

MILIEUX

institute for arts · culture · technology

Annual Report
2024-2025



Milieux x <MTL> Connect Event |
Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque

From left to right: Hei Lam Ng, François Lespinasse, Kamyar Karimi, Poki Chan,
Sabina Rak, Dorsa Armand, Maxime Perreault, Destiny Chescappio

Territorial Acknowledgment

We would like to begin by acknowledging that 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 gather today. 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.

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Director's message



In 2024, Concordia University signed on to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. An international effort that has been building momentum since 2012, DORA puts forth a series of recommendations and best practices to recognize and expand our collective understanding of research assessment and impact. Academic research has been notorious for being esoteric, out of touch and myopic in terms of our predominant focus on narrowly framed peer-reviewed publication as the be-all and end-all of research impact. While DORA is focused mainly on the historical limitations of research in the natural sciences in this regard, it also sheds light on the ability of research-creation as interdisciplinary methodology to open up the problem of engagement and impact in unique and productive ways both for the natural sciences and engineering, and for the arts, social sciences and humanities.

Research-creation puts the problem of impact at the heart of method. It is an approach to problem construction, data collection, experimentation, fabrication, implementation and communication which must always consider different vectors of engagement and impact. Some research takes the form of public exhibition or performance, some as open-source or commercial application, some might be presented in public websites or zines, others in formal publications. In all cases, the modality of output also fundamentally changes the research-creation process itself. Impact in this sense is never after research; it is always part of the process.

Milieux was created as an institute for research-creation in digital and media arts and culture. Our 200+ members across many disciplines deploy a range of tools and technologies in an effort to understand, evaluate, critique and innovate on the ever-expanding influence and effects of global technoculture across all aspects of social and natural life at a planetary scale. At Milieux, the problem of technology is THE problem which prompts a thousand investigations, but our impact and our output are not measured in publications and citations.

This annual report is a case in point. Long ago I abandoned the idea that Milieux should be producing a bog-standard academic annual report consisting of a list of members' publications as some kind of display of brute-force productivity and expertise. Instead, we ask our members to contribute stories and moments that stand out to them as being especially meaningful and impactful. On the one hand, these are the research outputs which we are most proud of, and which best represent the mission of the Institute. On the other hand, these are the moments in an always ongoing process of research which resonate for people beyond the researchers' own experience – research outputs which might connect people, intervene in the world, and create a trace or ripple beyond the fact of the research process itself.

In this report we focus on some of the more prominent initiatives that speak to how we interpret the mandate of DORA in the context of Milieux. How can we push research-creation further outside of our studio labs and bring our members into closer contact and collaboration with various and diverse publics that might benefit from this contact? To this end, we launched a partnership with the MUTEK festival in Montreal, which sees students from the Machine Agencies research group develop a collaborative exhibition/performance taking up an afternoon during the festival Forum event. In another initiative, we revived the old tradition of experimental game arcades once prevalent in Montreal in the 2010s and through the efforts of TAG members working with the indie and alt-game community, we helped create LUDODROME – an experimental game arcade which drew over 300 attendees for a single evening. In addition to bringing our work into the public, we also work to expand communication from our spaces – the Indigenous Futures Research Centre worked to expand accessibility and reach for its annual symposium; we experimented with developing a podcast, and hosted the well-known UKAI Projects for a collaborative artist residency.

All these are efforts to imagine research-creation in more expanded and public forms which not only add richness to the educational experience of our students but also lead us to new insights and new pathways for the research itself. Milieux was already well ahead of the curve when Concordia signed on to DORA, but our real challenge is in bringing the rest of the academic community along with us.

CLUSTERS

The Milieux Institute's seven dynamic clusters act as fortuitous meeting grounds for its research-creators, (as diverse amongst each other as the clusters are within the Institute!) to discuss, exchange, and collaborate. Peer-to-peer learning models are naturally adopted as workshops, talks, and long-term projects blossom from chance encounters in the physical and virtual space.

Each cluster has its own research and conceptual mandate, and the encounters and collaborations cross-cluster spring forth to new projects and ways of seeing. Here is a general but in no way restrictive description of the Institute's clusters:

Speculative Life is a research cluster at the intersection of the humanities, social sciences, design, and art. Its research activities focus on critical approaches to the environment, infrastructure, biomedia, digital culture, and AI. Established groups in the cluster include the Biolab, Critical Anthropocene Research Group, Critical Practices in Materials and Materiality, Disrupting Design, the Concordia Ethnography Lab, Financializing Infrastructures, and Machine Agencies.

Post Image is a dynamic research space with an open studio access model that strives to foster an image-based research culture that locates itself in-between institutional and community-driven art making. Its initiatives, events and facilities are grounded in studio practice and prioritize collective models in the learning and sharing of ideas combined with self-directed research.

Textiles and Materiality brings together research-creation expertise from textile arts and material culture to experiment with methods, processes and interdisciplinary modes of thinking that will shape the future of textiles, material objects and charged experiential spaces. The cluster fosters such expertise as complex weaving, electronic fabrics, interactive garments, rapid prototyping technologies, emerging materials, soft surfaces, and smart fashion.

The **Performing Arts Research Cluster** (**LePARC**)'s mission is to investigate performance practices by facilitating collaborative encounters through an inter-disciplinary hub. Its artist-researchers study the positive transformative impacts of performance practices on individuals and societies, and develop creative theories, methods, technologies, and perceptual strategies that strengthen these impacts. The act of performance figures as the core part of the research at the cluster, with learning-by-doing as an essential part of their approach.

Media and Materiality 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.

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.



Student recording sounds on the Verdun shoreline during the Mess & Methods Summer Institute | Photo Credits: Simon Parent

Mess and Methods:

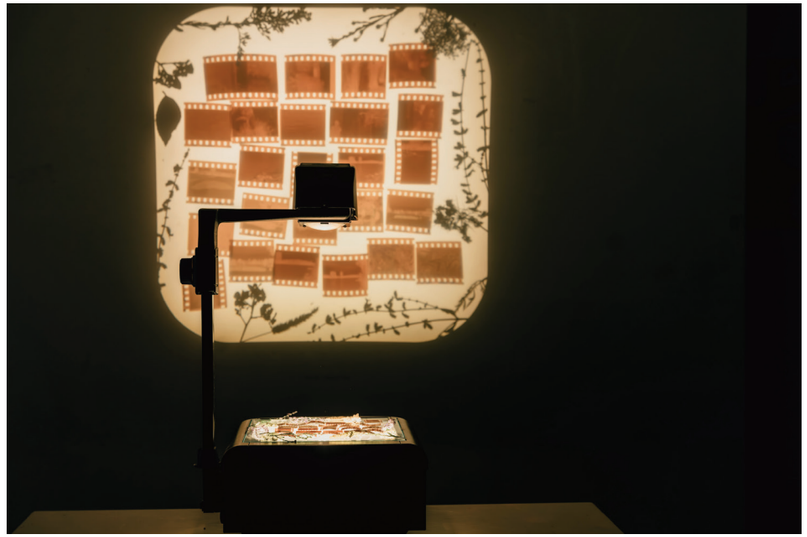
Experiments in Environmental Ethnography

Written by: The Waterways Research Collective

(Patrizio McLelland, Angelica Pliego, Polina Shubina, and Sarah Yems)

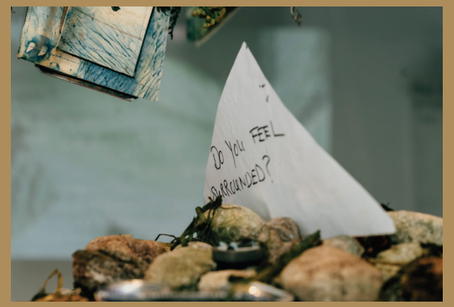


In collaboration with the Milieux Institute, Concordia University's Department of Anthropology and Sociology hosted Mess and Methods, an interdisciplinary Summer Institute in August 2025. Dr. Kregg Hetherington, director of the Ethnography Lab, led the Institute alongside the Waterways Research Collective. The Collective is a team of graduate students who experiment with ethnographic and interdisciplinary engagement at the city's shorelines and watery places.











