Making the invisible visible: documenting the creative process

A case study of the archive from the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration

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ABSTRACT

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Documenting community art collaborations is valuable to those who participate in the project, to the future of the communities involved, and to art history in general. Community art is generated from a creative process based on inter-subjective exchange and conceptual exploration. Therefore, documents can provide a tangible trace to the ephemeral aspects of the artwork's evolution. However, identifying documenting methods that are respectful, practical and participatory can prove challenging. This analysis of the Skol-CEDA project archive suggests that documenting the co-creative process can involve producing a combination of media that, as they are juxtaposed, can be activated discursively in the archive. By employing forms of auto-documentation, such as participant interviews and evaluations, the resulting archive becomes imbued with a spirit of shared authorship. The individual and group evaluations are instrumental in providing a vehicle for constructive criticism and for measuring how well the participants' aspirations were met. Furthermore, as participants bear witness to their personal experience, they recognize their stories in future representations of the project and their contribution to public memory becomes a meaningful act of social agency.

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I dedicate this thesis to my wonderful family and friends. Thank you for your amazing support, your insight and your sense of humor about it all. I could not have done this without you. I love you.

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Introduction

> History shows that what has not been recorded has difficulty claiming a space in our collective psyches. As a result, recording or documenting community arts work is valuable both to those who participated in the project, and to the future of the communities involved.
>   – *Community Arts Handbook*, Ontario Arts Council[1]

In 2009, I worked as a coordinator for several community art projects in Montreal. Given that I was self-trained, I was researching protocols for how to establish healthy group dynamics and encourage collaborative creativity. Concurrently, I was studying art history and I became preoccupied with documenting the projects I was involved with in order to somehow ensure their presence in collective social memory. My preoccupation with documenting was based on the premise that, if we are to trace the historical impact of community-engaged art projects in Montreal, it seems imperative to establish documentation methodologies that depict the creative process and the narrative pluralism inherent to collaborative art practices.

While a few colleagues and I were exchanging ideas on the topic, someone mentioned that there were helpful texts published on the Skol centres des arts actuels website. I visited the Skol website and was excited to find a *List of Recommendations* along with three annual reports from each year of the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration: a community art project that took place in Montreal from 2005 to 2008. The introduction to the *List of Recommendations* states that it was drafted to "orient subsequent collaborative projects". While it is presented without a specific author, a footnote to the list explains that the recommendations were "based on the evaluations

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[1] Angela Lee and Melanie Fernandez, *Community Arts Handbook* (Toronto: Ontario Arts Council, 1998), 16.

provided by the project collaborators (art educator, artists, "workshop participants," and

CEDA facilitators).[2]

The Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration was co-initiated by Adriana de

Oliveira, the education outreach coordinator at Skol centre des arts actuels (an artist-run

centre located in downtown Montreal), and Danielle Arcand, an adult literacy education

facilitator who works with the Comité d'éducation aux adultes de la Petite-Bourgogne et

de St-Henri (CEDA). The collaborative project was an opportunity for members from

both groups to explore the potential intersections between contemporary art and popular

literacy. The co-creative process, as noted on the Skol website,

> was informed by the tenets and practices of popular education, which
> promotes the development of critical thinking, participative democracy, and
> cultural democracy. The project's impetus lay as much in the production of
> the work itself as in fostering trust, mutual respect, and better understanding
> of cultural differences.[3]

Under the auspices of the project, three contemporary artists (who are members of Skol)

were invited to co-create artworks with participants enrolled in the adult literacy program

at CEDA. During a period of three years, four distinct interdisciplinary works were

produced that included a photo-collage, a visual environment for a theatre performance,

and two public interventions. The three professional artists, the art educator, the literacy

facilitators and all of the members from the CEDA adult literacy program were

considered co-creators and contributing artists.

Skol's *List of Recommendations* resonated with what I was grappling with in

terms of how to encourage healthy group dynamics and support participants while they

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[2] *List of Recommendations* [pdf document]; available from: http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/skolceda-en; Internet.

[3] Skol centre des arts actuels: http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/skolceda-en (accessed February 17, 2011).

explored the, at times, vulnerable terrain of artistic expression (Appendix 1). I also scrolled through the three annual reports that outlined the project's evolution over the three years. I was impressed with how ambitious and committed to a progressive collaborative process the participants seemed to be. Through a summarized meta-narrative, the reports explain how the project developed from a combination of group negotiations and communicative experimentation. In particular, one project objective that was outlined in the report from 2006, the first year of the collaboration, attracted my attention: "To develop a methodology for documenting traces of the creative process for co-creative projects in the community context."[4] Given that community art is generated from a creative process based on social interaction, the artwork produced represents a culmination of inter-subjective conceptual exchange.[5] The challenge lies in identifying the most effective means to record this ephemerality. Alternately, without documentation that accounts for the creative process, the rich complexity of the collaboration's evolution may more likely be omitted from historical narratives and therefore from social memory.

During my involvement with community art collaborations, my challenge has been to find practical, non-intrusive, affordable and participatory approaches to documentating. I hoped that the subsequent reports from the Skol-CEDA project would inform me about their experience and perhaps contribute some new ideas. I read through the contents on Skol website for further mention of the approach they adopted, however,

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[4] Translated by the author from the original text in French: "Développer une méthodologie de documentation des «traces» du processus de développement de projet(s) de co-création en milieu communautaire." - *2006_rapport_CEDA_phase1;* [pdf document]; available from: http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/skolceda-en; Internet.

[5] My use of the term intersubjectivity in relation to community art collaborations should be attributed to Heather Davis,. "*Making Politics Sing, Dance and Play: Community-engaged art and Collectivity.*" Paper presenting at Montreal: Canadian Association of Cultural Studies, McGill University, October 23-25, 2009.

after the quote from the 2006 report, while there were a few elaborations on the topic, there were no conclusive remarks. Surprisingly, the *List of Recommendations* also did not include a point about devising documentation methods for community art. However, given that the Skol-CEDA project participants were evidently concerned with thinking through documenting, I became compelled to delve deeper and hopefully identify the methodology they decided to use. To broaden my frame of reference, I also began investigating how other community art projects may approach documenting. My research into this line of inquiry was guided by the following questions: Do the documents from the Skol-CEDA project effectively communicate aspects of the co-creative process? Is there evidence of the multiple viewpoints of the participants? Finally, are the subsequent documents now contributing to or elaborating on the project's social memory?

During an interview with Adriana in 2009, I learned that she was the primary person responsible for the documentation of the project – taking photographs, saving correspondences and notes, and conducting and archiving evaluations. One of her primary objectives was to seek out methods that, as she expressed it, would lend visibility to an often invisible process.[6] For example, she was interested in documenting what transpired during group discussions and brainstorming sessions as well as recording how the relationships between the collaborators developed over time.[7] Adriana was also influenced by her awareness that the documents would eventually be archived at the Skol gallery and could perhaps even be referenced by a public in the future. In fact, she drew

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[6] Adriana de Oliveira, Interviewed by Pohanna Pyne Feinberg. Audio recording Skol gallery, August 14, 2009

[7] Howard Zinn, from address titled, "Secrecy, Archives, and The Public Interest." Originally presented at Society of American Archivists. Washington DC, 1970.
http://www.libr.org/progarchs/documents/Zinn_Speech_MwA_1977.html. (accessed February 18, 2011):
 "despite the recent development of oral history, the written word still dominates, and this tends to emphasize the top layers, the most literate elements in the population."

upon material in the archive to assemble the content that is currently presented on the

Skol website. She also encouraged my research for this thesis by offering me access to

the complete contents of the digital archive.

While I progressed with my study of the Skol-CEDA project archive, I maintained

awareness that, similar to other archival collections, the Skol-CEDA project archive is

neither neutral nor objective.[8] Archives are mediated by the bias of the person who

curates its contents. As Carolyn Steedman remarks,

> the archive is not potentially made up of everything, as is human memory; and
> it is not the fathomless and timeless place in which nothing goes away that is
> the unconscious. The archive is made from selected and consciously chosen
> documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no
> one intended to preserve and that just ended up there.[9]

That said, my study was concentrated on identifying how the documents that were saved

represented the collaborative character of the project. In particular, I looked for moments.

I was also interested in deciphering what elements from the Skol-CEDA project archive

could be a useful as a case study for other coordinators, researchers and project

participants as they develop methods for documenting the creative process.

