cluster members and alums include: Joseph Thibodeau, Ceyda Yolgörmez, Marc-André Cossette, Alice Jarry, Suzanne Kite, Rythâ Kesselring, TAG co-director Rilla Khaled, Samuelle Bourgault, Speculative Life co-directors Orit Halpern & Jill Didur, Tony Higuchi, Ricardo Dal Farra, David Howes, Florencia Marchetti, Samuel Thulin, Renata Azevedo Moreira, Jean Dubois, WhiteFeather Hunter, Csenge Kolozsvári, Evan Montpellier, Allison Moore, Hannah Claus, Nelly-Ève Rajotte, Nien Tzu Weng, Alexandre Saunier, Ida Toft, and Nathalie Dubois Calero.

Hexagram's first Interdisciplinary *Symposium* was held online through moderated live talks, demos and pre-recorded content as well, which is presented now archived online. The symposium was conceived under the key concepts of distribution and sharing – sympoietic processes are expressed in collaborations, relations and co-extensions which have set this year's theme. Many projects from Milieux members were presented in different formats, focussing on Artificial Intelligence featuring works and talks by the Machine Agencies group and Sustainable Materials discussions and production demos by BioLab researchers (Cyclical Matters).

The Machine Agencies group produced a very successful and well-attended online seminar series with the theme Artificial Intelligence Governance and Governmentality, welcoming acclaimed scholars and authors Sun-ha Hong, Louise Amoore, Nanna Bonde Thylstrup, Johannes Bruder, Devon Powers and Christian Katzenbach. Dr Katzenbach opened the series in September, exploring how controversial facial recognition, digital contact tracing and content moderation shape the global governance of AI.





**Technoculture, Art and Games (TAG)** not only hosted an edition of GAMERella — the world’s longest running annual game jam focusing on supporting marginalized game creators and aspiring game makers—in November 2020, but a groundbreaking GAMERella Global in July 2021, in partnership with EA Motive. This edition distinguished itself by being the first international version of GAMERella, and took place entirely online, attracting game creators from 32 countries with a record-breaking number of 307 participants registered producing another record-breaking amount of 37 games!

**Indigenous Futures’** AbTec (Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace) collaborated with Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto for the ‘*A Thread That Never Breaks*’ exhibition, hosted virtually at the AbTeC Gallery. AbTeC worked with IFWTO to intermedate the work of seven Indigenous artists from around the globe. As well, IIF’s RA Shirley Ceravolo (aka Swarm) led a workshop at *Immersivité et Innovations Technologiques Conference 2020* in Second Life, where conference attendees were invited on a tour of AbTeC Island, shown how to customize a virtual avatar in Second Life, and given the opportunity to experience Swarm’s interactive performance piece *Multiverse Traverser*.

**The Post-Image cluster** presented the *TIDES* screening, featuring a selection of works from thirteen current artist members and collectives, programmed by members Jinyoung Kim and Zinnia Naqvi. The works explored the boundaries between still and moving images and were produced by both emerging and established artists working in experimental video, digital auto narrative, fiction, performance, and documentary. The screening—presented virtually over a period of two weeks, with weekly discussion meetings—acted as a connecting point between members and audience and allowed participation around the world.

The **Speculative Life cluster** presented their project, *The Mont Pelerin Rewrite*, at the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt’s 2020 Anthropocene Campus program ‘The Shape of A Practice’*, as a case study in the consensus building seminar stream, and in the public session *Between Spaces, between Lines*. The project — led by Orit Halpern, Karolina Sobecka and Johannes Bruder — is defined as “a performative and collective effort to imagine a different world than the one instilled by the political-economic ideology of the Mont Pelerin Society, governed by free markets, floating currencies, and deregulation.”



# 2020

**SEPT** **11th** / Immersive Reality Lab Open House 2020  
**15th** / Hexagram Sympoïétiques Launch

**22nd** / Exploring Virtual Reality: My first VR socially distanced exploration!  
**22nd** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series — Dr. Katzenbach introduces a framework for the contested informal governances of AI  
**24th** / [Workshop] The Merit of Making

**OCT** **6th** / Amber the Maker: Book Soft Launch @ 4th SPACE  
**8th** / Post Image Open Zoom House

**13th - 18th** / ISEA 2020: Why Sentence?  
**19th** / [Workshop] Drawing with Threads — Materializing Data  
**20th** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series: Dr. Sun-ha Hong presents their new book, Technologies of Speculation: The Limits of Knowledge in a Data-Driven Society  
**26th** / [Workshop] Tiny Worlds in Bitsy  
**29th** / [Workshop] The Merit of Making  
**29th** / [Workshop] Intro to Sokoban Puzzle Games

**NOV** **2nd** / [Workshop] Textile Quotes  
**3rd** / [Workshop] Your 1st platformer! (Construct 3)  
**5th** / In Conversation with Alex Custodio, Author of Who Are You? Nintendo's Game Boy Advance Platform

**5th** / RubyCoders First Meeting  
**6th** / Workshop: Interactive narratives workshop 101 (INK)  
**10th** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series: Dr. Louise Amoore presents their new book, Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Ourselves and Others  
**12th** / [Workshop] In the Loop: Introduction to Soft Circuits  
**12th** / [Workshop] Game Audio Basics  
**14th** / Kishonna Gray opens GAMERella:  
**14-15th** / GAMERella 2020

**16th** / [Workshop] Drawing with Threads — Materializing Data  
**18th** / [Workshop] Intro to Photogrammetry  
**19th** / [Workshop] Circuit Board Design  
**19th** / We Are Planets – HTMilles Festival: Workshop with Nathalie Dubois, exploring human cutaneous microbiota, microorganisms that populate our skin – from the epidermis to the hypodermis.

**21st** / Expanded Workshops - Bodies in virtual space - Alys Longley et lo bil · Hosted by Centre de Création O Vertigo - CCOV and Le PARC Milieux  
**22nd** / Ateliers Augmentés - Alys Longley et lo bil · Hosted by Centre de Création O Vertigo - CCOV and Le PARC Milieux  
**24th, 26th** / [Workshop] VR Basic Concepts and Development  
**25th** / [Workshop] Working from Home: Monitor Calibration

**DEC** **2nd** / [Take Heed — Mental Health and Wearable Development — Artist talk with Alessia Signorino, Isabelle Charette, Amélie Charbonneau, and Nina Parenteau

**3rd** / Cannupa Hanska Luger — Making Things Works across Material | Digital Realms Talk  
**8th** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series — Dr. Nanna Borde Thylstrup theoretical framework to understand the material, ethical and political implications of data reuse in AI  
**9th** / Abstraction Fashion: Seeing and Making Network Abstractions and Computational Fashions — A Thesis Discussion with Nicholas Shulman  
**11th** / Resistance AI Workshop @ NeurIPS 2020  
**11th** / Cataclysmic scenarios in 10 mini-operas  
**18th** / Human-Human composition experiment with lo bil  
**18th** / TAKE HEED — HTMilles Festival: an artist talk with Alessia Signorino, Isabelle Charette, Amélie Charbonneau, and Nina Parenteau

**JAN** **18th** / [Workshop] Drawing with Threads — Materializing Data  
**21st** / Artist Talk with Aanchal Malhotra  
**22nd** / A Walk in LePARC with Bar Altaras — Performance Screening and Q&A  
**25th** / [Workshop] The Merit of Making  
**29th** / How Do We Know Each Other? | Artist Conversation

**FEB** **1st** / Fossilation at the Pompidou  
**2nd** / Pechakucha for Undergrad Fellows

**2nd** / Miranda Smitheram and Suzanne Kite in Experimenta: The International Triennial of Media Art  
**4th** / Artist Talk with Shubigi Rao  
**9th** / [Workshop] Cyborgs of the Web — An Introduction to 3D modelling with Blender — with Anna Elyer  
**15th** / [Workshop] Unity — with Jules Deslandes

**17th** / A Conversation with Mäire Treanor  
**17th** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series: Dr. Johannes Bruder presents from his ongoing research into the science of machine learning and artificial intelligence  
**18th** / [Workshop] Exploring Virtual Reality  
**18th** / [Workshop] Fiction Writing  
**19th** / [Workshop] Kombucha at Home An Introduction to Fermentation  
**22nd** / Paper Making with Your Favorite Place - Instructor: Tricia Enns  
**23rd** / [Workshop] Drawing with Threads — Materializing Data  
**24th** / TAG Microtalks #4  
**24th** / [Workshop] Setting up a scene in Unity - VR  
**26th** / [Workshop] Textile Quotes

**MAR** **4th** / Symposium Three: Past and Future Interventions // Natural Dyes: Contemporary Innovations — Collective Bactintorium

**4th** / [Workshop] Making 360° projects in Unity - VR  
**8th** / [Workshop] The Merit of Making  
**9th** / Artist Talk with Dawit L. Petros  
**15th** / [Workshop] In the Loop: Introduction to Soft Circuits  
**16th** / Streams of Resistance - Black Bodies in Space-Time