Installations views of the Summer Institute exhibition
Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque

Combining lectures, workshops, field work, and collaborations with experts Steven High, Andrea Muehlebach, Laura Ogden, Zoe Todd, and Kathleen Vaughan, Mess and Methods brought together students from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds.

As a focal point of inquiry, the field work (coordinated by facilitators Patrizio McLelland, Angelica Pliego, Polina Shubina, and Sarah Yems) was the outcome of previous engagements with two sites in Montreal: Parc de Dieppe and the Verdun shoreline. Dieppe hosts pristine fishing spots along an eroding shoreline; Verdun, on the other hand, hosts a public beach which was the site of multiple drownings this Summer. The tension between the spatial and sociocultural dimensions of the sites invited critical reflection on how the design of public spaces mediates our relationships with water.

Throughout the academic year, the Waterways Research Collective was guided by Protocol for a Composite Ethnography (Campos et al, 2025), a framework for collaborative research developed at the Ethnography Lab. Inspired by the protocol and their own field work, the team sought to explore how ethnography can create spaces for interdisciplinary exchanges of care and reflection. Furthermore, they investigated how those methods could be deployed rapidly, sensorially, and multimodally in the workshop setting of Mess and Methods.

In the first week of the Summer Institute, participants engaged in intensive seminars. In the second week, students met at the sites, engaging in condensed collection & reflection, co-constructing multimodal interpretations of their learnings, and creating an in-process composite shoreline within Milieux's Video Production Studio. The composite ethnographic process facilitated the emergence of various scales of tension, cohesion, thoughtful reflection, and knowledge construction, situated along our urban shorelines. In the face of unexpected challenges, co-construction became a pedagogical process of collectively understanding our surroundings.

Mess and Methods could not have been possible without the efforts of collaborators Marc Beaulieu, Marianne Couture-Cosette, Annabel Durr, Sophie Manker, John Neufeld, Simon Parent, and the Centre for Digital Arts. This Summer Institute was supported by the Concordia Research Chair in Environmental Ethnography, Milieux Institute, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Concordia Ethnography Lab, and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

From Metrics to Experimenting and Collaborating

How Milieux is Leading Concordia's Shift Toward Holistic Research

Written by: Rosie Long Decter
The original text has been edited for this publication.

On December 17, 2024, Concordia University signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), committing to move away from quantitative research assessment metrics and evaluate research based on quality and societal impact, joining the University of Calgary and Canada's tri-agency funders CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC.

For Monica Mulrennan, Associate Vice-President of Research, DORA responds to a need for more holistic, equitable assessment methods that recognize collaborative and creative work. For her, many spaces at Concordia were already putting DORA principles into practice long before the declaration was signed, and Milieux is one of them.

While this cultural shift challenges some traditional academic structures, Milieux has already been leading the way as a thriving example of collaborative, team-based research that prioritizes community engagement over standard publishing.

As this annual report demonstrates, the research and research-creation happening at Milieux take many forms (performances, video games, hands-on experimentations, community workshops, and more) that can't be reduced to a publication count. As Mulrennan points out, traditional metrics like journal impact factors or the h-index, simply weren't built for this kind of work.

> *"In interdisciplinary contexts or when collaborating across institutions, these metrics fall apart. They just don't reflect the work being done."*



The Nostagain team from left to right: Shahrom Muhammad Ali, Rowena Chodkowski, Annie Harrison, Richy Srirachanikorn, Derek Pasborg. Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque



Ph.D Candidate Rodrigo d'Alcântara in conversation with Victoria May and Dr. Michelle McGeough during IFRC's 3rd annual symposium. Photo Credits: Jerwin Cabañeros



The 3rd edition of the Nostagain Symposium at 4TH SPACE. Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque



Maya Lamothe-Katrapani in conversation with Richard Brouillette, film producer, director, editor and programmer. Photo Credits: Matteo Di Giovanni

Through its clusters and research groups, Milieux demonstrates that knowledge happens through tinkering, collaborating, and community building, prioritizing meaningful engagement and fostering an atmosphere of experimentation.

The Future Is a Tapestry:

Research and Community at the 2025 IFRC Symposium

Written by: Rosie Long Decter
The original text has been edited for this publication.

On January 23rd and 24th, the Indigenous Futures Research Centre hosted its third Annual Symposium.

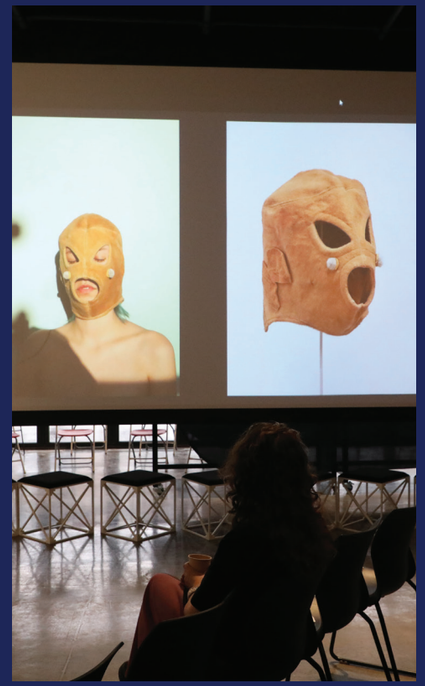
Over two days, researchers, artists and community members presented works on topics like re-conceptualizing design through Indigenous Knowledge systems, cultural practices including hide tanning, skin marking, making Wampum belts, and Indigenous cyberspace as subverting colonial futures.

“The Symposium is really the first place where a lot of students and faculty can work together or meet one another” Hanss Lujan Torres (IFRC Coordinator)

This year marked the largest undertaking yet, with eight panels in total and new contributions from the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) and the First Peoples Studies program.

“The Symposium has always been a moment of gathering for Indigenous scholars at Concordia across disciplines to hear what people are working on” Geneviève Sioui.

OCE presented ‘Community in the Centre: Indigenous Ways of Doing Research’, a panel inviting recipients of CELFIS grants — which recognizes the work of students conducting research using Indigenous methodologies — to talk about what it means to do community-based research.







The 2025 edition of the Symposium also shone the light on Indigenous Design. In a roundtable titled ‘Weaving Culturally-Grounded Visual Identities’, Abundant Intelligences explained the process of developing their logo that bucks Western trends of minimalism to embrace abundance, with 21 tiles making up the letters “AI”. The tiles represent flora, fauna, land and technology, each one a piece of the Abundance Intelligence story.

Each panel at the IFRC Symposium featured stimulating research and creative practices, adding up to an intricate whole – like tiles in a logo or beads in a belt, all part of a futuristic tapestry that the IFRC continues to weave.



Textiles & Materiality Community Dye Pot
Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque

Events Highlights

The diverse array of activities hosted by the Institute over the past year illustrates Milieux's commitment to not only fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, but also to encouraging varied modes of knowledge production and dissemination. By challenging the boundaries of traditional academic silos and initiating partnerships with major festivals, art centres and industry players, Milieux creates opportunities for its members to contribute to meaningful dialogues.

In mid-October, the Institute participated in Printemps Numérique's signature event, ***MTL Connect: Montreal Digital Week***. Bringing together entrepreneurs, researchers, decision-makers, and artists, MTL Connect aims to explore the challenges and opportunities of the digital revolution. Each year, the event offers a platform for international curators to engage with Montreal's digital art scene. For this occasion, Milieux curated a showcase where students presented their work and connected directly with industry professionals.

In mid-November, the Institute launched the ***Milieux Podcast***, an 8-episode series designed to provide an insider's perspective on the institute. Recorded in the Fine Arts Recording Studio and hosted by TAG coordinator Marc Lajeunesse, the series features interviews with faculty, students, and staff. The podcast interrogates the recurring question—"What is Milieux?"—while increasing awareness of the Institute's clusters, projects, and the breadth of its membership.







Early December saw **LePARC** and **Speculative Life** co-host ***Speculations in the PARC***, their end-of-semester mixer. The event brought together members from both clusters to present their research in a casual setting, offering a glimpse into their work while highlighting the thematic overlaps and diversity of research-creation practices.