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[8] *Ibid.* Originally presented at Society of American Archivists**.** Washington DC, 1970.
http://www.libr.org/progarchs/documents/Zinn_Speech_MwA_1977.html. (accessed February 18, 2011):
Howard Zinn also expressed that, "the collection of records, papers, and memoirs, as well as oral history, is biased
towards the important and powerful people of the society, tending to ignore the impotent and obscure: we learn most
about the rich, not the poor; the successful, not the failures; the old, not the young; the politically active, not the
politically alienated; men, not women; white, not black; free people rather than prisoners; civilians rather than soldiers;
officers rather than enlisted men. Someone writing about Strom Thurmond will have no problem with material. But
what if someone wants to write about the blind black jazz pianist, Art Tatum?"

[9] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive ad Cultural History* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 68.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I review the literature that surveys the defining characteristics and associated principles that render community art a distinct discipline. Special attention will also be given to the notion of community and how it applies to collaborative art practices. I will also review and compare two published sources that address how and why to document community art. Given the literature's emphasis on the interview as a document, and in light of the prominent role of the evaluations in the Skol-CEDA project archive, I will also briefly highlight the intersections between oral history theory and documentation practices for community art. In Chapter 3, I contextual the Skol-CEDA project within a historical overview of the community art landscape in Montreal, summarize the project's objectives and describe the artworks that were produced over the three years. Chapter 4 follows with a description of the research methodology I employed for the case study, including a content overview of the digital files found in the Skol-CEDA archive. In Chapter 5, I proceed with a qualitative analysis of the documentation approach used to record the creative process during the three years as well as how contents from the archive have since been publically disseminated. After reflecting on how the project summary is organized on the Skol website, I will offer a comparison with another on-line presentation dedicated to a community peace mural project in California. The multiple forms of documentation media and the use of oral history practices represent a useful and contrasting example of a web-based public memory initiative. In conclusion, I will summarize what I have surmised from the Skol-CEDA case study and pose some suggestions that may assist with future documentation of co-creative community projects.

2. Literature review

This chapter begins with a review of the defining characteristics of community art as described in relevant literature and funding program descriptions. I also address the notion of "community," a ubiquitous yet amorphous concept, as it relates here to the community art context. After summarizing the characteristics that distinguish community art as a discipline, I then review how two currently published texts broach the topic of documentation as both a form of social activism and a learned skill. Extrapolating on the idea offered by one of the references that interviews with participants can be informative, I suggest that recording subjective accounts is in fact critical for depicting pluralistic narratives of the creative process. Cited in combination with photos and other documents, evaluations and interviews can provide vivid descriptions of how the collaboration was actually lived. In fact, as I explain in the final section of the chapter, according to the theoretical framework proposed by oral historians, a personal account is a potent and irreplaceable piece of historical evidence.[10]

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[10] During preliminary research for this thesis, I was informed that Levier, the community arts organization for which Devora Neumark is co-director, is in the process of publishing a book that documents the community art projects that were funding and facilitated by Levier between 2002 and 2007. As the Levier website states,

> One of issues that LEVIER has considered critically from the outset was how, why, when and by/for whom to document community, activist and humanist art projects. At this turning point in our history, as the In Our Lifetime project takes shape, the time has come for an accounting of what we've been up to. Thus we are preparing a publication entitled *Documenting Collaboration: 69 Community Art Projects in Québec and Beyond* that will include a history of LEVIER, our ethical approach, descriptions of projects we have supported, proceedings and analysis of the training and exchange programs we've hosted over the years, as well as theoretical texts reflecting on this practice. A DVD compilation of five videos will accompany this book.

Given that the Levier book is projected publishing date is Spring 2011, I have chosen not to reference the draft material for the book that Devora Neumark generously shared with me after our meeting in 2009. The Levier publication is well anticipated and promises to contribute to the discourse on community art documenting practices.

2a. Defining characteristics of community art

The term "community art," most commonly used in North America and the United

Kingdom, refers to community-engaged art and community cultural development. Inspired

by social justice activism and grounded in the principle of cultural democracy, community

art projects are often implemented in order to encourage self-empowerment through

artistic expression, raise awareness about community concerns, document community

histories, as well as beautify shared public spaces.[11] The Canada Council for the Arts

explains in the introduction to the program for Artist and Community Collaboration that

community art projects involve varying degrees of conceptual collaboration between

professional artists and participants from the groups within the community sector,

> Community arts projects can take many forms. Activities involve groups of
> people coming together—either individually or through a community partner
> organization—to create artistic activities or works with the help and guidance
> of arts professionals. These projects can involve a large or small number of
> people, more than one community partner or group, and other sectors (such as
> health, justice, education or social causes).[12]

In Arlene Goldbard's book entitled, *New Creative Community: The Art of*

*Cultural Development (*2006)*,* she reviews the historical evolution of community engaged

art practices in the United States and identifies seven "unifying principles" or beliefs that

serve as motivating factors for artists who engage in community art:

- Active participation in cultural life is an essential goal
- diversity is a social asset

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[11] Angela Lee and Melanie Fernandez, 8.

[12] Artist and Community Collaboration Fund, "Guidelines for Integrated Arts Program: Artists and Community Collaboration." Canada Council for the Arts. http://www.canadacouncil.ca/NR/rdonlyres/A8A01675-0B17-4F08-81F9-5D36FFAFD40F/0/IAPACCPGuidelineswithQandA908.pdf (access February 18, 2011).

- all cultures are essentially equal
- culture is an effective "crucible" for social transformation
- Cultural expression is a means of emancipation, not the primary end itself
- Culture is a dynamic, protean whole
- Artists have roles as agents of transformation[13]

In their article, "Community-based Art for Social Change," which was published

on the Community Arts Network website in 1999, Kathie de Nobriga and Mat

Schwarzman attempt to summarize the sense of community spirit that serves as a

motivating factor for community art projects:

> Community-based art is creative expression that emerges from communities
> of people working together to improve their individual and collective
> circumstances. Community-based art involves a wide range of social contexts
> and definitions, and includes an understanding of "communities" that includes
> not only geographical places, but also groups of people identified with
> historical or ethnic traditions, or dedicated to a particular belief or spirit.[14]

In addition, community art can also be characterized by the participants'

commitment to the process of social exchange that generates the production of the

artworks. As Devora Neumark and Caroline Alexander-Stevens express in their 2005

article entitled, "L'art des relations : l'engagement et autres considérations concernant les

arts communautaires," the interaction and development of relationships are at the crux of

a community art collaboration. The artist's ideas are directly influenced by the group's

collective knowledge abilities. The thoughts and opinions of all participants contribute to

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[13] Arlene Goldbard. *New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development* (Oakland: New Village Press, 2006), 43-58.

[14] Mat Schwarzman.and Kathie de Nobriga. "Community-based Art for Social Change," Community Arts Network (October 1999)**,** http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/1999/10/communitybased.php (accessed February 18, 2011).

how the artwork is formed. In other words, a community-engaged artist should therefore have an aptitude for embracing this interdependence.[15]

Arlene Goldbard speculates that, despite the diversity of community art projects, the urge to establish a global definition for community art can be attributed to the major funding bodies needing to distinguish community-engaged art from other "conventional" art disciplines as well as art education. For example, in the *Community Arts Handbook* , The Ontario Community Arts Council identified three qualities that distinguish community art as an artistic discipline:

> 1. The co-creative relationship between artist and community;
> 2. A focus on process as an essential tool for collective, collaborative, mutually-beneficial results;
> 3. The active participation of artists and community members in the creative process. [16]

2b. Notion of community

As raised by Kathie de Nobriga and Mat Schwarzman, the diversity of reasons why people identify as a member of a community problematizes any simple definition of the word. In fact, *dictionary.com* currently lists nine possible definitions of "community" as employed in common parlance. That said, in the grant section for the 'Artist and Community Collaboration' program published on the Canada Council for the Arts website, a community can either be identified by regional parameters or be formed by an

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[15] Caroline Alexander-Stevens and Devora Neumark. "L'art des relations : l'engagement et autres considérations concernant les arts communautaires." *Cahier de l'action culturelle,* vol 4, no.1, (September, 2005), http://www.arc.uqam.ca/fichiersatelecharger.html (accessed February 1, 2011).