**18th** / Artist Talk with Lisa Jackson  
**18th** / [Workshop] Interactive Animations in Unity -VR  
**25th** / Exploring Immersive Narratives in VR: A Case Study of Collaboration and Co-Creation  
**27th** / Arduino Day 2021  
**29th** / [Workshop] Tajima Under Pressure with Gen Moisan + Alex Bachmayer  
**29th** / TAG Microtalks #5  
**29th** / Artists Talk - Virtual Reality exploration at the cross-cluster Immersive Reality Lab

**APR** **1st** / [Workshop] VR Workshop Developing landscapes & scene lights  
**6th** / AI Governance & Governmentality Series — Dr. Powers presents from her new book 'On Trends'

**MAY** **17th** / [Workshop] Haptic Images  
**18th** / Guest Talk by GAMERella Award Winner — Team Bardz  
**28th** / [Workshop] Drawing with Threads — Materializing Data

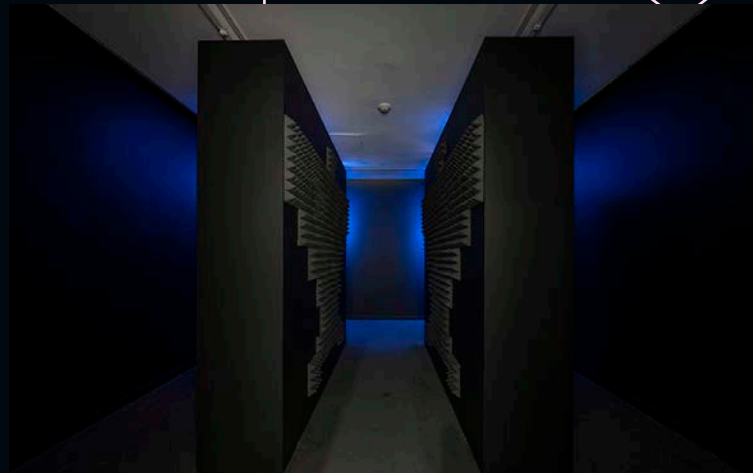
**JUN** **4th** / [Workshop] In the Loop: Introduction to Soft Circuits  
**4th** / [Workshop] The Merit of Making  
**6th** / [Workshop] VR Basics — Making 360° projects in Unity  
**17th** / [Workshop] Plug & Play with Yingxian Xiao  
**17th** / The Future of Textiles — Nehal El-Hadi in conversation with Miranda Smitheram @ Textile Museum of Canada  
**18th** / [Workshop] What Makes a Compelling Soundtrack? — Storytelling through Music With Emily Cheng [GISULA]  
**28th** / [Workshop] Textile Quotes  
**28th** / [Workshop] Character Design With Ying Ding

**JUL** **9th** / [Workshop] Developing landscapes, animations and scene lights for VR without coding in Unity  
**9th - 11th** / GAMERella Global

**AUG** **19th - 22nd** / Future Imaginary (4th Annual Symposium) Virtual Edition  
**24th - 5th SEPT** / MUTEK

**SEPT**

# 2021



# Exhibitions & Performance

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

September 25th – January 15th 2021: *Skátne Tíón:nis - Many Faces, One Mind*. Avatar Portrait Exhibition from 2019 POP Montreal with LOVE - Québec and AbTeC on display at the virtual AbTeC Gallery.

November 6th 2020 - February 14th 2021: *Sensory Orders*, Laznia Center for Contemporary Arts, Gdansk, Poland. Concept/Curators: Chris Salter and Erik Adigard.

February 1st to 14th, 2021: *Fossilation* installation at the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris as part of the Festival Hors-Pistes.

February 10th 2021 - April 25th 2021: Group exhibition *La machine qui enseignait des airs aux oiseaux*, at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal highlighted the work of Milieux members Scott Benesiinaabandan, Sandeep Bhagwati, Suzanne Kite, Surabhi Ghosh, Kelly Jazvac, and past members Marlon Kroll, Jérôme Nadeau, and Karen Kraven.

February 10th 2021 - June 27th 2021 - *Des horizons d'attente* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Skawennati, Hannah Claus, Andrea Szilasi,

February – March 2021: Post Image's Celia Perrin Sidarous' solo exhibition *Flotsam* took place at Galerie Bradley Ertaskiran (Montreal).

February 26th - 7th of May 2021 : Vanessa Mardirossian's exhibition, *Culture de la couleur: Une écollitératie du design textile*, at the École Supérieure de Mode (ESM) de l'UQAM

March 2021 – February 2023: INUA, the inaugural exhibition at Qaumajuq (formerly the Inuit Art Centre) at the Winnipeg Art Gallery was co-curated by Inuit Futures' Director Dr. Heather Igloliorte.

March 19th 2021 – January 30th 2022: Experimenta Life Forms: International Triennial of Media Art, is featuring work by Miranda Smitheram and by Suzanne Kite

March 24th – 27th 2021: Etta Sandry's Solo Exhibition Open at every turn at the Concordia MFA Gallery

April 15th 2021: LePARC co-presented the live, networked premier of Juanita Marchand Knight's mini opera *Mixed Messages, No Pants*, a four-movement 'improvisatopera' about pandemic job loss, artificial intelligence, and pyjama bottoms



# Publications

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Fenwick McKelvey from the Machine Agencies group at Speculative Life, co-edited with Joshua Neves Volume 21, Issue 2 of the academic journal *Review of Communication*, whose themed issue title was “Optimization: Towards a Critical Concept.”

The *Cultural Life of Machine Learning: An Incursion into Critical AI Studies* was published by Palgrave Macmillan, which includes chapters by Fenwick McKelvey, as well as Ceyda Yolgörmez and Speculative Life co-director Orit Halpern.



Early October saw the soft Launch of institute associate director Ann-Louise Davidson's children storybook *Amber the Maker* co-authored by with Elizabeth Lakoff, and illustrated by Alina Gutierrez.

Textile + Materiality's Miranda Smitheram co-authored with Frances Joseph: "Material-aesthetic collaborations: making-with the ecosystem," an article in the December 2020 edition of *CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, edited by Janet McDonnell.

Textile + Materiality's Barbara Layne is co-author of a research paper, "Leakage versus Material Filtration in Barrier Facemask Efficiency" with Ali Bahloul and Clothilde Brochot, published in the April 2021 issue of the *Health Journal*.



Coming out of the early Covid-era collaborative design project *Designing Efficient Face Masks*, Nathalie Dusponsel from the Education Makers group has published the instructable: “Making Better Fitting Facemasks With a Quick 3D Printed Frame” (<https://www.instructables.com/Making-Better-Fitting-Facemasks-With-a-Quick-3D-Pr/>) and RythA Kesselring from the Textiles + Materiality research cluster has published “3D Cloth Facemask Design for Improved Fit and Comfort” (<https://www.instructables.com/3D-Cloth-Facemask-Design-for-Improved-Fit-and-Comf/>).

Théo Chauvirey from the Speculative Life BioLab published the Instructable: DIY “Kombucha - Bacterial Cellulose Fermentor,” from the *Kombucha Machine* project with Ann-Louise Davidson. (<https://educationmakers.ca/project/kombucha-machine/>).

From the Education Makers group in the Participatory Media cluster, Ann-Louise Davidson co-authored with Nathalie Duponsel the article “Building a Makerspace in a Youth Center and Imagining Futures.”

From the Residual Media Depot in the Media History research cluster, Alex Custodio's book *Who Are You? Nintendo's Game Boy Advance Platform* was published in October.

Also from the RMD in the MHRC, AJ 'spoopy' Rappaport's *Melee is Broken: Super Smash Bros. Melee: An Interdisciplinary Esports Ethnography* was published in November.

Recently published photography book *Looking North* by Jessica Auer of Post Image is a collection of landscapes and encounters the artist had around Iceland during the time leading up to the 2020 global pandemic.