In late January, **IFRC** hosted its third ***Annual Symposium*** at Concordia's 4TH SPACE. Marking the largest edition to date, the event spanned two days and featured eight panels, with notable new contributions from Concordia's Office of Community Engagement and the First Peoples Studies program. The symposium spotlighted Indigenous design practices, including Abundant Intelligences' process in creating their new visual identity, and underscored the importance of fostering intergenerational conversations to empower the next generation of researchers and scholars.



On February 20th, **Textiles and Materiality** held a panel discussion around the exhibition ***Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction***. Presented at the National Gallery of Canada, the exhibition explored how abstract art and woven textiles have intertwined over the past seventy years. PhD scholars and cluster members Victoria MacBeath, Geneviève Moisan, Fernanda Suarez, and Morris Fox hosted a captivating conversation about their own creative research practices. This served as an introduction to the second conversation happening at NGC between cluster co-director Miranda Smitheram, Concordia alumni and visual artist Michaëlle Sergile, and curator Armando Perla.

In the spring of 2025, **Speculative Life** hosted a speaker series exploring questions regarding future ecologies while highlighting the systems of exploitation and oppression that have accelerated the climate crisis. Led by Speculative Life co-director Jill Didur and PhD student Brennan McCracken, the series invited four international researchers to spotlight the narrative behind these disasters, bringing each participant's distinct perspective and discipline into the conversation.

In April 2025, the Institute welcomed the ***UKAI Project*** for a 10-day residency. Guided by the concept of "culture for what's coming," the artistic trio composed of Jerrold McGrath, Luisa Ji and Kasra Goodarznezhad developed the second iteration of their project ***Shipwreck***, turning the Institute into a host for remnants of disaster. Over the course of the residency, the project evolved significantly, inviting local artists Meghan Moe Beitiks, Eija Loponen-Stephenson and Gabriel Junqueira to intervene, and later allowing the Concordia community to contribute to the installation. On April 11th, the Shipwreck exhibition opened to the public, inviting visitors to interact with the work.



Another highlight of this year was the inaugural edition of **LUDODROME**, organized by Professor Emeritus Lynn Hughes and PhD Candidate Richy Srirachanikorn. Hosted at the Society for Arts and Technology (SAT) on May 15th, the event brought together over 40 experimental games for an inspiring evening of conversation and gameplay.

To conclude the year, the **Machine Agencies** research group took the stage at MUTEK Forum on August 21st with ***Machinic Encounters***. Curated by Postdoctoral Fellow Ceyda Yolgörmez, this exhibition was the culmination of a collaborative summer residency at the Institute. The showcase featured eight works that challenged the invisible nature of ubiquitous technology. By treating machines as agents of 'play, curiosity, and wonder,' the artists aimed to disrupt dominant tech narratives and invent new ways of sensing and relating to the algorithmic world

EVENTS CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 11.09.2024 **The Crit Club (featuring Abbas Akhavan)** Post Image / 13.09.2024 **Re-imagining Landscapes in Times of Ecological Crisis** Speculative Life / 16.09.2024 **ROBODADA** Speculative Life / 18.09.2024 **Disrupting Computing History** Media and Materiality / 18.09.2024 **Epistemological Foundations Conversation #05** IFRC / 19.09.2024 **Ethnolab Open House** Speculative Life / 20.09.24 **Situated Emergences Conference** Speculative Life - LePARC - Media and Materiality / 26.09.2024 **An introduction to Voter_Machine_World with Fenwick McKelvey** Media and Materiality / 09.30.2024 **Drawing with Threads: Materializing Data** Textiles & Materiality

OCTOBER 03.10.2024 **Alternative medicine and infernal alternatives: on the modern fear of being duped** Media and Materiality / 04.10.2024 **Drawing with Threads: Materializing Data** Textiles & Materiality / 09.10.2024-12.10.2024 **Sensorium Colaboratory** Milieux / 09.10.2024 **La Suite Canadienne** LePARC / 09.10.2024 **Intersections of Indigenous Languages and Art** IFRC / 11.10.2024 **Nation to Nation @30** IFRC / 11.10.2024 **Merit of Making: Embroidery Shape, Texture, Image** Textiles & Materiality / 11.10.2024 **The Social Stitch** Textiles & Materiality / 16.10.2024 **Milieux x MTL connect networking event** Milieux / 21.10.2024 **Merit of Making: Embroidery Shape, Texture, Image** Textiles & Materiality / 24.10.2024 **Olli Sotamaa - Engagement and Emotions in Game Data Work** TAG / 25.10.2024 **Working in Friendship** Textiles & Materiality / 25.10.2024 **#Gamergate, Extremism, and Disinformation in Games** TAG / 29.10.24 **Exploring Visual Methods Across the Disciplines: An introductory Workshop** Speculative Life / 30.10.2024 **TAG Critical Watch Series: The Mario Bros. Movie** TAG

NOVEMBER 01.11.2024 **Performative outcome of residency research by the Somatic Performer Collective** LePARC / 01.11.2024 **Regulating Data in the Cloud: Spectral Traces and Analog Imprints** Media and Materiality / 04.11.2024 **The Crip/Mad Archive Dances: Embodies Histories** LePARC / 07.11.2024 **Low-Quality in Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking** Speculative Life / 08.11.2024 **Lay the Loop: Introduction to Soft Circuits** Textiles & Materiality / 08.11.2024 **Community Engaged Ethnography** Speculative Life / 13.11.2024 **"Entranced Earth"** LePARC / 15.11.2024 **Texting on Tajima From Quote to Embroidery** Textiles & Materiality / 19.11.2024 **Drawing and Ethnography Workshop** Speculative Life / 20.11.2024 **TAG Critical Watch Series: WarGames** TAG / 22.11.2024 **Haptic Images Workshop** Textiles & Materiality / 22.11.2024 **All-cluster Meeting** Textiles & Materiality / 27.11.2024 **Pizza Lunch!** Milieux / 27.11.2024 **The Aesthetics of Stealth: Digital Culture, Video Games, and the Politics of Perception by Toni Pape** LePARC / 28.11.2024 **ANTHROPOCENE: The human Epoch** Speculative Life / 29.11.2024 **Mario Party** TAG

DECEMBER 02.12.2024 **Speculations in the PARC - An-end-of-semester mixer by Speculative Life and LePARC** Speculative Life / 02.12.2024 **Fourth Annual Stéfan Sinclair Lecture** Milieux / 06.12.2024 **Next-Generation Cities x TAG** TAG / 06.12.2024 **Craft Café** Textiles & Materiality / 09.12.2024 **Haptic Images Workshop** Textiles & Materiality / 11.12.2024 **TAG Critical Watch Series: Uncharted (2022)** TAG / 11.12.2024 **Workshop with André Bocchetti and Esteban Donoso** LePARC

JANUARY 15.01.2025 **Alanis Obomsawin en conversation avec Nicolas Renaud** IFRC / 15.01.2025-16.01.2025 **Workshop on AI and Digital Humanities** Milieux / CRIHN / 20.01.2025 **Inaproppriate AI: Encounters with Unruly Algorithms** Speculative Life / Applied AI Institute / 23-24.01.2025 **IFRC Symposium** IFRC / 29.01.2025 **UG Fellows presentations** Milieux / 30.01.2025 **Moving Mending Circle** Textiles & Materiality / 31.01.2025 **MHRC Speaker Series: Sandra Gabriele / Paul Moore** Media & Materiality / 31.01.2025 **Broidering on the Brother** Textiles & Materiality

FEBRUARY 04.02.2025 **LASER TALK?** Milieux / 07.02.2025 **Craft Café** Textiles & Materiality / 07.02.2025 **Haptic Images Workshop** Textiles & Materiality / 07.02.2025 **Working with Ollama: Build AI RAGs on your own laptop** Speculative Life / 10.02.2025 **Broidering on the Brother** Textiles & Materiality / 12.02.2025 **Safflower Dyeing Demo** Speculative Life / 14.02.2025 **LOVE & LOSS - Nostagain Symposium** TAG / 14.02.2025 **MHRC Speaker Series: Steven High** Media & Materiality / 17.02.2025 **Drawing with Threads** Textiles & Materiality / 20.02.2025 **Streaming by the Rest of us: Book Launch** TAG / 20.02.2025 **Woven Futures: In conversation** Textiles & Materiality / 20.02.2025 **Woven Stories** Textiles & Materiality / 21.02.2025 **Ethnography Lab Manuscript Workshop Series** Speculative Life / 21.02.2025 **Sequencing with Sequins** Textiles & Materiality / 26.02.2025 **Octavia Butler Celebration** Speculative Life / 27.02.2025 **Moving Mending Circle** Textiles & Materiality