[16] Angela Lee and Melanie Fernandez, 8.

activity itself as people come together for a common interest or goal.[17] However, the Canada Council also acknowledges that the term "community" can be applied to multiple contexts, and yet "this is not the only way of defining a community. An activity can involve communities of more than one kind, including virtual or digital communities, if they can be identified as a distinct group."[18]

However, in the case of the Skol-CEDA project, the artists did not self-identify as originating from the same community as the CEDA participants. Rather, as a result of the participants gathering regularly over a sustained period of time, a sense of community was cultivated through the collaborative process. This is a form of community exchange and would perhaps be better labeled as an inter-community art project. In this respect, community art projects can also be the impetus for new and lasting relationships to emerge from a meaningful shared experience. According to the authors of *Education for Changing Unions*, building community is synonymous with building solidarity and is formed through the act of building connections across differences in social or cultural identity: "For us community means building connections between people for a common purpose [...]. What we have in mind is a community based on a sense of common humanity and a bond of shared experience and values [...] This community is forged by deep listening to difficult differences in order to build more trust and shared power."[19]

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[17] Artist and Community Collaboration Fund, "Guidelines for Integrated Arts Program: Artists and Community Collaboration." Canada Council for the Arts. http://www.canadacouncil.ca/NR/rdonlyres/A8A01675-0B17-4F08-81F9-5D36FFAFD40F/0/IAPACCPGuidelineswithQandA908.pdf (access February 18, 2011).

[18] *Ibid*, (access February 18, 2011).

[19] Bev Burke et al., *Education for Changing Unions*. (Toronto, Ontario: Between the Lines Press, 2002), 3.

2c. Documenting community art

Given that community art projects are as diverse as the communities from which they originate, there may not be one documentation methodology that would be equally effective for all groups. Instead, perhaps there are tips that can be shared for practical, affordable and efficient approaches to documentation that can then modified according to the particular needs and interests of the group. In addition, if we acknowledge that once documents are archived they will eventually become available to the public , then what types of documents would best trace the project's creative process?

The first source I came across that mentioned documentation as an integral aspect of community art collaborations was the *Community Arts Handbook*.[20] This fifty-six page handbook, that serves as a guide or type of instructional manual, was created in response to the 1997 conference, *Vital Links Enriching Communities through Art and Art through Communities.* The handbook summarizes some of the ideas shared during the conference and is intended as resource for those who have already or would like to work in community art.[21] It begins with a description of the principles of community art and then lists the three distinctive qualities of a community art collaboration as mentioned above. As the introductory text to the handbook iterates, community art is an old practice and artists have always been engaged with community initiatives.[22] However, the two authors, Angela Lee and Melanie Fernandez, mention that "what is new about community arts is the recognition of this art-making method as a means by which to dissolve the

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[20] Lee and Fernandez, 16.

[21] *Ibid*, 4.

[22] *Ibid*, 7.

divisions between art, society and life; between the artist and the community."[23] In essence, they are situating community art within the objectives of historical avant-garde while drawing parallels between other contemporary relational art forms such as interactive public performance. Community art, generated by and through social interaction, is a reaction to and articulation of community-based concerns.

There is a section of the handbook entitled "Document the Project," which is situated in the third chapter of the book, "Community Arts in Action – Process." Prior to chapter three the handbook outlines aspects of how to initiate and successfully develop a community art project in the following five sections: "Making It Work: Community Arts in Practice"; "First Steps; Develop and Refine Process"; and "Collaborate." The "Collaborate" section outlines various ways an artist may become involved in a community collaboration, ranging from the artist originating from the community to the community hiring an artist to teach a specific skill. Directly following this discussion, the handbook turns to a section on documentation. Documents are described here as vital components of community history, one well worth preserving for social memory.[24] The authors argue that, as critical material for future formulations of community histories, documents are fundamental to honoring the project's significance for the community.[25]

The handbook also provides a comparison between collecting documents and compiling a family photo album. By depicting the act of documenting as a commonly practiced gesture that can simply involve saving photos and memorabilia, the authors

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[23] *Ibid,* 7.

[24] *Ibid*, 17.

[25] *Ibid*, 16.

seem to be trying to detangle the prevalent impression that documentation is strictly a paper or text-based record. Rather, documentation can include visual or audio medium as well. Furthermore, according to the handbook, documenting community art should be "an important consideration from the outset of a project and a natural extension of the design and work process."[26] For example, the group members should be aware that they may be recorded and should feel comfortable with the presence of a camera or recording devise. If there are collaborators who would like to remain anonymous then what means are there for respecting these parameters? Additionally, if there is an expressed interest in creating a special project with the collected documents, then which media would be best suited for this type of project and who should be responsible for its production?

Because the "Document the Project" section is comprised of only a few paragraphs and merely introduces the reader to the topic, the reader may be left wanting more detailed directives or comparative stories that could indicate how other groups have addressed the potential challenges they faced when planning and executing their documentation. For example, did they find it useful to appoint one person to manage documentation? If so, how did they address the inherent biases in this approach?

In the handbook, "documenting" and "evaluating" are separated into two sections. While these topics certainly merit individual reflection, the Skol-CEDA project exemplifies that evaluations may well-serve as informative historical documents. While the authors seem to suggest that a creative process is best documented with photography and video, I would contend that evaluations, in fact, provide an intimate and complimentary understanding of how the collaboration was lived. Since evaluations "can

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26 *Ibid*, 17.

be ongoing and assist with managing expectations," they provide markers for the project's development. [27]

In contrast to the theoretical leanings of the *Community Arts Handbook*, the second instructive text that I will discuss, "How To Document an Event," (2004) is presented as a step-by-step approach to assist the reader with developing a plan for documenting a community art event.[28] Written by Linda Frye Burhnam, the article is widely available on the Community Arts Network website (CAN), which is a United States-based web portal for community arts that provides "news, documentation, theoretical writing, communications, research and educational information".[29] One of the most comprehensive resources on community art in North America, CAN is an exemplary historical archive unto itself. Started in 1999 by Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland, CAN ceased its web activity in 2010 due to a lack of resources. However, the site contents are currently being maintained with the help of the Open Folklore project, a joint effort of the Indiana University Libraries and the American Folklore Society**.**

In the introduction for "How To Document an Event," Frye Burnham stresses that "the most important guideline of all is this: Imagine you just got back and you are telling your best friend what happened."[30] She then continues to outline three general stages of

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[27] *Ibid*, 17.

[28] Linda Frye Burnham."How To Document an Event." Community Arts Network, September 2004 http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2004/09/how_to_document.php (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[29] *Community Arts Network.* http://wayback.archive-it.org/2077/20100906194807/http://www.communityarts.net/canabout.php (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[30] Linda Frye Burnham, (Accessed February 18, 2011).

preparation: one, basic questions, two, shaping the documentation, and three, writing about the event. Frye Burnham explains that the basic questions are the details or the project facts – who, what, when, where, why and how. The next section is about formatting the documentation and begins with tips for how to "Know Your Audience." Frye Burnham urges the reader to consider with whom the documentation will be shared and thus to take into consideration which style and structure would best facilitate its reception. In a subsection entitled, "things to collect," Frye Burnham writes about items to gather such as promotional material, photos or videos, notes, and samples of the work produced. This list echoes the *Community Art Handbook*'s analogy between a collection of documents and a family album or a scrap-booking method.

While reading the second section of the text, entitled "interviews," it became apparent that the article is directed towards a journalist rather than a project participant. Frye Burhnam walks the reader through a few basic interviewing tips such as taking notes during the interview and how to ensure there is good sound quality in the recording.[31] However, the interview itself as a document or source for historical evidence is treated as secondary to its function to inform the written article outlined in section three, "writing about the event." Within the parameters of this article and the author's emphasis on creating a time-sensitive responsive text, her treatment of the interview's function does suffice. However, as a primary source of first-hand accounts that can elucidate various modulations in the rhythm and pitch of the collaboration, interviews are also irreplaceable sources of insight.

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[31] *Ibid*, (Accessed February 18, 2011).

That said, the article's accessibility in writing style, format, and content is commendable. "How To Document an Event" provides a model for how a similar guide could be drafted for documenting long-term community art projects. In combination with the *Community Arts Handbook*'s emphasis on the importance of documents to provide records of community histories, a practical list of preparatory considerations would provide a starting point for groups who are seeking suggestions for how to record their project. Particularly, the handbook's encouragement to engage the participants in a group discussion about documentation from the beginning of the collaboration reaffirms the participants' innate ability to author their own historical narrative.

2d. The interview as document

The article "How to Document an Event" claims that interviewing participants is an important component of writing about an event. Likewise, for community groups who engage in long-term collaborative art projects, conducting interviews or recording group discussions can be useful outlets for constructive criticism and processual transparency. Additionally, as historical documents, interviews with project participants are primary sources of narrativity that can portray multiple facets of the creative process. As oral historian Paul Thompson writes, "reality is complex and many-sided; and it is the primary merit of oral history that, to a much greater extent than most sources, it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated."[32]

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[32] Paul Thompson, *The Voice of The Past: Oral History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 27.