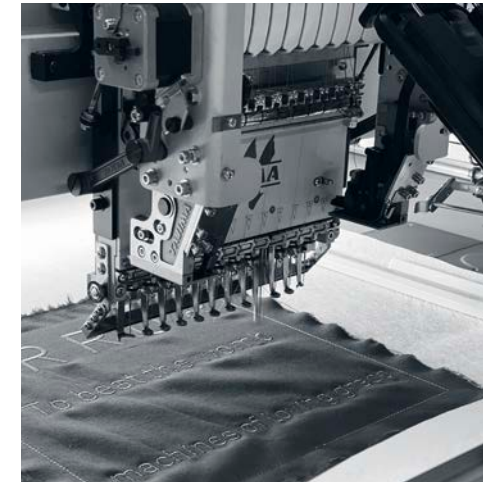
# Hands-on Teleworkshops

## HYBRID RESEARCH-CREATION WORKSHOPS

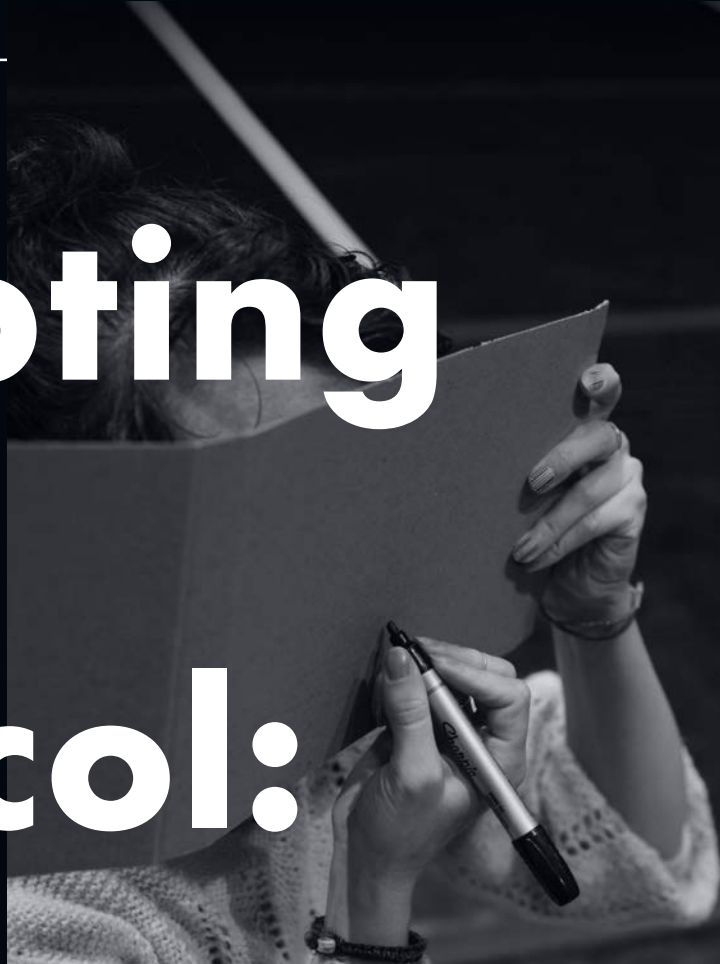
Milieux and its research clusters strove to keep the connection between the virtual and tactile alive despite pandemic restrictions for the combined 2020-2021 workshop programme. While several workshops could be adapted to be conducted by researchers and staff remotely from their homes, those requiring the use of the large immovable and highly specialized equipment at Milieux, like the Tajima Industrial Embroidery machine, required detailed considerations. After a months-long testing period, custom camera and equipment setups were installed in both the Bio Lab and the textile cluster (as well as a mobile unit assembled), in order to accommodate remote workshops needing onsite equipment to allow the participants to engage fully as though they were onsite with the equipment.

Genevieve Moisan's embroidery workshops at the Textiles and Materiality research cluster were a true hybrid experience as she balanced the software and hardware instruction needs with the hands-on experience of interacting with the machine remotely to participate fully in the act of creation, despite being at a distance. Using a combination of screen-sharing, remote logins for specialised software usage and a simple yet ingenious swing-arm clamp to broadcast from a cell phone, Genevieve was able to provide a fully realised "hands-on" learning experience. Participants were empowered to generate their designs, to select which threads and fabrics to use, and to be at the front for the entire preparation and production process. Though users would not literally be controlling the large equipment themselves, they would be fully immersed in the process and have a clear view of the machine in action producing their work that they had created moments before, experiencing the machines stitches, vibrations, reactions and possible glitches, to fully participate in the research-creation process.

As we head into a year where hybrid-learning will likely be the norm, we will continue to build on these and enable research in the areas of telepresence and hybridity.



# Disrupting Zoom protocol:



*Travelling inside and out with Alys Longley and Lo Bil*

*By: Lucy Fandel*

Within the spatial confines of Zoom protocol during the 2020-2021 year, artists were asking what our worlds might be like if we attended more closely to our internal motivations and the potential for play.

Forty artists and researchers gathered on November 21 and 22, 2020, to launch a new series entitled Expanded Workshops (Ateliers Augmentés). Some of them called in from small, socially distanced groups at studios, while others called from their individual spaces, all connecting virtually through video.

The screen became a tool and a toy, rather than just a site for the event. With guidance from performance practitioners and researchers, attendees worked to disintegrate the sense of passive physical cordiality that video meetings can impose. With a crown of bright virtual flowers floating on their head, dance artist and writer pavleheidler asked, “Can you continue doing what you want, simultaneously as you do what you have to do?” The question then begged, simple and fundamental: What do you want to do?

LePARC and the Centre de Création O Vertigo (CCOV) organized the new curatorial collaboration series. Cluster co-directors Angelique Willkie and Eldad Tsabary, co-curators Hanako Hoshimi-Caines and Nate Yaffe, and I, Lucy Fandel (coordinator of LePARC), invited performance practitioners and researchers to guide the sessions. They included lo bil (Toronto, ON) and Alys Longley (Auckland, NZ) with her colleagues Macarena Campbell, Máximo Corvalán-Pincheira, Eduardo Cerón-Tilleria, Rolando Jara (Chile), and pavleheidler (Sweden).

Combining in-person and virtual gatherings, participants were encouraged to try new ways of connecting to their bodies and one another. Throughout the workshops, the consideration of the disparate and storied territories in which we live and the participants’ connections across multiple time zones and continents gave the weekend a thrilling and disorienting sense of multidimensionality and borderlessness.

In Alys Longley and her colleagues’ workshop, language acted as an intangible bridge bounced across translations in French, English and Spanish, and invited participants to co-create through scores and experimental documentation with material: cardboard. Longley described the material as “both equalizing and accessible.” The cardboard



brought about practical and poetic reflections about packaging, global shipping, social unrest, touch, insulation for people without permanent houses, and much more.

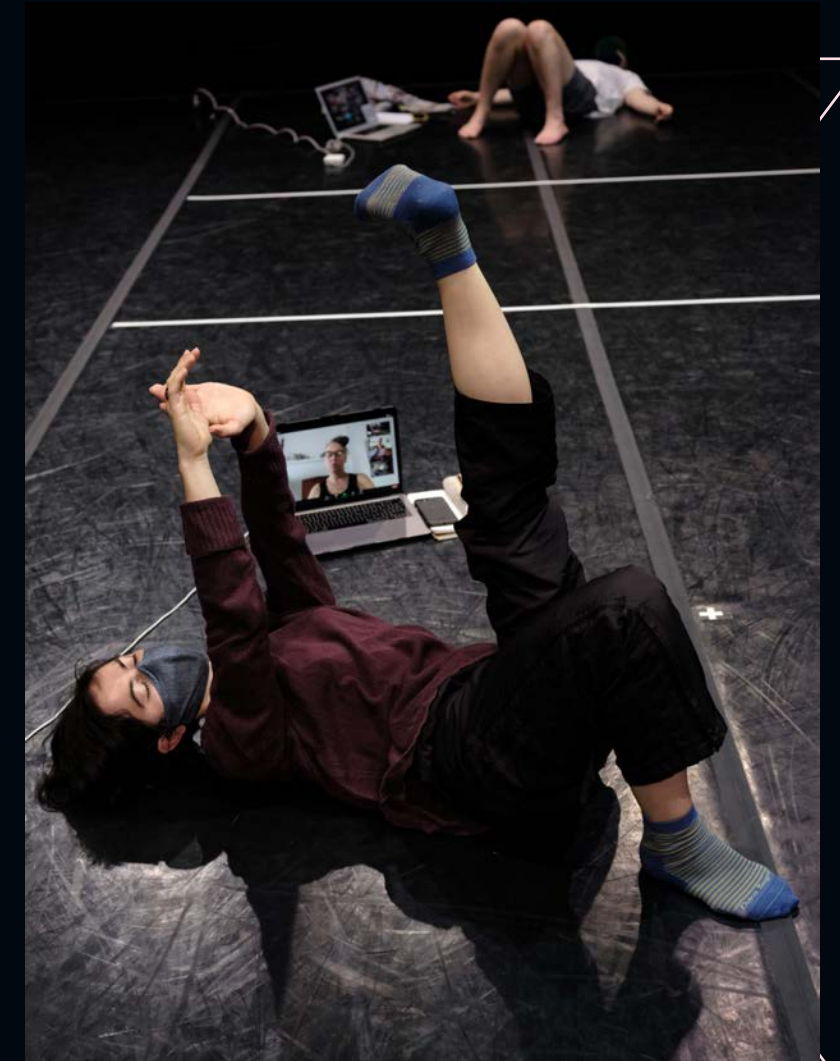
For Bettina Szabo, Uruguayan dancer and choreographer based in Montreal, the connection to artists of the global South helped her reflect on the impact of socioeconomic inequalities across global artist communities:

“It was especially significant for me to be able to connect with creators from South America...Some sent me private messages daydreaming about our facilities available in Canada. It really gave me a flashback to before leaving [Uruguay] and how I was romanticizing the opportunities abroad. As the collective mentioned, there is kind of an “inferiority complex” from South American countries, so called ‘third world countries’ that is a leftover of colonial discourse but still super present and engrained.”