MARCH 04.03.2025 **Exploring Audiovisual Narratives in Virtual Reality with Point Line Piano** Post Image / 05.03.2025 **TAG Critical Watch Series: Assasin's Creed (2006)** TAG / 05.03.2025 **Alison Donnell-Mapping missing Caribbean women narratives in Montreal** Speculative Life / 06.03.2025 **Epistemological Foundations Conversation #6** IFRC / 07.03.2025 **Alison Donnell- Who cares? Public humanities methods and building impact** Speculative Life / 10.03.2025 **Machine Agencies Info Session / Computer Build** Speculative Life / 13.03.2025 **Screening and discussion with Sarra El Abed** Speculative Life / 14.03.2025 **Chatting with Ollama: Build your own AI Bot** Speculative Life / 14.03.2025 **Guest Talk: Evgeni Puzankov - Extreme Design** TAG / 17.03.2025 **An evening of Output** TAG / 19.03.2025 **In.Site2 Symposium** LePARC / 21.03.2025 **Ethnography Lab Manuscript Workshop Series** Speculative Life / 21.03.2025 **Sampling with AudioStellar: New Frontiers in Music and Machine Learning** Speculative Life / 26.03.2025 **TAG Critical Watch Series: Jumanji (1995)** TAG / 27.03.2025 **Moving Mending Circle** Textiles & Materiality / 28.03.2025 **Joni Adamson - Beyond Climate Fiction: Visionary Fictions, Futures Thinking, and a Cosmovisionary Archive** Speculative Life / 31.03.2025 **Marco Armiero - Guerilla Narrative in the Wasteocene** Speculative Life

APRIL 01.04.2025 - 12.04.2025 **UKAI Projects Residency at Milieux** Milieux / 08.04.2025 **EthnoLab Screening: Wind, Tide & Oar (2024)** Speculative Life / 09.04.2025 **Pizza Lunch and Shipwreck Meet and Greet** Milieux / 09.04.2025 **Ethnography Lab Manuscript Workshop Series** Speculative Life / 09.04.2025-10.04.2025 **Concordia and Milieux discover Shipwreck** Milieux / 10.04.2025 **Shipwreck: Call out to the Milieux Community** Milieux / 10.04.2025 **MHRC Speaker Series: Jeremy Stolow** Media & Materiality / 10.04.2025 **Mycelium Workshop** Speculative Life / 11.04.2025 **Community Dye Pot: Red Amaranth** Textiles & Materiality / 11.04.2025 **Opening Exhibition Shipwreck** Milieux / 11.04.2025 **Malcom Ferdinand- Loving Ourselves the Earth: Undoing the Colonial Inhabitation** Speculative Life / 16.04.2025 **Milieux AGM** Milieux / 17.04.2025 **Epistemological Foundations Conversation #7** IFRC / 24.04.2025 **Moving Mending Circle** Textiles & Materiality / 29.04.2025 **An Esoteric TTRPG History with Leonardo Abate, Michael Iantorno and Marc Lajeunesse** TAG / 30.04.2025 **Chronicle of a Summer, Screening and Discussion** Speculative Life

MAY 09.05.2025 **The Disco Elysium Roundtable** TAG / 14.05.2025 **Abstracted! How to write a Conference Proposal** Speculative Life / 15.05.2025 **Ludodrome** TAG / 17. 05.2025-18.05.2025 **Embodied Intervention: Ruminations on Plurality** LePARC / 30.05.2025 **Aesthetic Rebellions to Reclaim Anti-Authoritarian Futures** Speculative Life

JUNE 04.06.2025 **Epistemological Foundations Conversation #8** IRFC / 12.06.2025 **Bookbinding workshop for beginners** Textiles and Materiality / 19.06.2025-20.06.2025 **Augmented Reality Soundwalking Workshop** LePARC / 26.06.2025 **Advanced Bookbinding workshop** Textiles and Materilaity

AUGUST 11.08.2025-22.08.2025 **Mess and Methods Summer Institute** Milieux / 21.08.2025 **GenAi Studio at MUTEK** Milieux

PUBLICATIONS: A SELECTION 2024-2025

Marc Lajeunesse published *Frights, Fears, and Fallout: Layers of Horror in video games in Game Generation*

Kregg Hetherington and **Élie Jalbert** published *L'expérimentation infrastructurelle des ruelles bleues-vertes: utopies et tensions de répétabilité in Transitions socioécologiques et milieux de vie. Entre expérimentation, politisation et institutionnalisation.*

Martin French and **Hanine El Mir** published *(Un)Lucky designs?: What game jams can contribute to critical gambling studies* Critical Gambling Studies.

Alex Custodio, **Hanine El Mir** and **Michael Iantorno** published *The Sun Is in Your Hand(held): mediating solar imaginaries and technological ambivalence in* Digital Creativity.

Jason Lewis and **Ceyda Yolgörmez** published *Abundant intelligences: placing AI within Indigenous knowledge frameworks* in AI & Soc.

Bart Simon and **Darren Wershler** published *How a solar Minecraft server is changing the way we play video games in* The Conversation.

Aurélie Petit published *The Digital Ethnographic Potential of Animated Documentaries in Knit's Island* at Short Ends.

Scott Dejong & **Michael Iantorno** published *Game Design for a Fiverr: Precarity, Regionality, and Platform-Mediation in the Gig Economy* Media Industries

Fenwick McKelvey directed a special issue of the *Journal of Digital Social Research.*

Jonathan Wald published *"The Facts are Not Enough"* Theorizing the Contemporary, Fieldsights.

Aurélie Petit published *The Hentai Streaming Platform Wars in* Porn Studies.

Mia Consalvo, **Marc Lajeunesse** & **Andrei Zanescu** published *Streaming by the Rest of Us: Livestreaming Videogames on Twitch* at MIT Press.

Rowena Chodkowski, **Richy Srirachanikorn**, **Annie Harrison**, **Derek Pasborg**, and **Muhammed Shahrom Ali** published *Designing for Meaning: Uniting Creative and Scholastic Research Through Collective Practices in Event Design* in International Journal on Stereo & Immersive Media, 9(1).

Fenwick McKelvey and **Robert Marinov** published *AI is making elections weird: Lessons from a simulated war-game exercise in* The Conversation.

Jill Didur and **Nalini Mohabir** published *(Post)Colonial Ports: Place and (Non)Place in the Ecotone* at Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Kregg Hetherington published *Composite ethnography: Collective encounters with emergent objects in the anthropocene* in Ethnography.

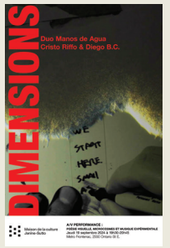
Richy Srirachanikorn published *La nostalgie n'a jamais appartenu au passé in Le Devoir*.

Aurélie Petit published *The limits of 'zero tolerance' policies for animated pornographic media in* Porn Studies.

Richy Srirachanikorn published *Internet pitstops: YouTube as a place for reimagining social time with nostalgia in* Time & Society.

A selection of Exhibitions and Performances







Speculative Life member and Ph.D Candidate **Brice Ammar-Khodja** presented *En, Sur et Face at Perte de Signal* from September 6th to October 3rd, 2024. This installation explored the imperceptible presence of metallic contaminants and magnetic residues in urban soils.

Speculative Life's **Cristo Riffo** presented *Systèmes Sensibles* at Maison de la culture Janine-Sutto from September 19th to November 3rd, 2024. The exhibition investigated the delicate intersections between biological life and technological systems.

Textiles & Materiality member **Sarah Bertrand-Hamel** presented *Interpolated* at TIAN Contemporary from January 11th to February 22nd, 2025.

Speculative Life member **Philippe Vandal** presented *Spectral Narratives* at Eisode Gallery from January 16th to February 27th, 2025. Inspired by an environmental analytical chemistry protocol, spectral narratives is an art installation designed to detect the presence of petroleum hydrocarbons in Montreal's urban soils.