The act of bearing witness to the lived collaborative experience can also become an act of social agency. Through these respective acts of personalized authorship, the participants lay claim to their historical narrative.[33] The artists Geoff Broadway states in "Celebrating the Lives of Others,"

> Essentially, oral history is a practice that puts the individual right at the centre through the sharing of his or her own experiences, perspectives and interpretations. It can radically transform our own contemporary reading of history by allowing the experiences of participating groups and people who have literally been 'hidden from history' to be shared and more fully understood.[34]

When first hand accounts are recorded and archived in conjunction with other discursive documents such as photos or workshop outlines, the stories shared through interviews help illustrate the dynamism of the group's interactivity. Moreover, as I will explain in Chapter 5, these interviews may later contribute to public memory initiatives such as web publications that feature quotes from the participants. The collaboration's history is thereby memorialized through the lens of personal insight and, by laying claim to the historical narrative of the project, the participants are creating content for narrative renditions that exemplify the democratic principles of community art.

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[33] Susan M. Pierce, "Objects In Action," *Museums Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study,* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 222.

[34] Geoff Broadway, "Celebrating the Lives of Others: Three creative oral-based projects by Geoff Broadway." *Animus Project: Cultural Animation*. (Institute for Culture, University of Warsaw, Poland, 2009). http://www.animusproject.net/eng/document.php?DocID=65. (Accessed February 18, 2011).

3. The Skol-CEDA project summary

3a. The emergence of community art in Montreal

In order to understand the historical context from which the Skol-CEDA project emerged, it is helpful to review the development of socially-engaged arts in Québec. In the recently published book, *Art et Politique : Nouvelles formes d'engagement artistique au Québec* (2009), Eve Lamoureux attributes the regional inception of *les arts engagés* to the early twentieth century, when Western art production shifted away from the ideological restrictions of the Academy, religious art and state-controlled interests.[35] There was also a pivotal shift towards an acknowledgement of the artist's subjectivity and individuality that, as Lamoureux points out, contributed to the period of *les automatistes* (1945-196) in Québec.[36] With artists presenting public declarations for social change such as the *Refus global*, along with a resonating rejection of the authoritarianism of the Academy and the dominance of the clergy in 1948, there ignited the notion of *l'art engagé* and the possibility that the artist could contribute to social transformation. [37]

Lamoureux claims that even though *les automatistes* were more focused on individual liberation than political activism, their abstract expressionism was unto itself a

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[35] Eve Lamoureux. *Art et politique: Nouvelles formes d'engagement artistique au Québec.* (Montréal, Québec: Les Éditions Écosociété, 2009), 15-18.

[36] Lamoureux. *Art et politique: Nouvelles formes d'engagement artistique au Québec*, 28.

[37] *Ibid.,* 30.

strong statement for the period.[38] Additionally, during this period there was a kind of politicization of the public sphere through conversational works such as *La famille* (1949) and *La paix* (1951) by Robert Roussil and more directly political statements such as *L'arbre de la rue Durocher* (1954- 1955) and *Justice pour les Indiens d'Amérique* (1957) by Armand Vaillancourt.[39] This period would serve as the precursor to a shifting discourse around social art practices in the 1960s and related debates about the role of art in society,

> L'art dans la rue, le dialogue avec le public, la démystification de la production artistique, la démocratisation culturelle et la creation d'un art en relation avec des thématiques sociopolitiques sont toutes des caractéristiques qui seront reprises et généralisées dans l'art engagé des années soixante et soixante-dix.[40]

In the late 1950s, a burgeoning cultural sector also started to take form with state sponsored initiatives towards cultural democratization such as the introduction of the Canada Arts Council in 1957 and the Quebec Minister of Culture in 1961. The birth of these institutions indicates a sense of recognition that artists would play an important role in cultural development. However, according to Francine Couture, an even more poignant historic shift occurred in the early 1960s when a young generation of artists burst open the aesthetic constraints of modernism and initiated a new artistic paradigm.[41] During this period, innovative forms of artistic exploration evolved that were more directly, socially

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[38] *Ibid.,* 36.

[39] Eve Lamoureux. "De l'émancipation à la subversion : rétrospective historique de l'art engagé au Québec." *Cahier de l'action culturelle,* vol 4, no. 1, (Sept 2005): 4.

[40] *Ibid.,* 5.

[41] Couture, Francine, "Présentation', in *Les arts visuels au Québec dans les années soixante: L'éclatement du modernisme,*ed*,* Francine Couture (Montréal, VLB Éditeur, tome 2, 1997), 9.

engaged, such as *art d'animation social* and *art vivant*. As Couture explains, "la jeune génération d'artistes des années soixante [...] posent que l'art est liés à des contextes socioculturels spécifiques, que ce soit l'air sociopolitique ou le lieu de l'exposition et de la diffusion des manifestations artistiques."[42]

While pushing the potential of interactivity and interdisciplinarity, artists were also self-organizing to express their common interests and to better professionalize through associations and event-based group gatherings such as "happenings."[43] Given that one of the primary characteristics of *animation social* was to call on the participation of the public and urge that art making be made accessible to all, the emergence of community-based art – at least its principles of participation and creative exploration – can be aligned with this period in Quebec art history.

During the 1970s, as the *Révolution tranquille* was being infused, artists were responding and contributing to an increasing secularization and other influential socio-political changes. There were several examples of artists who briefly became politically implicated through their action-based art such Françoise Loranger who presented *Double jeu* as a performance protest against the Vietnamese war.[44] Feminist artists also injected the analysis of gender equality into acts of political and social activism that exposed the impact of diverse forms of oppression. This delineation from a Marxist or class-based ideological lens also marked a shift into an "art of awareness" or *l'art de conscientisation*. While Lamoureux notes a general optimism about art's potential to lead

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[42] Couture, 10.

[43] Lamoureux. *Art et politique: Nouvelles formes d'engagement artistique au Québec*, 37.

[44] Lamoureux. "De l'émancipation à la subversion : rétrospective historique de l'art engagé au Québec," 8.

the public into social change, she also eschews generalizations by acknowledging the

range of experiences during this period. As Lamoureux writes,

> Les artistes engagés développent une pratique caractérisée par un travail
> collectif, uneinterdisciplinarité, une connexion étroite entre l'art et la société.
> Ils sont nombreux et s'associent avec les forces sociales et politiques alors
> assez structurées. Il faut être prudent dans l'évaluation de cette coopération.
> Les expériences varient beaucoup en fonction de la proximité des artistes avec
> les groupes, de la nature et des pratiques des groupes dans lesquels ils se sont
> impliqués, et de leur propre vision. Par contre, l'art est plus souvent
> qu'autrement soumis[45]

As the number of artists and the professionalism of the field increased, so too did

the number of arts professors and courses being offered in Quebec. More art galleries

were also opened including artist-run centres, which are artist initiated and managed

spaces that enable contemporary artists to self-determine which art forms they would like

to present publically.[46] Amidst this effervescent climate of artists organizing and

promoting marginalized art forms, Lamoureux highlights the role of feminist artists in

pushing the creative envelope in Quebec,

> L'art féministe est sans doute, à la fin des années 1970, celui qui contribue le
> plus à faire éclater les pratiques en arts visuels et la conception militante de
> l'art engagé. La galerie parallèle Powerhouse à Montréal (créée en 1973) et le
> centre Vidéo femmes à Québec (créé en 1975) jouent un rôle important dans
> la création et la diffusion. Les femmes artistes adoptent, entre autres, le projet
> de réaffirmer le lien entre l'art et la vie en réinscrivant, dans l'art, la vie
> domestique et les gestes quotidiens.[47]

This period of reaffirmation of everyday life and personal identity through art was

coupled with the use of artistic expression as a means of addressing pressing issues such

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[45] *Ibid.*, 9.

[46] *Ibid.,* 9.

[47] *Ibid.,* 9.

as poverty, social exclusion and marginalization. The late 1970s saw evidence of an increased number of artists who were anchored in community initiatives and seemingly more dedicated to humanizing social space than to revolutionary political change. [48]

During the 1980s artists' collectives were being formalized by the organization of the Regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec (RCAAQ). State bodies were also increasing the amount allocated to funding programs for art production.[49] During this period, in 1984, Skol centre des arts actuels was created and was then registered as a non-profit organization in 1986. In 1988, Skol became a member organization of RCAAQ.[50] However, Lamoureux claims that this increased institutionalization of arts organizations and funding bodies contributed to a few interesting evolutions in the 1990s: for instance, art that aimed at socio-political critique was exhibited in more mainstream art spaces. A new generation of subversive artists also emerged, focusing their work on personal responses to global and local concerns including the effects of globalization, addressing ecological sustainability and the struggle for Aboriginal rights. During this period there were several artists coalitions or collaborations in Montreal, such as L'Action terroriste socialement acceptable (ATSA)[51] and Farine orpheline,[52] that become active in organizing public interventions.