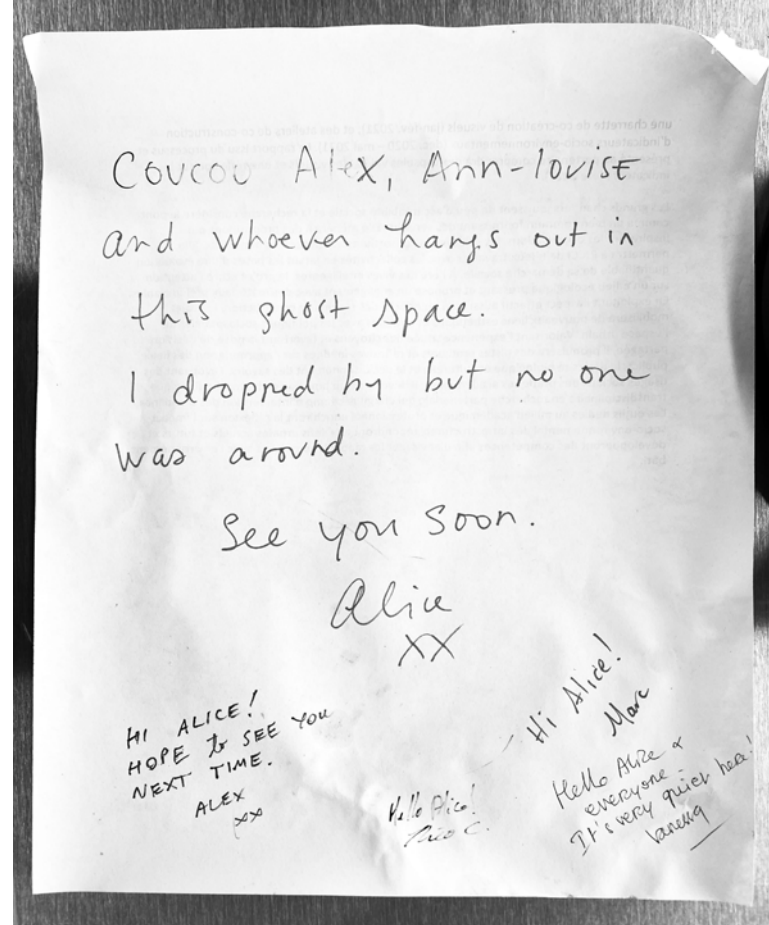
Her attention has since shifted to encouraging artists who are building local support structures in those countries, rather than sending solutions from the outside that reinforce the saviour-victim dynamic.

On November 22nd, lo bil’s workshop Human-Human: trialling ecologies of practice opened the spaces to experiments with attention, intention and pleasure. In such a protocol heavy space as Zoom, she guided participants into an awareness and a curiosity towards sensation and emotion unfolding internally. With people moving about both in the CCOV black box and in their individual virtual spaces, her proposal to reinvent the screen and camera as a liquid and messy place welcomed a vulnerable and playful state of not knowing. She asked participants not to be afraid of “pushing into one another and also being porous to one another.”

Tricia Enns, an MFA student in the Design program, said of the experience: “I was terrified and excited by the in-personness.” She described the mix of in-studio and virtual connections as a combination of weird, overwhelming and playful. “The second day since we were the only group gathered together in a studio, it felt sort of like being in a dance troupe for those participating virtually. It was slightly performative!”









# LOOKING FORWARD

## – 2021



# THE FUTURE



# Visions of a Future

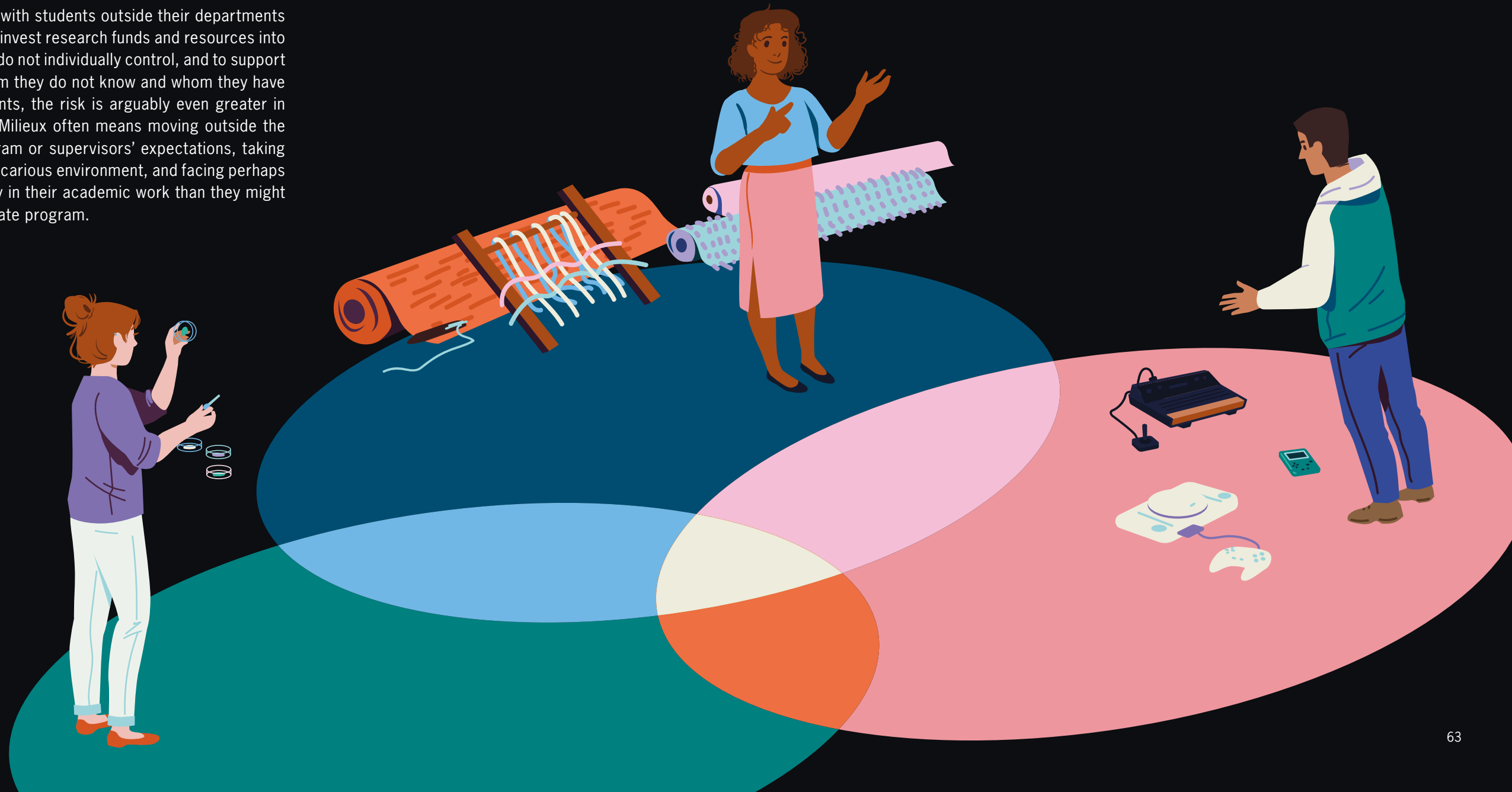
Words by Bart Simon  
Images by Natalia Balska