Post Image's **Thomas Kneubühler** presented *The Dividing Line* at OPTICA from January 17th to March 29th, 2025.

The artistic duo **Leisure** (**Meredith Carruthers** and **Susannah Wesley**) presented *Chrysalis and Butterfly* at OPTICA from April 12th to June 14th, 2025.

Textiles & Materiality's **RythÂ Kesselring** presented *Can You Hear the Ground Shout?* at the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA 2025) in Seoul from May 23rd to 29th, 2025.









IFRC's **Skawennati** and **Nadia Myre** presented solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada from May 30th to September 1st, 2025. Nadia Myre: *Waves of Want*, looked at Myre's artistic and critical process from over two decades. *Skawennati: Welcome to the Dreamhouse* told the story of Skawennati's dynamic artistic trajectory as she envisioned Indigenous people in the future.



Students learning about human-robot interactions during the ROBODADA Workshop | Photo Credits: Andreas Muxel

Machinic Encounters:

An artistic exploration of generative AI

For the second consecutive year, the Applied AI Institute, Milieux and the Hexagram Network collaborated to provide seed funding for student-led research-creation projects exploring the artistic potential of generative AI. Initiated by Applied AI Institute Director Fenwick McKelvey and Milieux Director Bart Simon, the initiative is structured as a summer residency where students are encouraged to meet regularly to exchange ideas and collaborate, allowing their projects to evolve and nourish one another.

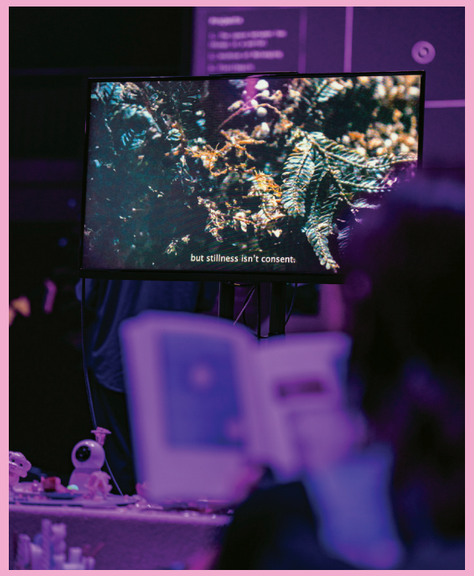
During the residency, students stayed in conversation, sharing knowledge and developing their work leading up to the exhibition presented on August 21st at MUTEK Forum. This year, post-doctoral researcher Ceyda Yolgörmez curated the exhibition and guided the group throughout the residency program, while previous residents François Lespinasse and Kamyar Karimi provided technical support, sharing both their experience of the Forum and knowledge of AI tools and technologies.

Machinic Encounters stems from a simple observation by curator Ceyda Yolgörmez: despite the fact that “we live amidst the ubiquitous abundance of technology”, we seem unable to truly ’encounter’ the machines around us. In that spirit, Machinic Encounters arose from the desire to “encounter machines in their strangeness, in their manifold agencies, and shifting manifestations.”











Views of the Machinic Encounters exhibition at MUTEK Forum
Photo Credits: Felix Bonnevie

The eight research-creation projects presented at MUTEK "[explored] the machinic in its multiple registers: as assemblages of interlocking mechanisms; as mythic sites of projection and possibility; and as aesthetic systems for composing new forms of connection."



Machinic Encounters Artist-Researchers:

Lydia Graveline & **Louis Barbier**
Poki Chan & **Karim Nafiz**
Mike Cassidy & **Kristian North**
George Kerasias
Nata Pavlik & **Jihane Mossalim**
Catherine Lejeune
Kamyar Karimi
Aurélie Petit

The Milieux Podcast

Last November, the Institute launched a new initiative: **The Milieux Podcast**. In recent years, podcasting has emerged as a new way for researchers to communicate their work to a broader audience. Unlike traditional lectures or peer-reviewed publications, the format offers a more open platform for mobilizing knowledge and making complex ideas feel accessible.

In that spirit, we decided to explore new ways of conveying what Milieux is: its clusters, its community, and the research-creation projects that have taken shape here over the years. The series acted as a welcoming guide for both prospective and new students, giving them a better understanding of the institute's ecosystem while giving current members more information about the different clusters' activities and updates.

Hosted by Research Associate and TAG Coordinator Marc Lajeunesse, the Milieux Podcast invited its members (faculty, students and staff) to answer a deceptively simple question: *What is Milieux?*

Through eight candid conversations recorded over the summer of 2025, the series offered listeners an insider's view of the institute and sheds light on its research clusters.





Episode 1: Interview with **Dr. Bart Simon**, Director of the Milieux Institute
Episode 2: Discover TAG research cluster with **Lynn Hughes** and **Owen Hellum**
Episode 3: Discover Speculative Life with **Dr. Kregg Hetherington** and MA student **Maya Lamothe-Katrapani**
Episode 4: Interview with Milieux Associate Director **Alice Jarry** and PhD student **Brice Ammar-Khodja**
Episode 5: Inside Milieux with **Marc Beaulieu**
Episode 6: A conversation with **Mia Consalvo** and **Scott DeJong**
Episode 7: Inside Milieux: A conversation with **Harry Smoak** and **Ophélie Queffurus**
Episode 8: Discover LePARC with **Lília Mestre** and **Syd Hosseini**



Machine Agencies at MUTEK Forum

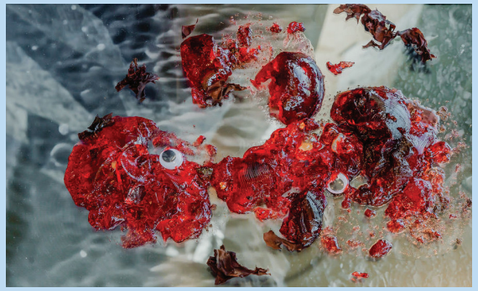
From left to right: Nata Pavlik, George Kerasias, Jihane Mossalim, Kamyar Karimi, Louis Barbier, Lydia Graveline, Poki Chan, Ceyda Yolgörmez, François Lespinasse, Catherine Lejeune, Kristian North, Aurélie Petit, Mike Cassidy,

Views of the UKAI Project residency at Milieux
Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque

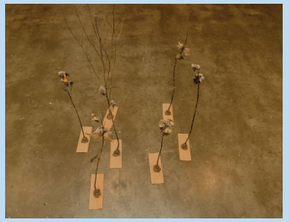








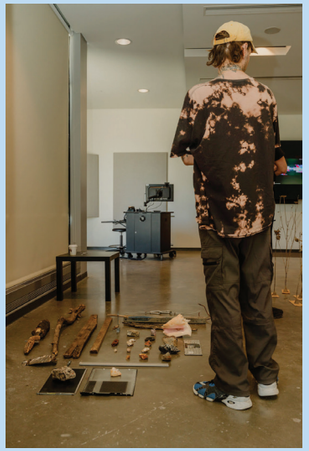














Shipwreck at Milieux

Last April, Milieux became the site of a unique experiment. In collaboration with the Applied AI Institute, the institute opened its doors to the UKAI Project for a 10-day residency.

Composed of Jerrold McGrath, Luisa Ji and Kasra Goodarznezhad, UKAI Project stages cultural works to probe the tensions of a world under transformation. During their stay, the trio worked on Shipwreck, an immersive experience exploring how we navigate ecological, cultural and technological devastation, drawing on mutual aid, commoning, and craft as a survival practice.

During the initial stage of the residency, the collective slowly transformed the institute into a landscape of wreckage, dispersing collected objects and ruins throughout the resource room, kitchen area and atrium.

From there, the residency unfolded in three chapters, inviting local artists Meghan Moe Beitiks, Eija Loponen-Stephenson and Gabriel Junqueira, alongside the broader Concordia and Milieux communities, to contribute to the work and engage with the installation as it evolved.