During the 1990s, there is evidence that socially-engaged artists were increasingly

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[48] *Ibid.,* 10.

[49] *Ibid.,* 10-11.

[50] Skol. http://www.skol.ca/en/centre/history (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[51] L'Action Terroriste Socialement Acceptable (ATSA) http://www.atsa.qc.ca/pages/accueil.asp (access February 18, 2011).

[52] Farine orpehline. http://www.farineorpheline.qc.ca (Accessed February 18, 2011).

implicated in public interventions and collaborative projects that explored the fertile

complexity of social exchange and community identity. Lamoureux claims that,

> plusieurs artistes réalisent des interventions qui s'insèrent dans
> l'environnement social et qui questionnent les relations humaines, les rapports
> sociaux et leur contexte : les solidarités, les échanges affectifs et
> économiques, les frontières des communautés, les rapports au paysage urbain,
> etc. On parle alors d'art relationnel, de manoeuvre, d'art communautaire. [53]

As Montreal became more culturally diverse in the 1990s, many artists were

influenced by the intercultural exchange of ideas. During the turn of the century, I would

argue that the growing presence of the Internet also influenced many Montreal-based

artists who would likely have been exposed to international artists either through

encounters with immigrant populations in Quebec or via the Web. This heightened

awareness arguably could have contributed to parallel phenomena such as increased cross-

regional sensitivity and aesthetic hybridity. More specifically, through an awareness of

how artists from around the world engage in political protest or have cultivated histories of

community-based art, local artists may have been influenced by and infused with a

diversification of ideas about the relationship between community and art. In respect to the

development of community art as a definitive practice, the international discourse about

the discipline was directly enriched by resources such as the *Community Arts Handbook*

published by the Ontario Community Art Council in 1998 as well as on-line research

portals such as Community Art Network based in the United States initiated in 1999.[54]

The programming for Skol centre des arts actuels also begins to flourish in the

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[53] Lamoureux. "De l'émancipation à la subversion : rétrospective historique de l'art engagé au Québec," 12.

[54] Community Art Network. http://www.communityarts.net/ (accessed February 18, 2011) and Ontario Community Art Council. http://www.arts.on.ca/Page2841.aspx (accessed February 18, 2011).

1990s. From 1996-1997, Skol presented a year retrospective to installation art in Quebec from 1975 to 1995. In 2000, Skol dedicated the year of programming to new forms of intervention art and published *Les commensaux: Quand l'art se fait circonstances / When Art Becomes Circumstance,* "a first in-depth look at "relational" practices in Canada, edited by Anne-Marie Ninacs and Patrice Loubier". **55** In 2002, Skol launched its educational outreach program, which was originally intended to reach audiences that are unfamiliar with contemporary art, and Adriana de Oliveira, originally from Brazil, joined the Skol team.[56] In 2005, Skol marked its first year of the three-year collaboration with the/Le Centre d'éducation des adultes de la Petite-Bourgone et de St-Henri (CEDA). During this period, the Canada Council for the Arts introduced a program specifically designed to support artists working with community collaborations. Provincial and municipal funding programs also appeared, such as the Programme de Partenariat de la Culture et Communauté (City of Montreal) that supported the Skol-CEDA project and over fifty-seven other cultural mediation projects since 2005.[57] Cultural mediation, or *mediation culturelle,* has been increasingly used in Quebec within the cultural milieu. It is a term that encapsulates the current practices of *action culturelle* in respect to the objectives of cultural democracy initiatives. [58] In an article written in 2007 by Jean Marc Fontan, "De l'action à la médiation cuturelle : une nouvelle avenue d'intervention dans le

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[55] Skol. http://www.skol.ca/en/centre/history (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[56] *Ibid*., (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[57] Inspire Art. Partenariat culture et communauté. http://inspireart.org/2011/01/culture-and-community-funding-programprogramme-de-partenariat-culture-et-communaute/. (Accessed February 20, 2011)

I created www.inspireart.org during my during my Masters program. Inspire Art is an on-line magazine with the objective to raise awareness about community art and document various projects in the Montreal region.

[58] Eva Quintas, "Preface." *Cahier de l'action culturelle,* vol. 6, no.2, (December, 2007), http://www.arc.uqam.ca/fichiersatelecharger.html: 2

champ du developpement culturel, " he writes that *médiation culturelle* is a concept that

can be outlined by three guiding rubrics for cultural workers,

- permettre une meilleure intégration sociale entre des pratiques artistiques et des publics ;

- assurer un élargissement de la participation de parties prenantes à la création de produits, d'objets, d'évènements sociaux à vocation culturelle ;

- faciliter une évolution en continu du sens donné à l'acte culturel et à l'action artistique, donc à la place qu'occupent la culture anthropologique, la culture populaire et la « culture artistique » dans le vivre ensemble.[59]

In the wake of increased state-sponsored support for community art projects, we

are also witnessing a period of intensified reflexivity and criticality about the potential for

community art to be politically normalized or nullified by public funding bodies.[60] In an

article published in 2008 by Marc James Léger, a Montreal-based artist and writer, he

argues that, "in accord with the neoliberal view of the individual as a unit of capital, and

with the gradual dismantling of welfare state provisions, a new genre community artist and

service provider is now expected to meet the requirements of large public institutions and

norms of productivity." [61] Léger claims that, by being "beholden to a liberal model of the

needy public, or a multicultural model of diversity" there is an emergence of a

contemporary art practice that renounces "agitational work" for an "ambient conviviality,

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[59] Jean-Marc Fontan, "De l'action à la médiation culturelle : une nouvelle avenue d'intervention dans le champ du développement culturel." *Cahier de l'action culturelle,* vol. 6, no.2, (December, 2007), http://www.arc.uqam.ca/fichiersatelecharger.html: 4

[60] Marc J Léger, "The Elephant in the Room: A Brief Excursus on Avant-Garde and Community Art." *CMagazine: International Contemporary Art*, (Summer 2008): 18.

[61] *Ibid.*, 19.

reformism and complicity."[62] According to Léger, consequently many forms of socially

engaged community art lack an adequate theory of cultural politicization."[63] In this view,

the potential of community art as an avant-gardist expression is subsumed by a wave of

appeasement to mainstream perceptions of what is acceptable social change within the

confines of a capitalist paradigm.[64]

However, concurrently there is alternate perspective circulating that asserts

community art stimulates social and political change through aggregate acts of self-

empowerment and community engagement. [65] Additionally, the "cognitive

dissonance", such as the frictions that are mentioned below which arose during the

Skol-CEDA project, can serve as a "positive force generating productive change on the

artist's conception of what art can do as well as on the community's understanding of

how 'aesthetic process' contributes to clarifying the problems communities face."[66]

Additionally, within the local community art landscape, there is also a significant

increase in the number of courses and programs being offered at Quebec universities (such

as Concordia University, Université du Québec à Montréal and Laval University) that

focus on issues related to community-engaged art and *l'animation culturelle*.[67] Over the

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[62] *Ibid.*, 20.

[63] *Ibid.*, 20.

[64] Claire Bishop also addresses the trend towards a nullification of antagonism in relational art practices, an idea that Bishop attributes to her reading of Lacan in Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics." MIT, *October Magazine* , no.110 (2004): 51-79.

[65] For example: The Atwater Digital Literacy Project: http://media.atwaterlibrary.ca/ and Leave out Violence (LOVE): http://www.leaveoutviolence.com/english/quebec/index.htm

[66] Quoted from the biographical note about assemblage artist Noah Purifoy, who served as chair of the California Arts Council artist-in community committee. http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/cba/index.html

[67] For example: Concordia University Theatre and Development Program: http://theatre.concordia.ca/theatre_development.php; Concordia University Art Education for community arts program:

past five years, several roundtable discussions and conferences about the development of

community art have also been organized. For example, *Le Phénomène des pratiques*

artistiques communautaires was presented in 2006 by Studio XX, a Montreal-based media

arts and multimedia resource centre for women.[68] In 2008, the *Forum Rencontre*, an

international conference on community art and cultural mediation, was coordinated by the

local culture sector advocacy organization, Culture Pour Tous.[69] Additionally, in

November 2009 a group discussion was organized at articule, a local artist-run center,

with the title, *Borders and Boundaries: How do art galleries reach out to communities,*

and is it working? [70] All of these gatherings brought together artists, policy makers and

academics to compare and contrast the local and international trends in community art.