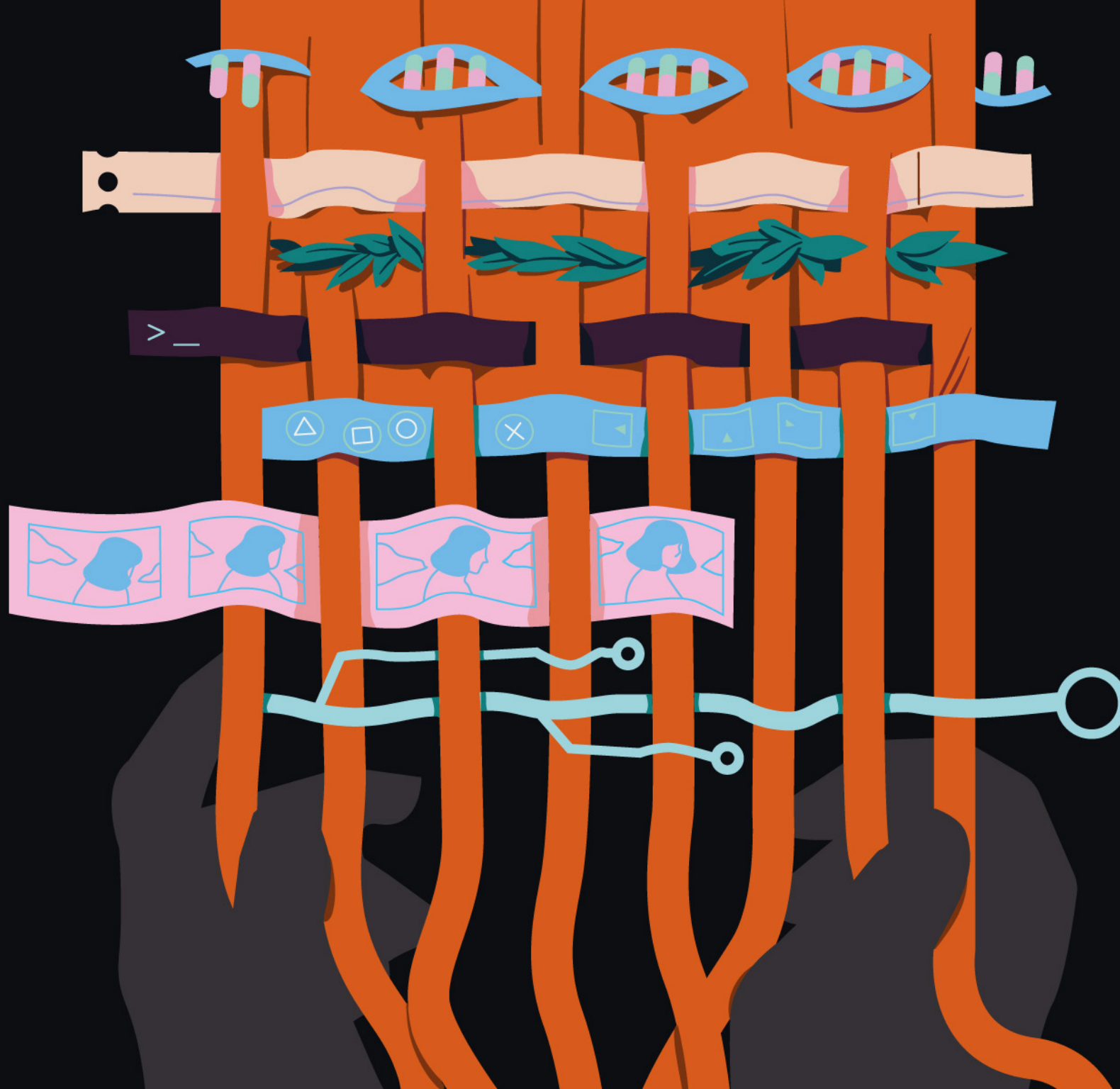
Milieux was created out of a collective desire for a kind of intellectual encounter which might fuel creativity, critical thought, and productivity in ways we have come to think of as not only rewarding and impactful but also fun. As a product of the voluntary labour and commitment of its original faculty and students, the institute has always been competing with the normal requirements of our professional careers. The roles and responsibilities of faculty and students in academic departments and disciplines are demanding, and they always exert a centripetal pull on institute members. There is always a pull on bodies to remain in departments or even to be working alone in pursuit of traditionally normative notions of academic excellence. There is a pull on commitment to attend to the seemingly endless array of tasks and meetings that have to be performed as a department member, and there is a pull on resources to support departmental and program needs and desires. Our story has been about attempts to counteract that pull and to cultivate different, and possibly more fulfilling, ways of being in the university.





What has emerged over the years are various members' attempts to balance that centripetal force by creating pockets of possibility where the exact value of any committed time or effort is indeterminate. It is a leap of faith for faculty to work with students outside their departments whom they do not supervise, to invest research funds and resources into lab and studio spaces that they do not individually control, and to support and encourage colleagues whom they do not know and whom they have no responsibility for. For students, the risk is arguably even greater in the sense that participation in Milieux often means moving outside the boundaries of a graduate program or supervisors' expectations, taking on extra labour in an already precarious environment, and facing perhaps more ambiguity and uncertainty in their academic work than they might otherwise in a traditional graduate program.





Institutes like ours are founded to conduct cutting edge research of a kind that could not be performed in other academic units as they are. As our legacy of annual reports have shown, we are most certainly meeting the mark on that front. Collectively across our clusters, we punch and tug at the boundaries of not just digital arts and culture, but we also continue to push, critique, and probe the epistemic hubris of the technical sciences and engineering, as well as the economic and corporate logics which that are defining our technological futures at an unprecedented rate. The stakes here are enormous, and nothing less is required than a redefinition and reorganization of technical knowledge, practice and application with deep artistic, social, and cultural studies understandings, methods, and values at its heart.

Looking forward, its not just a matter of what we do but also how we do it. Our organizational structure and ethos are just as important as the research we produce. The form and content of the research, and the structure of the institute are antipodes. As a kind of living lab, we are always reflecting, retooling and reimagining our structure and mandate; not just for ourselves but also for the sake of the university, We must publicize the successes and failures of our model.

The future lies not in a folding in on ourselves, or in a kind of protectionism; the idea that Milieux is some kind of bastion in an increasingly troubled academic environment. Instead, I think we will need to be more adventurous, and perhaps become even more porous by building our networks and relations outside the university and across academic and para-academic organizations. Milieux is already well-situated in terms of organization and infrastructure to be flexible and adaptable to collaborations and partnerships with different communities and organizations. It is likely that the future of graduate training and education lies in the ability of our students to co-produce relevant research with these communities even more than producing research for them.



At the end of the day this is our mission... the redefinition of what it means to do research, any research in an academic setting. To be useful and meaningful we can not fetishize research and research-creation as the purview of siloed academics, but rather frame our efforts as a set of methods for responsibly making sense of a complicated world with the many others who struggle to do the same outside of the formal university. Academic bureaucracy cannot succeed in this mission, so the work must be allowed to happen on the ground through the long term, patient and tolerant commitments of our students, staff and faculty. Milieux is one model for cultivating this, and now we look to join forces with others who see a similar future path.



# Looking to the Future





# Where are they now?

Transdisciplinary artist, former BioLab Technician and T+M cluster coordinator **WhiteFeather Hunter** is currently conducting research as a SSHRC Doctoral Fellow & Australian government scholar at SymbioticA, the University of Western Australia. WhiteFeather's research into creative tissue engineering involves stem cell isolation and serum extraction from menstrual fluid, intersected with feminist witchcraft.

**Maggie MacDonald** is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information, where she researches platformization of the pornography industry using the case of Montreal-based company MindGeek - the owners of Pornhub and over 100 other streaming porn sites. Lately, she focuses on digital methods and policy interventions to improve conditions for porn workers.

After her time as an **Andrew W. Mellon** Postgraduate Fellow (2019-2021) at the National Museum of the North American Indian at the Smithsonian in Washington DC, Lauren Osmond, the first Head of Operations and Coordination at Milieux has recently become Conservator and Assistant Registrar at the Textile Museum of Canada.

**Sofian Audry** from Speculative Life is now Professor of Interactive Media at the School of Media at UQAM and Co-Director of the Hexagram Network. After the release in 2021 of Art in the Age of Machine Learning, an MIT Press book that examines machine learning art and its practice in art and music, Sofian is currently working on multiple research-creation projects exploring AI-based art practices beyond human creativity.

Former TAG PostDoc **Lai-Tze Fan** is an assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo.

Former Milieux in-house designer **Vjosana Shkurti** recently left her position at the PHI as a Video Content Creator yearning to return to the Freelance life and is applying for funding for and directing a short-fiction-film "Mirare" in fall 2022. The film script received the Writers Guild of Canada prize for the best English film script at Concours Cours écrire ton court 2021 organized by SODEC.

After defending their doctoral thesis in March 2021, **Dr. Jess Rowan Marcotte** of TAG, founded the Soft Chaos Cooperative, which creates and consults on meaningful, playful interactive experiences. Jess has also continued their community organizing work through QGCon (the Queerness and Games Conference) and became an Ambassador for WINGS, which funds the projects of gender marginalized game developers.

Based in Vieux-Rosemont, **Nicholas Shulman** from the T+M Cluster is now working as an NFT (Non-Fungible Token) developer and (DAO) Decentralized Autonomous Organization contributor working in the emerging Web3 space.

From 'Indigenous Futures', former Skins Workshops Associate Director **Maize Longboat** is currently a Partner Relations Manager at Unity Technologies. He is also an active member of the Indigenous Game Devs community, a global group of Indigenous creatives working on and studying games.

Former T+M cluster coordinator **MJ Daines** completed her MFA at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College in 2021 and has been working as a lecturer in Visual Arts at Princeton since 2020.