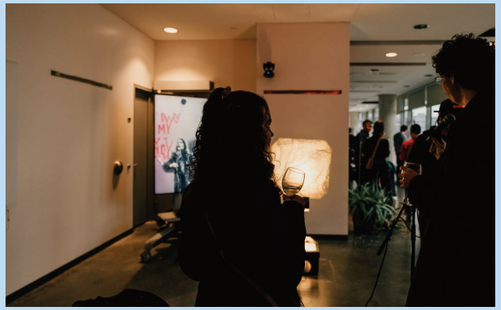




















The experimentation culminated in a public presentation of Shipwreck, where visitors were invited to experience the wreckage themselves—play, navigate and find their own narrative among the ruins.

LUDODROME

Celebrating Montreal's Experimental Game Scene



On May 15th, the Society for Arts and Technology (SAT) hosted the first edition of LUDODROME. Organized by Prof. Emeritus Lynn Hughes and PhD student Richy Srirachanikorn, the event brought together more than 40 experimental games and over 450 visitors responded to LUDODOROME's invitation to join for an afternoon and evening of conversation and play!



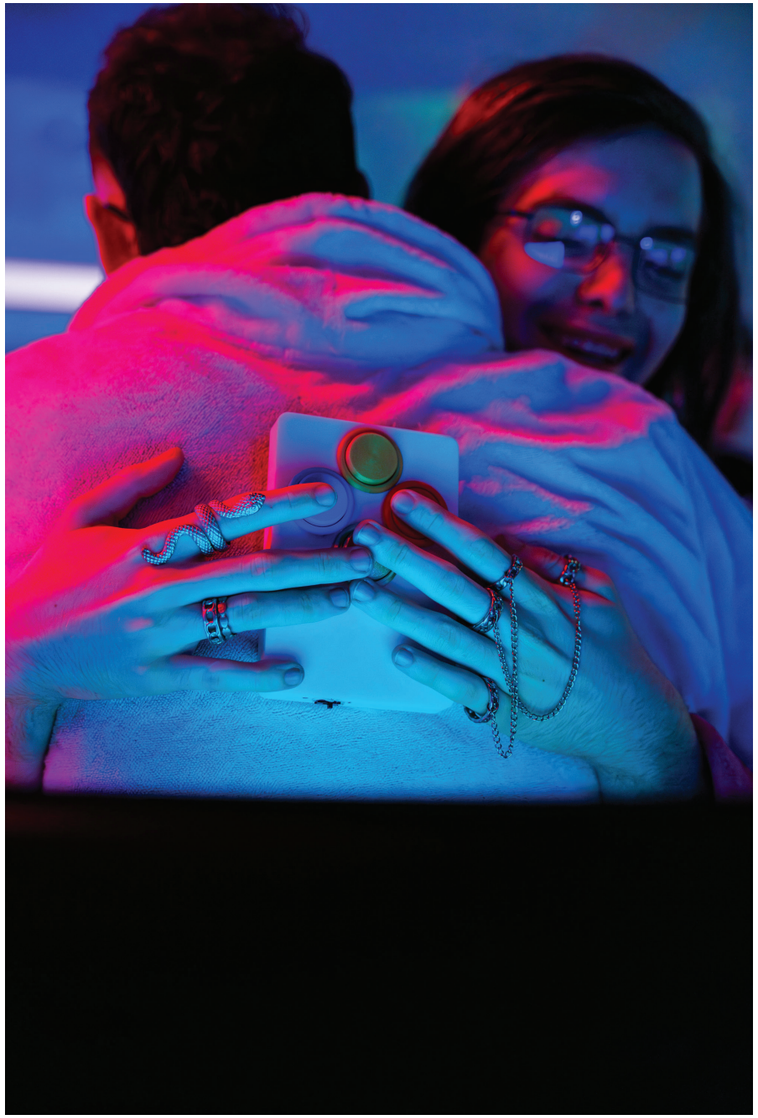


Supported by the Hexagram Network, the Behaviour Interactive Research Chair in Game Design (Concordia), the Chaire de Recherche en Économie Créative et mieux-être FRQSC (Axe créativité numérique, NAD-UQAC), and Milieux, LUDODROME provided a public platform for research-creation in Game Studies as well as an occasion for students to renew connections within Montreal's experimental games community.

Montreal has a robust infrastructure supporting games as an industry, but venues highlighting games for their artistic, innovative, and critical approaches have been scarce, especially after the closure of the Mount-Royal Games Society and FLOP. LUDODROME offered indie game designers a space to share recent work, reconnect and hang out together.

While the afternoon invited visitors to play the games and meet the designers, the event took a more social turn as evening set in, and the space slowly transformed into an expo, with three on-stage games punctuating the night.

Inspired by Paloma Dawkin's video game Oceanarium, the first performance of the evening, Deep Dive, invited spectators into a blue and abstract, immersive world. On stage, Paloma



Dawking and LePARC's Malte Leander guided the audience through the audiovisual experience by circulating a remote control in the public to awaken "Mother Whale".

A bit later in the night, Montreal-based game designer Henry Smith invited the audience to participate in Large Hadron Party. Originally created for Sam Gregson's science shows, Large Hadron Party is composed of multiple mini-games requiring 100+ players to coordinate and play together to accomplish simple tasks.

The last game, by TAG member and PhD student JoDee Allen, "Jingle Jigsaw: En construction" is a single player VR dance/puzzle game. Players saw three-to-four floating blocks that, when pressed, played excerpts of famous songs. The main task is to correctly press the song in chronological order, but here's the catch: the funny placement of each block — high, low, far, near — turns "player interaction" (for the player in the VR) into a set of dance moves (for those spectating).

The evening concluded with TAG member and Ph.D. student JoDee Allen's Jingle Jigsaw: En construction. This single-player VR dance/puzzle challenged players to correctly sequence song excerpts triggered by pressing three-to-four floating blocks. Their placement, however, forced players into movements that look like impromptu and comical dance moves.

TAG Contributors:

Vadim Nickel, "Sound Garden"
Jonathan Lessard, "C'est La Vie !"
Pippin Barr, "It's as if you were on your phone"
JoDee Allen, "Jingle Jigsaw: En Construction"
Matt Bethancourt, "instauratio exiguus"
Elise Trinh, "All those Times"
Katey Campbell, "Midnight Shopping" as part of the GAMERella station
TAG alumnus **Owen Hellum**, "UNDERSCORE"
TAG alumnus **Maize Longboat**, "Terra Nova"
and the **Soft Chaos crew** and their games as TAG alumni



LUDODROME | Photo Credits: Marc Lajeunesse

Milieux Undergraduate Fellows 2024-25

And the tradition continues! For the seventh consecutive year, the Milieux Institute has awarded a group of 10 undergraduate students whose work and engagement within its research community has been exemplary.

This year's exceptional cohort represents a dynamic blend of disciplines across seven academic departments (Design, Computation Arts, Studio Arts, Anthropology & Sociology, Contemporary Dance, Marketing, and Music)—embodying the Institute's commitment to interdisciplinary innovation. Our fellows' groundbreaking projects span a diverse range of topics and media, from VR game development and Indigenous futurism to environmental anthropology and experimental sound art, each making vital contributions to their respective research clusters: Technology, Art and Games (TAG), Textiles & Materiality, Speculative Life, LePARC, Post Image, and the Indigenous Future Research Centre (IFRC).

In an era marked by environmental challenges and cultural transformation, our fellows are pioneering new forms of creative expression and critical inquiry. Through diverse mediums including digital art, performance, photography, and video games, these emerging researchers are reimagining the intersections of arts, technology, and cultural practice.

Nominated by Milieux's faculty affiliates, each fellow received financial support and full access to Milieux's specialized resources to support their projects throughout the 2024-25 academic year.