Perhaps in the future we will be able to better assess the impact of these

conferences, the increased number of educational programs and recently introduced

funding options for community art initiatives in the region.[71]

http://art-education.concordia.ca/prospectivestudents/#undergrad); UQAM community animation and research program: http://www.arc.uqam.ca

[68] Studio XX. http://www.studioxx.org/en/node/1174 (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[69] Culture Pour Tous. http://www.culturepourtous.ca/forum/index_en.htm (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[70] *Borders and Boundaries: How do art galleries reach out to communities, and is it working?* Articule. http://www.articule.org/web/evenements/09-10/university%20of%20the%20streets_en.html (accessed February 18, 2011).

[71] Inspire Art. http:// www.inspireart.org (accessed February 18, 2011).
The archive on Inspire Art lists at least thirty community-based art projects that have been initiated by artists and community organizations alike over the past two years

3b. A summary of the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration

The Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration took place between 2005 and 2008. It was funded for three years by the city of Montreal's *Programme de partenariat culture and communauté* which is offered within *l'Enente sur le développement culturel de Montréal* in partnership with *Culture, Communication et condition feminine Québec*. In describing the impetus for the program, the Ville de Montreal website explains,

> Over the years, the city has formed several partnerships with cultural organizations as part of its mission to develop audiences throughout the city, to support intercultural arts, to pursue cultural innovations and to contribute to the growth of the arts in Montréal.
>
> Some of these partnerships are funded through a cultural development agreement between the city and Québec's Ministère de la Culture et des Communications to make arts and culture more accessible to Montrealers. Partnerships are created with organizations whose mission or long-term activities are closely aligned with the city's objectives of cultural mediation with target audiences.[72]

According to the rubric that is outlined by La Ville de Montreal, the Skol centre des arts actuels is the cultural organization and CEDA is the community partner. As an artist-run centre, Skol is a non-profit organization with a mandate to present

> new work by emerging artists focusing on those whose research and experimentation generates method and critical thought. Occasionally, the centre will invite more experienced artists whose exploratory or experimental approaches contribute to the development of theoretical discourse and artistic practice.[73]

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[72] Culture and Community Partnership, City of Montreal.
http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=4517,7008967&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[73] Skol. http://www.skol.ca/en/centre/kiosk (accessed February 18, 2011).

Skol offers on-going and project based, public education programming with an overall aim to promote "a better understanding of contemporary art and foster a closer relationship between the artists and the visitors by providing inclusive, creative, and participatory learning experiences."[74] They present exhibitions and offer public programs in the gallery space, however, in the case of the Skol-CEDA project, the co-creative collaboration took place in the CEDA building located in St. Henri, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Montreal.

St. Henri developed in parallel with the industrial history of the city. During the 1950s, the Lachine Canal was decreasingly used for transportation of goods and as a result, the factories that employed many of the people living in St. Henri closed. The majority of residents were left without an alternative source of income as well as a very low level of education.[75] In an effort to uplift the neighborhood, in 1968 a group of residents founded Le Centre de Perfectionnement des adultes, which became a community centre and meeting place. Literacy classes were offered in collaboration with la Commission Scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) and in 1971, the centre was renamed Comité d'Éducation aux Adultes (CEDA). In the 1980s, CEDA benefited from a community development and social intervention funding-wave in Montreal that also contributed to the establishment of several community health clinics (CLSC) and legal aid services.[76] In 1987, CEDA collaborated with La table de concertation Solidarité Saint-Henri, to fight against poverty and social exclusion as well as improve the standard

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[74] Skol. http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/learn (accessed February 18, 2011).

[75] CEDA. http://www.ceda22.com/historique.php (accessed February 18, 2011).

[76] *Ibid.,* (Accessed February 18, 2011).

of life for the St. Henri residents. However, according to the CEDA website, since the 1990s, St. Henri has experienced a shift in demographics and a form of gentrification that has resulted in a class-based polarization.[77] As a result, the CEDA Board of Directors is now reconsidering its relevance to the community and contemplating revising the types of services it offers. [78]

The majority of participants of the CEDA adult literacy program are from Quebecois origins, although a small percentage are immigrants who have lived in Quebec for many years.[79] Many CEDA program participants face socio-economic challenges, chronic health issues, and some also struggle with mental health stability. The adult literacy program is offered for free to adults who speak French and who do not have a high school diploma. While reading and writing improvement courses are offered, the literacy program is modeled after the tenets of popular education. The program objectives are to:

- develop a sense of belonging and confidence in a group;
- demonstrate appreciation for popular culture;
- increase people's confidence in their ability to learn;
- develop critical thinking skills; defend the participants' rights through collective action; implicate program participants in decisions that concern them;
- reinforce their strengths, knowledge, abilities and experiences;
- promote respect and autonomy while developing team working skills;
- raise awareness amongst the residents in the South West region of Montreal of the necessity to make services, resources and information accessible to illiterate populations. [80]

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[77] *Ibid.,* (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[78] *Ibid.,* (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[79] Cited from unpublished document, *Le secteur Alpha du CÉDA,* given to me for reference by Danielle Arcand by email August 27, 2010.

[80] Text translated from an unpublished document, *Le secteur Alpha du CÉDA,* given to me for reference by Danielle Arcand by email August 27, 2010.

In fact, the practice of applying individual artistic expression to literacy, skill development was already well embedded in the CEDA educational approach before the Skol-CEDA project. CEDA's craft and hobby program promotes social interactivity and aims to generate self-esteem, two qualities linked to improved literacy confidence.[81] In fact, since the 1980s, the recreation and hobby program has included amateur visual art classes, woodworking, ceramics and other forms of art making (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Billboard at the CEDA centre promoting craft activities taken by author at CEDA community picnic, September 3, 2010.

As paraphrased from the CEDA website, the hobby activities at CEDA provide moments for meeting, group solidarity and intercultural exchange.[82] Through crafts and hobby classes one can develop many skills such as reading, writing, public speaking, and teamwork.[83] However, the Skol-CEDA collaboration was still innovative to the CEDA

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[81] CEDA. http://www.ceda22.com/loisirs.php (Accessed February 27, 2011).

[82] *Ibid.,* (accessed February 18, 2011).

[83] *Ibid*., (accessed February 18, 2011). The original text reads:
Les activités de loisirs au CEDA sont des moments privilégiés de rencontre, de solidarité et d'échanges interculturelles pour les membres et la population des alentours. On peut y développer plusieurs compétences telles que la lecture,

programming in two ways. My impression is that the participants were encouraged to not only make art, but to think artistically about their personal histories, their local environment and how they engaged in social interactions. Secondly, they were offered the opportunity to collaborate with a professionally trained artist.

The idea for a long-term, art-oriented project took form after members from CEDA's adult literacy program attended three art literacy activities organized by Adriana de Oliveira at the Skol gallery.[84] At the time, the literacy program participants were researching how to create a photography exhibition as a compliment to their writing workshops. The CEDA adult literacy program coordinator, Danielle Arcand, thought that attending the Skol workshops would help expand CEDA participants' awareness of what constitutes a photography exhibition.[85] After the CEDA group visited the Skol gallery, Danielle became inspired by how the CEDA participants responded. As a result of discussions with the photographer who facilitated the workshops, Catherine Bodmer, Danielle found that the CEDA participants became more interested in investigating new aesthetic possibilities in their own photography. Given that Danielle's goal was to expose the CEDA participants to diversified forms of self-expression, she felt the visits represented a success.[86]

Danielle was interested in continuing this type of art awareness programming and Adriana proposed extending the gallery-based workshops into a more collaborative program between the CEDA participants and an artist. The role of the CEDA literacy

l'écriture, la prise de parole, le travail en groupe, l'animation, l'approche interculturelle. Plusieurs personnes agissent à titre de ressources ou de bénévoles pour la réalisation des activités

[85] Danielle Arcand. Interviewed by Pohanna Pyne Feinberg. Audio recording. Concordia University, September 1, 2010.

[86] *Ibid.,* September 1, 2010.

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program participants was thereby shifted from that of spectators to co-creators.[87] The

collaborative program would respond not only to CEDA's literacy program goals, but

also to Skol's educational initiative to encourage emerging artists who were interested in

gaining experience through working in community contexts. The artist Catherine Sylvain

was the first artist invited to collaborate on the project.