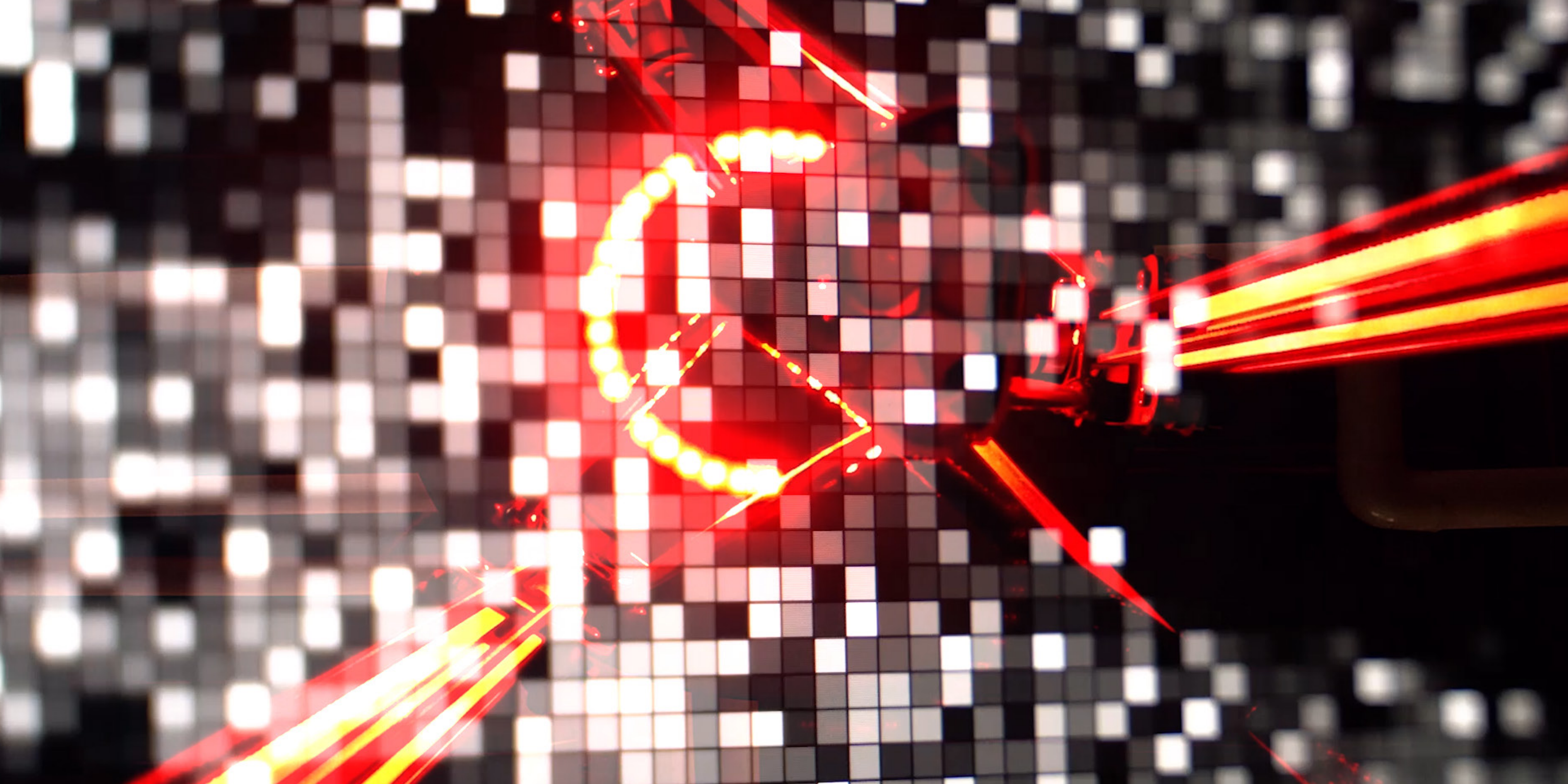
**Adam Van Sertima** is still teaching film and culture at Champlain College of Vermont's Montréal Campus, performing curatorial work with the Musée des Ondes Emile Berliner in St-Henri and is planning to resume doctoral studies in the near future.

Based in Toronto, **Élise Cotter** is Manager of Immigration Programs and Services at Collège Boréal, a francophone public college in Ontario.