Aidan Catriel
TAG



Annabel Durr
Speculative Life



Callie Evans
Textiles and Materiality



Destiny Chescappio
IFRC



Gaelle Legrand
Post Image



Mallory Lowe Mpoka
Post Image



Milo Puge
IFRC



Quinn Saggio
TAG



Rena Adell Eyamie
(LePARC)



Sophie Manker
Speculative Life



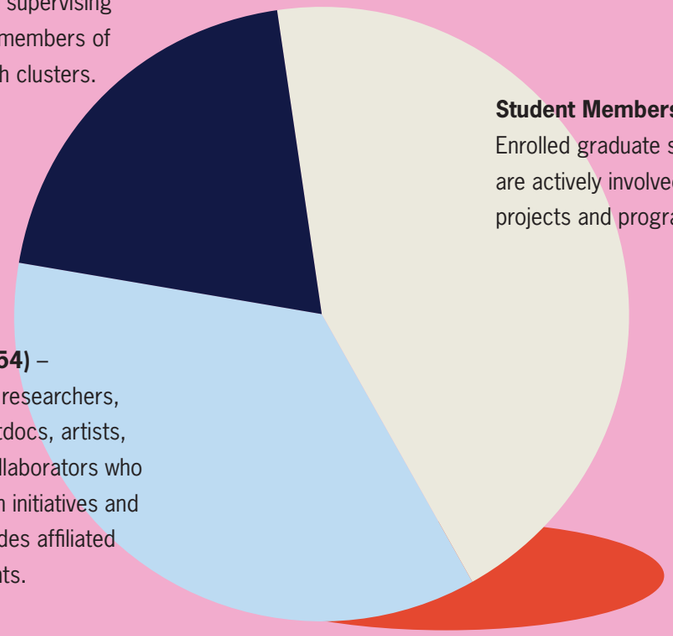
Valentina Plata
LePARC

Milieux Membership

Total Active Membership (Including Affiliates and Assistants)

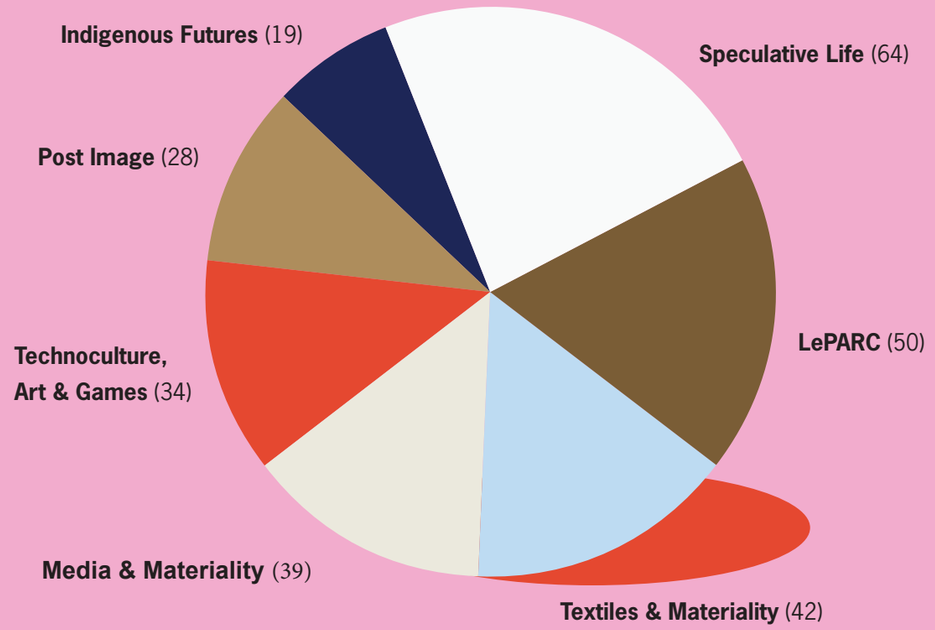
The research institute maintains a **diverse and interdisciplinary membership**, encompassing faculty, graduate students, undergraduate fellows, affiliated researchers, and independent collaborators. The total membership count of **430** reflects both long-term and short-term engagement with the institute's activities.

Regular Members (87) – Faculty members and supervising researchers who are members of the institute's research clusters.



Student Members (189) – Enrolled graduate students who are actively involved in research projects and programs.

Affiliated Others (154) – Includes independent researchers, visiting scholars, postdocs, artists, and other external collaborators who contribute to research initiatives and cluster life. Also includes affiliated undergraduate students.





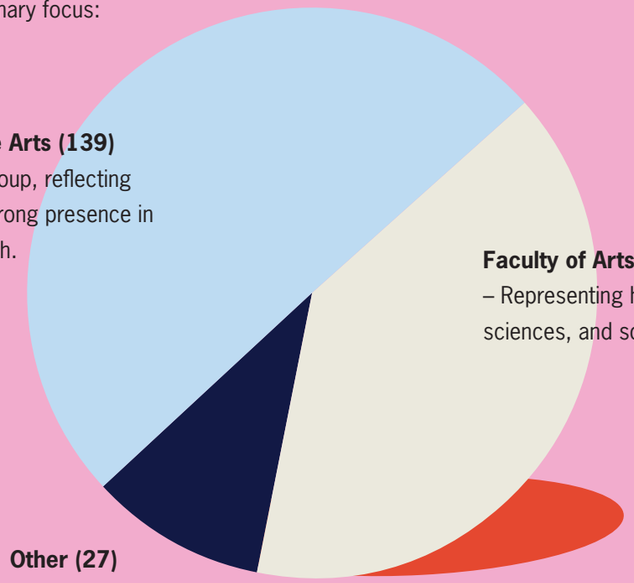


Membership by Cluster (Regular Faculty + Students)

The institute's research clusters serve as **thematic and disciplinary hubs** for faculty and student members. The distribution of **276 regular faculty and student members** across clusters reflects areas of specialization and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Membership by Faculty/Unit (Regular + Students)

The institute's **core membership of 276 active regular faculty and student members** is drawn from multiple faculties and academic units at the university, reflecting a strong interdisciplinary focus:

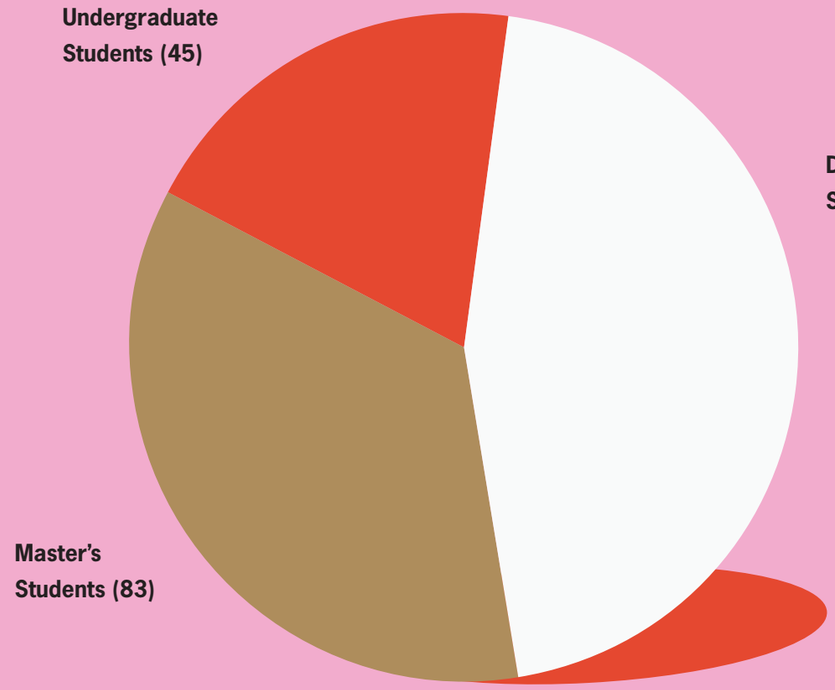


Faculty of Fine Arts (139)
– The largest group, reflecting the institute's strong presence in creative research.

Faculty of Arts and Science (110)
– Representing humanities, social sciences, and science-based research.

Other (27)

This distribution highlights the institute's role as a **cross-disciplinary research space**, integrating expertise from both creative and analytical disciplines.



Undergraduate Students (45)

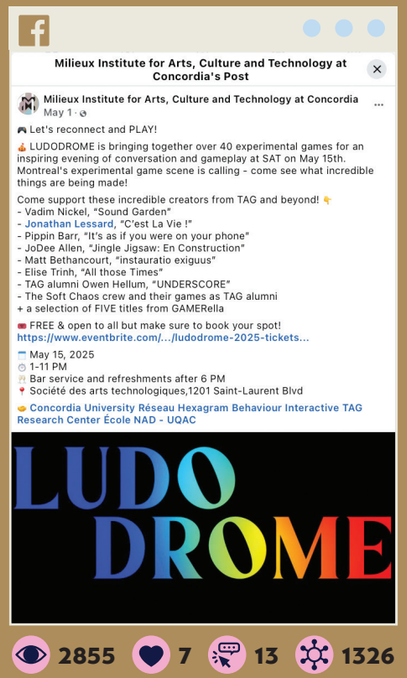
Doctoral Students (106)

Master's Students (83)

Student Involvement

Graduate students form a vital part of the institute's research community, contributing to projects, artistic practices, and scholarly initiatives. The **189 graduate students (doctoral and master's level)** span multiple academic levels.