> Spurred by the positive experience of these visits and by a desire to give wider
> expression to the collaborative spirit at the heart of all the centre's operations,
> we [the two partners, Skol and CEDA] initiated a creative project with artist
> Catherine Sylvain. Facilitated by the art educator Adriana de Oliveira and the
> literacy facilitator Danielle Arcand, the open process was informed by the
> tenets and practices of popular education, which promotes the development of
> critical thinking, participative democracy, and cultural democracy.[88]

Building a healthy context for social exchange was central to the project's

objectives. "The project's impetus lay as much in the production of the work itself as in

fostering trust, mutual respect, and better understanding of cultural differences."[89] As

quoted by Grant H Kester, in his book *Conversation Pieces,* Wolfgang Zinggle has

commented that a community collaboration, "does not need the artist as prophet or priest.

[...] Instead, it arises from inter-subjective communication and reflection on the

possibilities of taking part in a changing world."[90] The creative process amongst the

participants emerged from a generative, group dynamic that encouraged a commitment to

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[87] *Ibid.*, September 1, 2010.

[88] Skol . http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/skolceda-en (accessed February 18, 2010).

[89] *Ibid.,* (accessed February 18, 2011).

[90] Grant H. Kester. *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. California: University of California Press, 2004, 101.

"shared authority," a term I borrow from oral historian Michael Frisch.[91] The

Skol/CEDA collaboration was not only an exercise in bridging two organizational

cultures, but also in integrating two distinct social spheres and approaches to art making

(Appendix 2).

3c. Brief descriptions of the art works: 2005-2008

L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre (2006)

The first work completed during the SKOL/CEDA co-creative collaboration in

2006 was entitled *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre*. The photo-collage, which measures 4'x8'

framed, commemorates CEDA's 35th anniversary through its representation of a tree

(Figures 2 & 3). The photo collage was designed and created with mosaic-style

placement techniques during fifteen 3-hour workshops. The participants included

Adriana, the artist Catherine Sylvain and eight participants from the CEDA adult literacy

program: Gérald Allaire, Lise Cyr, Roland Cyr, Yves D'Aragon, Yves Doyon, Mina

Mazzer, Henriette Robertson, and Siria Vargas.[92] After its completion in May 2006, the

work was publically exhibited at the Skol gallery in October of that same year and has

since been on permanent exhibition in the hallway of the CEDA community centre.

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[91] Michael Frisch. *A Shared Authority.* (New York, SUNY Albany, 1990).

[92] Biography provided by the artist: Née en 1976 à Québec, Catherine Sylvain vit à présent à Montréal. Jouant avec les rapports d'échelle, ses sculptures sont souvent utilisées à des fins performatives, elles mettent en scène le corps et questionnent les notions d'identité et de rapport à l'autre. Elle compte à son actif quelques exposition solos, notamment : *Le monde matériel*, Galerie Horace (Sherbrooke, 2006); *Outils pour exister*, Expression, Centre d'exposition de Saint-Hyacinthe (Saint-Hyacinthe, 2005); *Réalités subjectives*, VU (Québec, 2004) et *Petites détresses humaines*, Centre d'exposition CIRCA (Montréal, 2004). Parmi les expositions collectives et événements auxquelles elle a participé, soulignons *Intrus/ Intruders*, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Québec, 2008); *Lieux Communs*, Instants chavirés (Montreuil, France, 2007); *Le festival de théâtre de rue de Shawinigan* (Shawinigan, 2004); *The Dress Show*, Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen (Montréal, 2003); *L'art qui fait Boum*, la Triennale de la relève québécoise, présenté au Marché Bonsecours (Montréal, 2003) et le *Symposium d'art contemporain de Baie-St-Paul* (Baie-St-Paul, 2002).

Figures 2 & 3: *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre (2006),* CEDA

According to the 2006 group evaluation, the creation process for *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre* involved exploring the space in the centre, seeing new things, learning how to take photographs, cutting out images, negotiating how to paste them together and some related risk involved with making good choices (Appendix 4).[93] During the initial workshops, CEDA participants were given basic instruction on how to use a camera as well as how to be playful with how an object or person is framed – to not only see, but also explore through the camera lens. Apart from these activities, there were group discussions around how to decide which people and objects should be included in the photos. Adriana and Catherine explained terminology related to photographic language and how to take compelling and well focused photographs. There were also several

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[93] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: Éval_participants.doc. August, 2006.

workshops on collage techniques and how to work with printed photos to build a mosaic (Figures 4 & 5).

Figures 4 & 5: Workshops during the making of *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre*, (2006).

The CEDA participants were encouraged to explore the centre and engage with the people who work there. The act of taking photos seemed to provide a motivation for developing interactive social skills. Additionally, by shaping or depicting their experience at CEDA through the lens of the camera, the photos became subjective depictions of personal perception. The making of *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre* can be described as an exercise in developing photographic communication skills as well as learning how to shape photos into narrative representation through mosaic techniques based on symbolic associations.

The tree form is meant to serve as an allegory for CEDA's organizational growth. The branches depict six sectors of CEDA activities: literacy; intercultural exchange and

immigrant orientation; food services (the kitchen); volunteer services; cultural activities; and administration. Photos were taken of various items that were seen in certain offices or spaces such as the kitchen. CEDA's departments are therefore represented by the material objects which support the functioning of the centre. The cut-out style photographs of these items were then arranged in a mosaic collage of the tree's branches. The photographs of the people who work at the Centre were placed around the base of the tree, alluding to how, as a community-based organization, CEDA is a living entity and human resources provided the nourishment for CEDA's history and its future growth (Figures 6 & 7).

Figures 6 & 7: *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre*, (2006), details

Placed against an aqua blue background, the red, orange and light yellows, browns and metallic tones in the tree are well articulated. Images in the trunk, which are square-shaped and comprised of textures from tree bark, brick walls, and graffiti on cement, were presumably photographed from trees in the neighborhood and the exterior wall of CEDA's building. This decision to focus on these textural details seems to indicate the importance placed on how the organization has evolved out of an integral connection to place, and

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particularly the centre's relationship to the neighborhood. The branches are comprised of playful and graphically bold images that immediately attract the viewer's eye. On the branch dedicated to the food services department, there are photos of silver bowls, pots, spoons, glass measuring cups, a stove, colorful pairing knives, an ice cream scooper, the sign for Café Mozaik, rolling pins, a blender, a tea cup, as well as a weight measure, and more. The tactile forms tickle the eye. The images of familiar objects, as they are overlapped in a two-dimensional collage, are perceived in relationship to one another. While in context these objects are associated with making food, in this juxtaposed depiction their bold shapes with shine, curve, negative space, color and shadow are their emphasized aspects. Each department's respective branch is equally compelling and acts as an associative play on the community organization's growth; the objects of our lives communicate the function of our behaviour.

As thematically rich and aesthetically charming as the final work is, according to the evaluations from the participants, the creative process from which *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre* was produced is an essential aspect of the work's history.[94] In Chapter 5, I will elaborate on the how the relational dynamics affected the collaborative process, but in short, even though this was artwork was presented as a two-dimensional photo-collage, according to Catherine Sylvain, the work would be better defined within a framework of relational aesthetics. For Catherine, the aspects of the work that were most striking and memorable were the journey the project participants lived together, the relationships that were formed through the process and the personal accomplishments of each participant.[95]

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[94] *Ibid.*

[95] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: évaluation_sylvain.doc. August, 2006.

Concierge demandé (2007)

During the second year of collaboration, the project was focused on

conceptualizing and designing a visual environment for *Concierge demandé,* a live

theatre piece performed by CEDA members at the CEDA centre on May 10 and 11,

2007. Compared to 2006, there was only half the amount of time allocated for

workshops. However, prior to the start of the workshops, there were several meetings

between Adriana and the CEDA staff to discuss their reflections on the outcomes of the

first year and to reaffirm the aspirations of the two organizations. They also decided

together, through a selection process, to invite Nancy Belzile to be the next collaborating

artist. In addition to Nancy's experience as an art educator, she had recently worked with

projected images, short films and shadow theatre techniques. Here she demonstrated

interest in the organic qualities of the human condition that may have also influenced

their decision to work with her.[96] In addition to Nancy Blezile, the collaborators included

Adriana and Danielle as well as the CEDA theatre program director Denis Plante and six

CEDA program participants: Gérald Allaire, Roland Cyr, Yves Doyon, Henriette

Robertson, Gilles Brière et Alain Gervais (four of whom had been involved in the 2006

collaboration). The three-hour long workshops took place over eight weeks. [97]

As the Skol website explains, the play entitled *Concierge demandé,* "developed

from improvised dialogue and dealt with the theme of housing. Designed to express and

refine situations triggered by the dialogue, the environment attempts to push the notion of

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[96] Clark Gallery, Programming Calendar 2005-2006.
http://www.clarkplaza.org/programmation/05_06/05_06_eng.html#desborough.