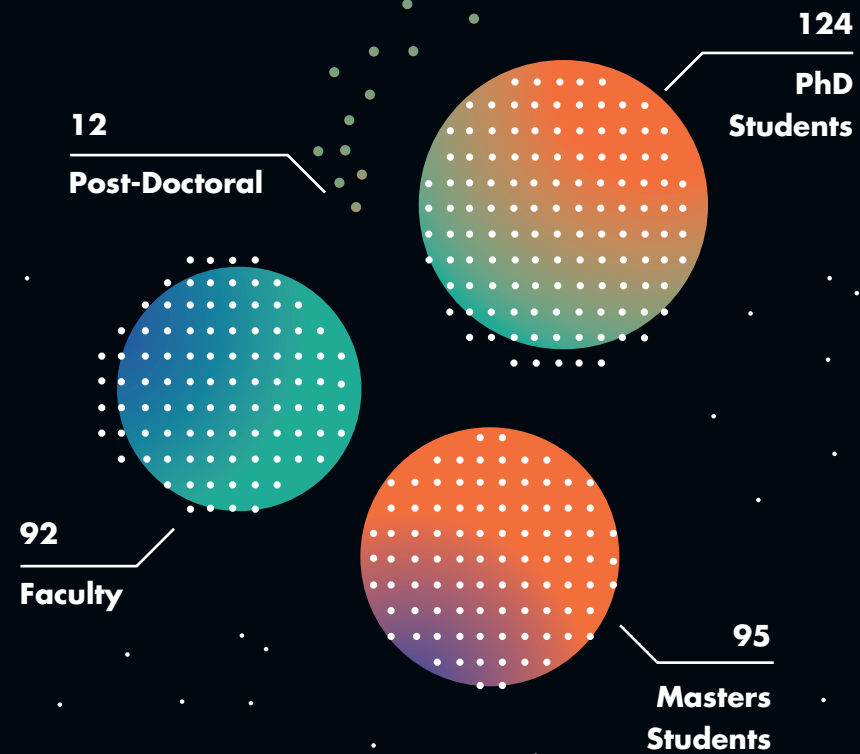




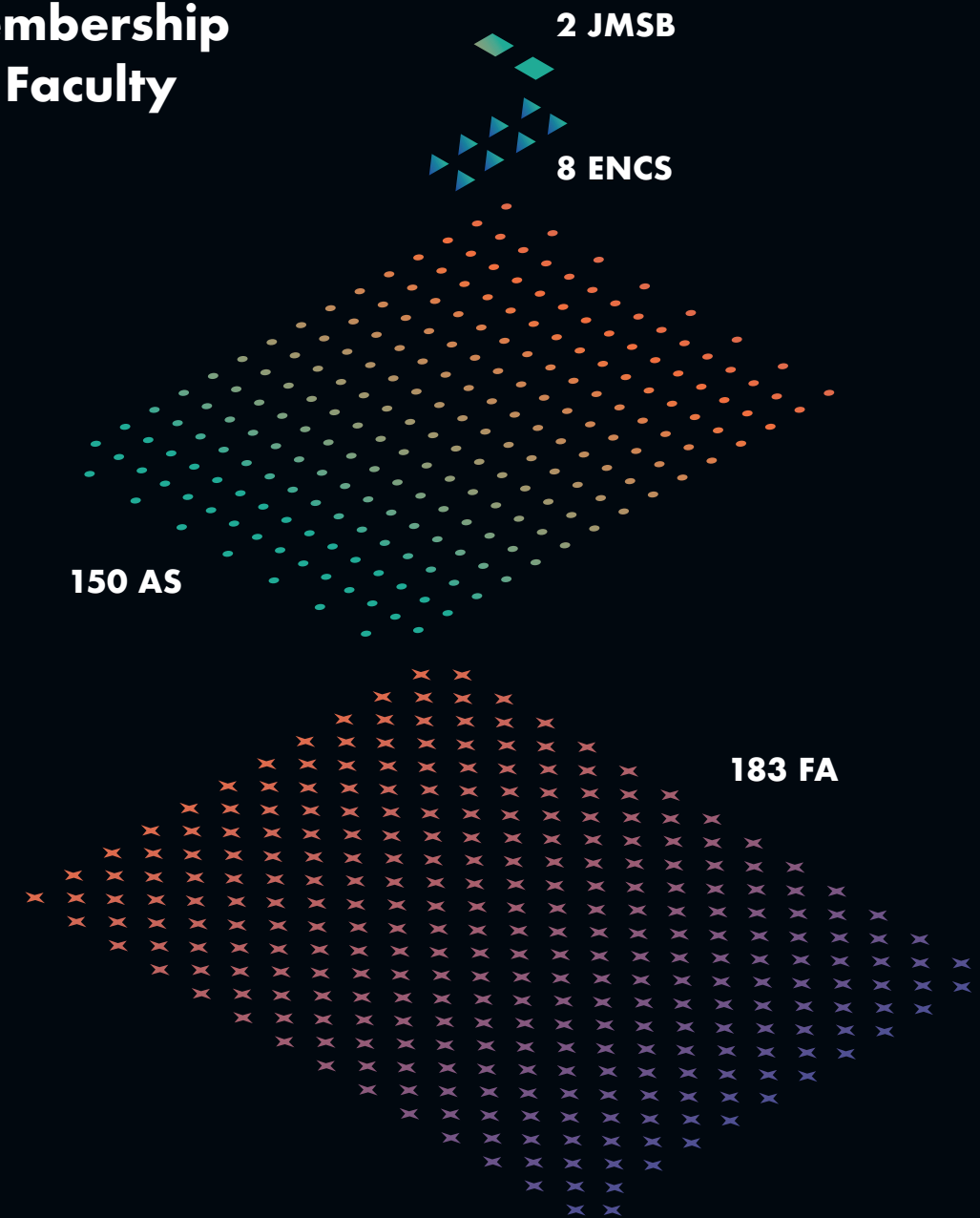


# Milieux 2020-2021: By the Numbers

**464**  
**Total Members:**

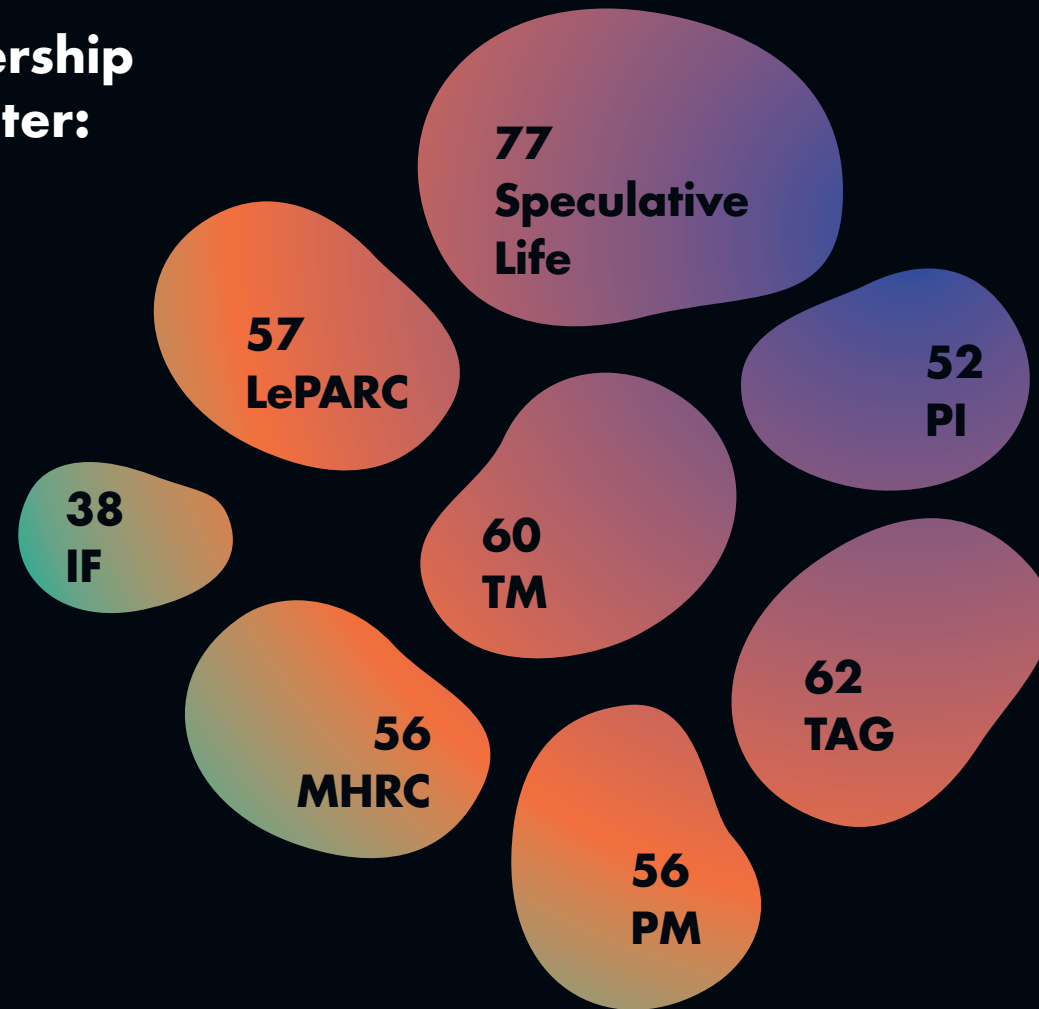


## Membership by Faculty





## Membership by Cluster:



## Research Profile:

Milieux researchers  
Mobilized:

**over \$2 M** in external  
Funding in  
2018-2019

## Engagement:



# Milieux Staff & Steering Committee

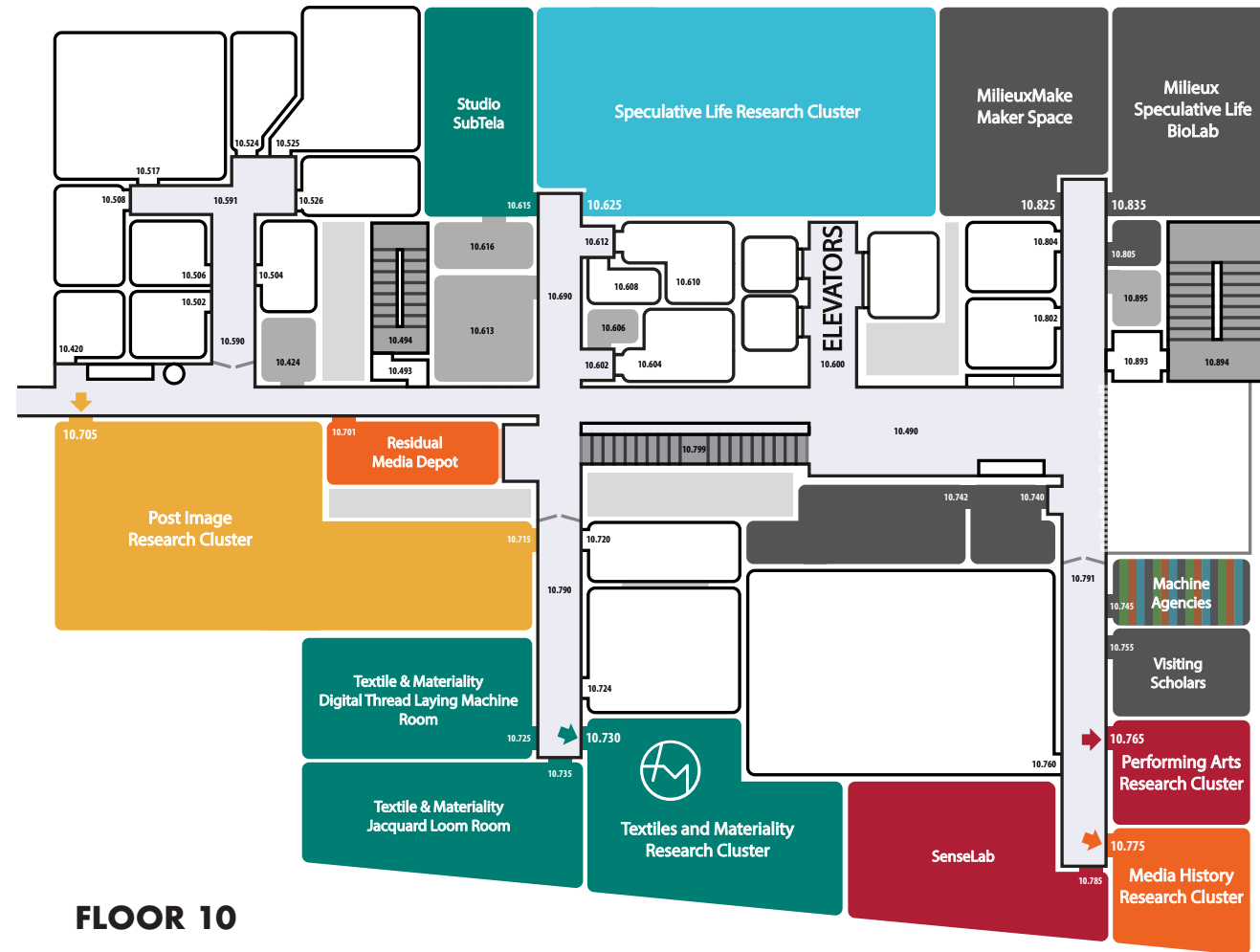
## Staff:

- Bart Simon, Institute Director
- Ann-Louise Davidson, Associate Director
- Chris Salter, Associate Director
- Harry Smoak, Head of Operations and Coordination
- Marc Beaulieu, Head of Technical Support and Infrastructure
- Danielle Douez & Stephanie Creaghan, Head of Communications
- Jennifer Muir & Etta Sandry, Administrative Support
- Brennan Mccracken, Communications & Social Media Assistant
- Matthew Raymond, Communications
- Geneviève Moisan, Textiles & Materiality Technical Support
- Marco Luna, Immersive Realities Lab Technical Support
- Alex Bachmayer, BioLab Technical Support
- Natalia Balska, Annual Report Graphic Designer

# Research Cluster Directors:

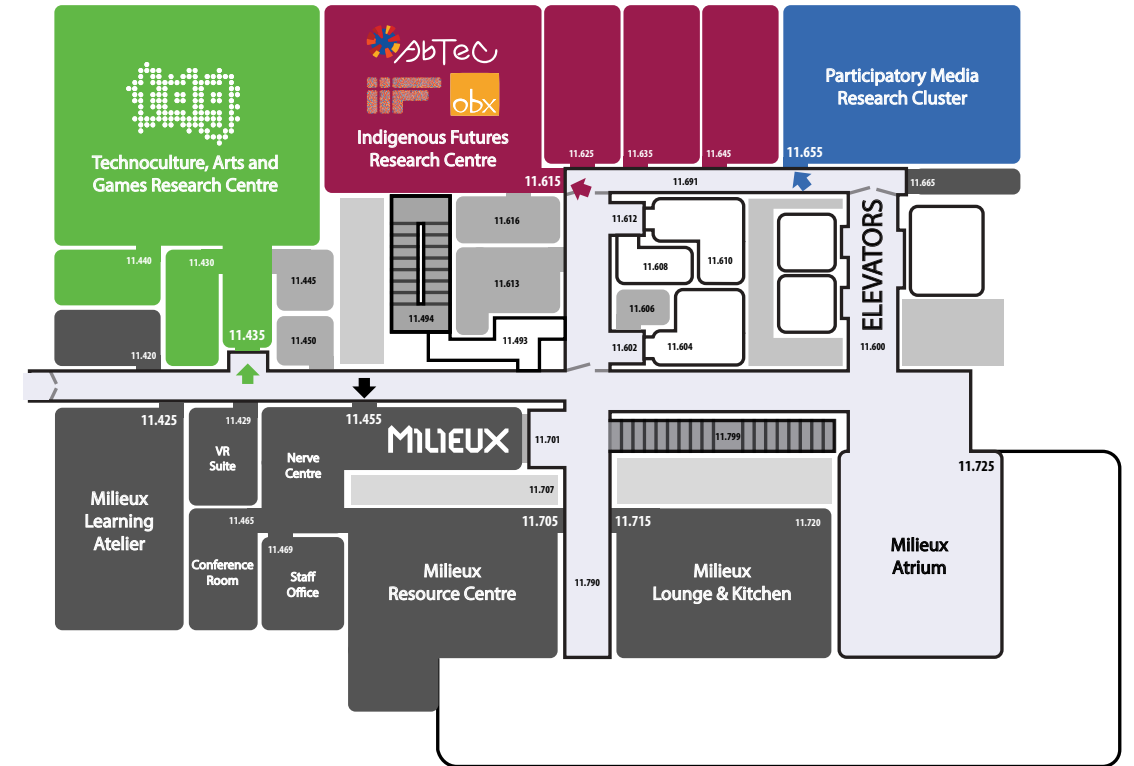
- Rilla Khaled, TAG
- Pippin Barr, TAG
- Haidee Wasson, Media History
- Peter van Wyck, Media History
- Jason Lewis, Indigenous Futures
- Heather Igloliorte, Indigenous Futures
- Orit Halpern, Speculative Life
- Jill Didur, Speculative Life
- Kim Sawchuk, Participatory Media
- Marisa Portolese, Post Image
- Dan Cross, Post Image
- Barbara Layne, Textiles and Materiality
- Kathleen Vaughan, Textiles and Materiality
- Angelique Willkie, LePARC
- Eldad Tsabary, LePARC





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**MILIEUX**  
institute for arts · culture · technology



FLOOR 11

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## MEDIA HISTORY

Fenwick McKelvey  
co-director

Jeremy Stolow

MYRIAM RAPA (PhD)

Darren Wershler  
co-director

ABBE 'SPOOMY' KAPPAPORT (BFA)

Kieran Airey-Lee (BA)

Stephen Monteiro

Jonathan Lessard

Michael Li Lung Hoi (BA)

David Price (PhD)

Yong Gao (PhD)

Rhonda Chung (PhD)

Bojana Krstanovic (PhD)

Ivan Ruby (PhD)

Nathalie Duponcel (PhD)

Ann-Louise Davidson

Nadia Naffi

Thomas Gauthier

Colleen Leonard

Shahram Lashan

TRISTAN MATHESON

Giuliana Cucinelli  
co-director

Kim Sawchuk

Ashley McAskill  
cluster coordinator

Laurence Parent (PhD)

Amel Louic (MA)

Constance Lafontaine (PhD)

Kristen Fells (PhD)

Magda Olszanski (PhD)

Carly McAskill (PhD)

Darian Goldin Stahl (PhD)

Antonia Hernandez (PhD)

Luciano Frizzera (PhD)

Scott DeJong (MA)

## PARTICIPATORY MEDIA

## TECHNOCULTURE ART & GAMES

Gina Hara  
coordinator

Jill Didur

(TAG)

Daniel Cross  
MARLON KROLL (PhD)

Christopher Moore

Pippin Barr  
associate director

Simon-Albert Boudesault (BFA)

Rilla Khaled  
director

JESS MARCOTTE (PhD)

SQUINKY (PhD)

ENRIC LAMOSTERA (PhD)

Rebecca Goodine (MDes)

Jessie Marchessault (MA)

Lynn Hughes

Ida Toft (PhD)

Sylvain Payen (PhD)

SKOT DEETHING (PhD)

Tony Higuchi (PhD)

## INDIGENOUS FUTURES

SKawennati

Victor Ivanov

Travis Mercredi

Tam Vu

Dion Smith-Dick

Jason Lewis  
co-director

Sabine Rosenberg

Mikheil Poulx

Roxanne Spiros

Maize Longboat

Jen Reimer

Sara England  
cluster coordinator

Kite (PhD)

## SPECULATIVE LIFE

Thérèse Chouinard

Martin Racine

Shawn Suyong Y. Jones (PhD)

Bart Simon  
institute director

Gabouelle Lavuie (PhD)

Cyda Soljémes (PhD)

DAVID HOWES

Kregg Hetherington

Eligah White (PhD)

Marie-Eve Drouin-Gagné (PhD)

Treva Michelle Pullen (PhD)  
cluster coordinator

Orit Halpern  
co-director  
(on leave)

Sam Zenderoudi (MA)

LUCAS LaROCHELLE (BFA)

WhiteFeather Hunter

Carolina Cambre

Vjosana Shkurti

Erin Manning

Celine Pereira

Matthew-Robin Nye (PhD)

## POST IMAGE

Velibor Božovic  
technical coordinator

Chih-Chien Wang

Qinghong Chen

Thomas Kneubühler  
technical coordinator

Marisa Portolese  
co-director

MATTHEW BROOKS (MFA)

Celia Perrin-Sidrans

Fiona Ann

Gwynne Fulton (PhD)

Katie Jung

Scott Benisunabandan (MFA)

Raymonde April  
co-director

Daniel Cross

Marc Luna Barahna

## TEXTILES & MATERIALITY

Kelly Jozvac

Genevieve Moisan  
technical support

Lianne Marchneau

p.k. langshaw

Joey Berzowska  
co-director

ALEX BACHMAYER (BFA)

Lauren Osmond (AR)

Ryatt Kaseking (PhD)

Fanny Savoye (BFA)

ANNA EYLER (MFA)  
cluster coordinator

Kathleen Vaughan

Kelly Thompson

Sasha Buruska

Kelly Arlene Grant (PhD)

Elizabeth Johnson (MFA)

Donna Legault (MFA)

Venessa Mandrossian (PhD)

Pati Tehlingarian (MDes)

Lea Schwaib (BFA)

Janis Jefferies (AR)

Barbara Layne  
co-director

## PERFORMING ARTS (Le PARC)

Eldad Tsabary  
co-director

HOLLY RYAN (MSc)

Ricardo Dal Farra

Angélique Willkie  
co-director

DANA BUGH (MA)  
cluster coordinator

Lucy Rodriguez

BEN COMPTON (BFA)

Luis C. Sotelo

ANDREA DIAT (MFA)

Andrea Peña

Meghan Riley (BFA)