Undergraduate students also play an active role in the institute's research community, contributing to projects, creative practices, and learning initiatives. Around **45 undergraduate students** are involved with the Institute clusters, primarily through fellowships and research assistantships.



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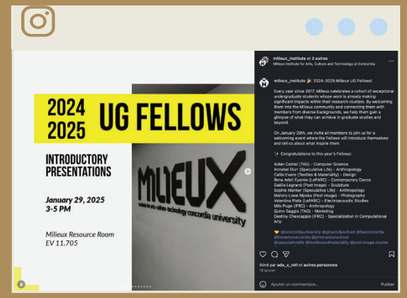

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Followers	2324
Impressions	177 019

Instagram

Followers	2422 (+1115 YoY)
Impressions	486 809

LinkedIn

Followers	1061 (+409 YoY)
Impressions	17 928

SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS



Students working in the biolab during the Mycosculpture Workshop led by artist Amélie Brindamour | Photo Credits: Ana Isabel Duque



Milieux Steering Commitee & Staff

Bart Simon, Institute Director
Alice Jarry, Associate Director

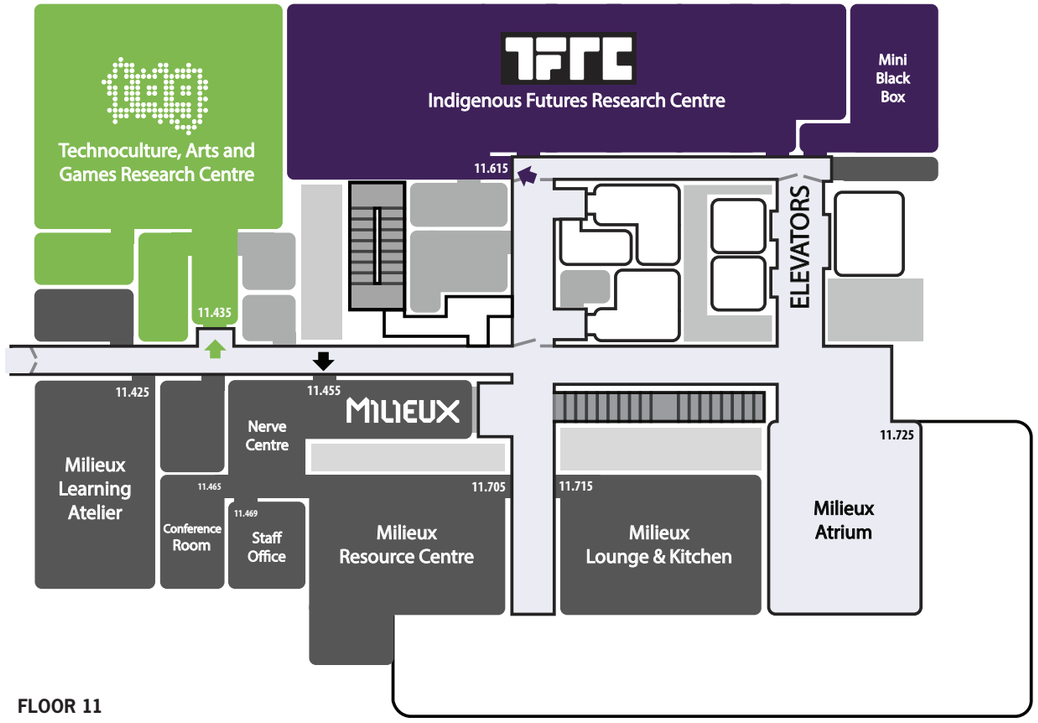
Harry Smoak, Head of Operations and Coordination
Marc Beaulieu, Head of Technical Support and Infrastructure
Ophélie Queffurus, Head of Communications

Kari Valmestad, Administrative Support
Rosie Long Decter, Storyteller
Francis Ouelette, Social Media Assistant
Natalia Balska, Graphic Design

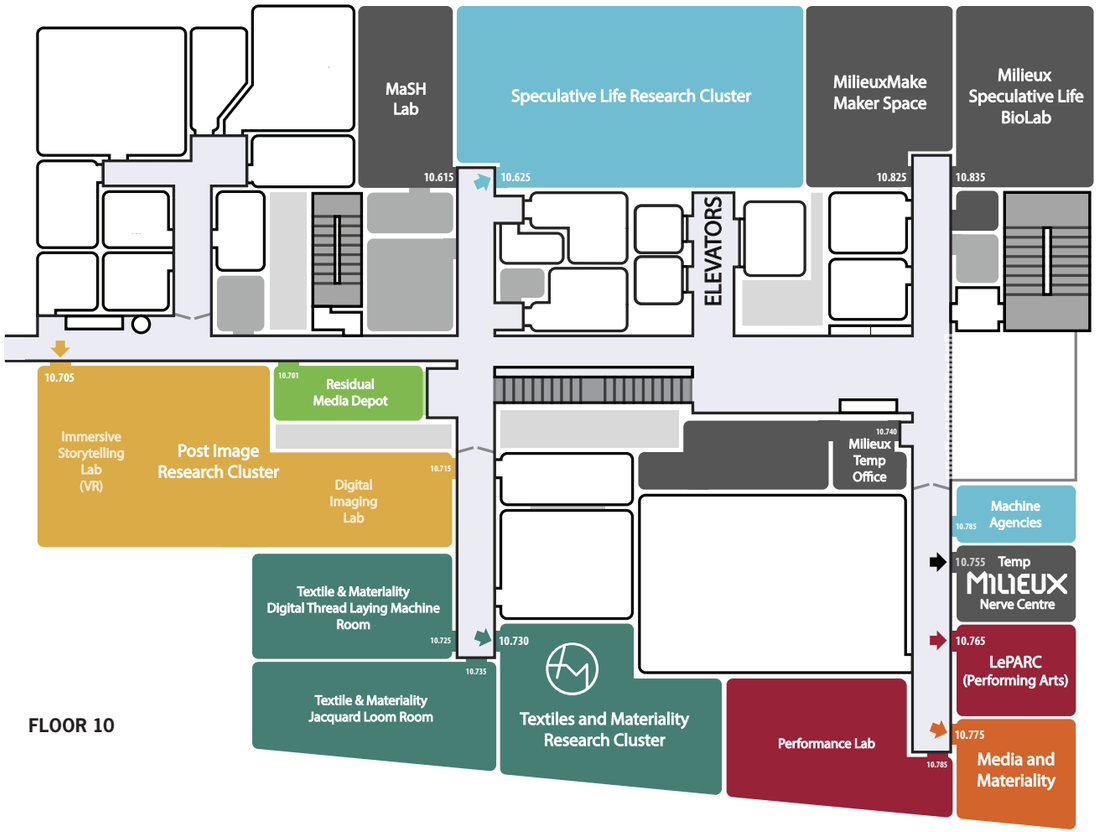
Geneviève Moisan, Textiles & Materiality Technical Support
Marco Luna Barahona, Immersive Storytelling Studio Technical Support
Alex Bachmayer, BioLab Technical Support

Megan Moe Beitiks, LePARC
Lília Mestre, LePARC
VK Preston, LePARC
Miranda Smitheram, Textiles & Materiality
Kelly Jazvac, Textiles & Materiality
Jason Lewis, Indigenous Futures
Hannah Claus, Indigenous Futures

Stefanie Duguay, Media and Materiality
Charles Acland, Media and Materiality
Kregg Hetherington, Speculative life
Jill Didur, Speculative Life
Juan Ortiz-Apuy, Post Image
Rilla Khaled, TAG
Mia Consalvo, TAG



FLOOR 11



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Results of the Mycelium Workshop | Photo Credits: Alex Bachmayer