[97] Skol-CEDA project archive. Rapport d'étape *Programme de partenariat Culture et communauté 2006/2007*.
Document: 2007_rapport_CEDA.doc.

decor beyond its materiality." [98] *Concierge demandé* is based on the improvisation of life.

It addresses how as humans, as social beings, we find solutions to problems through

improvised reactions and by adjusting to life's surprises as they arise. The visual

environment, which consisted of images projected onto the stage, served as a narrative

extension and dialogical reiteration of the performance. The projections provided a

visualization of not only the location and physical context, but also the actors'

imaginations. In effect, the images guided and cued the audience through the loosely

improvised performances and illustrated the sub-text of themes addressed in the

performance, such as finding means of building self-esteem.

Figures 8 & 9 : Workshops to build visual environment for *Concierge demandé.*

The projections were comprised of graphic imagery such as the heart, illustrations

of a robust muscle-man, photographs of buildings, a photo-collage of a self-portrait and a

video of snow falling outside (Figures 8-11). Switching between bold cut out shapes,

illustrations, photography and video, the diversity of imagery effectively situated the

performance. For example, during a scene where one of the actors was taunted for being

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[98] *Ibid.*

overweight, he joked with the audience by asking them if they agreed with his taunter. He then said, "but look at my muscles!" as he posed like a muscle-man (Figure 13). Simultaneously, the illustrated images of weightlifter body-types, which the actor also drew, were projected on the wall beside him. These illustrations were intended to reflect his inflated self-image. The audience laughed with and at him, and thereby endearing him to them and even making them complicit in his attempts to redeem his self-confidence as the performance progressed.

Figures 10 & 11: Workshops to build visual environment for *Concierge demandé.*

In another scene, the actors attended a party. The stage was transformed into a festive environment when an image of brightly colored hanging lights was projected against the stage's back wall. This simple and colorful interpretation of a decorated dance hall exemplified the overall aesthetic of the visual environment. The visual environment's charm lay in the timely insertions of simplistically drawn illustrations and

the use of bold colors; sparse yet effective. Because the artwork was clearly produced by the actors, the performance was infused with a personalized quality that engaged the audience and invited them further into the story. As Gilles Brière, one of the CEDA participants expressed, the projected images contributed a unique quality that the audience members commented on:

> Bien, les décors meubles, ça prend de l'espace, puis les décors projetés, c'est une image, c'est différent. Y'a bien du monde de la pièce qui sont venues voir la pièce qui ont trouvé ça super de voir des projections puis y'a en qui parlent, qui disent que ça parle plus que les meubles… Ça donne, ça fait grounder le monde, c'était bon. Je trouve que le décor meuble, ça parle, oui, mais pas autant qu'une image […] je pense pas…[99]

However, Gilles also noted in his evaluation that, while producing the projections was important to the participants, the primary merit was in the act of sharing their creations with the public.[100] For Gilles, because there was improvisation involved, he enjoyed the sense of the unknown or spontaneity in the performance and he also noted that it simply felt good to have presented something that they had all worked on together.[101]

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[99] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: Extrait_évaluation-annee2.odt, 2007

The 2007 group evaluation was recorded and transcribed. As is written as an introduction to the document: L'évaluation suivante a été réalisée à l'issue de la 2e année du partenariat Skol/CEDA. Dans le but de s'adapter à la culture des participants du CEDA, nous avons privilégié une évaluation orale, sous forme d'entrevue, et en groupe. Les extraits textuels ne traduisent pas entièrement la diversité, ni la richesse de l'échange pour tous."

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] Skol-CEDA project archive. Dcoument: Extrait_évaluation-annee2.odt, 2007,

I have paraphrased Gilles original comment. His original words are: "C'est l'expérience d'avoir à monter un travail, tu sais. Tu t'en va sur un thème mais tu sais pas exactement qu'est-ce que ça va te donner pis ces choses là. Fait que c'est une bonne affaire de toute rassembler et […] pouvoir montrer quelque chose ensemble. C'est une expérience que j'ai bien aimé…"

***HLM Les Fleurs* (2007) and *Dunkin' Donuts* (2008)**

The planning of the project for the third and final year of the collaboration began in

August of 2007. During an initial meeting between the project coordinators, including

Adriana, Danielle and literacy facilitator Nathalie Germain, they determined that the

project could better address the feelings of social isolation that can effect people who live

with illiteracy. As the project description on the Skol website states,

> During the meeting, literacy facilitator Nathalie Germain [from CEDA]
> brought up the issue of the loneliness and isolation experienced by the
> illiterate in society. We then devoted the third joint creative project to a
> reflective process around questions concerning the notion of *encounter* and
> the artistic means [to] bring it about.
>
> The desire for *encounter* prompted both partners to leave their physical spaces
> in order to take artistic action in the urban environment.[102]

The participants during the third year included the artist Christine Brault, Adriana

de Oliveira, the literacy facilitator Nathalie Germain and seven CEDA literacy program

participants, Gérald Allaire, Henriette Robertson, Gilles Brière, Alain Gervais, Nicole

Gérardot, Lisette Gérardot, and Claire Beaulne. Christine Brault came to the Skol/ CEDA

project with previous experience working on community-based projects. Her practice is

interdisciplinary and often involves public performance as well as relational works based

on audience participation.

There were two works that were both presented as the public interventions or

"encounter-actions".[103] The first one, *HLM Les Fleurs,* was held Wednesday, November

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[102] Skol Website. http://www.skol.ca/en/apprendre/skolceda-en (Accessed February 27, 2011).
[103] Term quoted from the first press release announcing the *Les Fleurs* performance, in archive, document: CEDA_3_eng.

14, 2007, at the Les Fleurs housing project in Montreal's Little Burgundy district (a neighborhood adjacent to St. Henri in Montreal's South-West district). The second intervention, *Dunkin' Donuts,* was presented on April 16th in a Dunkin Donut's shop located on Wellington Street in Verdun, another neighborhood not far from St. Henri.[104]

The *HLM Les Fleurs* was a playful attempt to initiate communication with residents of the nearby housing project through artistic intervention. The artwork consisted of the Skol-CEDA group walking together to the housing project and hanging paper-leaf cutouts on a tree on the grounds (Figures 14 &15). The leaves were brightly colored and portrayed a photographic image of the CEDA building as well as some text including the centre's address and an invitation to the public to visit the centre on November 21, 2007 (Figures 12 &13).

Figures 12 &13: *HLM Les Fleurs* workshop and preparation for action-performance

If the leaves were found, the Skol-CEDA group hoped the public would come to the centre and participate by hanging their found leaf on a paper tree in the CEDA centre foyer. Therefore, the artwork involved three moments: the making of the leaves, the

public intervention when the leaves were hung, and the subsequent social interaction and symbolic gesture of adding a leaf to the CEDA tree if the people actually took the cue to visit the center.

Figures 14 &15: *HLM Les Fleurs*, hanging leaves at the housing project

The potential new visitors would thus represent the future of CEDA's organizational growth, revisiting the symbolic significance of the tree-form in *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre*. However, the distinction between the two works is that the focus was shifted from creating art as material object to exploring the notion of social interaction as a form of artistic innovation. As the notes in the archive indicate, Christine reiterated during the workshops that through the act of making and hanging the leaves, the artwork was already occurring. In fact, the installation of leaves, as interactive gesture, was an important event unto itself.[105] Rather than focusing on art as an outcome, the artistic

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[105] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: Partenariat Skol-CEDA, Atelier_10oct_2007.

The original text reads: "L'œuvre ce n'est pas les feuilles mais la rencontre à travers l'art..Donc Christine pourrait nous parler de l'étape installation. En fait c'est plus qu'une étape c'est déjà un premier résultat du projet : quand on va faire

gesture was the work in progress. In other words, it was through involvement in the cumulative stages of intervention that one could experience the full act of artistic expression. In this way moments of tension that resulted from the participants wondering if people would respond to their invitation were subverted by placing the emphasis on the successful completion of the initial intervention. However, some people did come to find the leaves, took the cue to come to the Centre and were encouraged to hang a leaf on the metaphorical tree of the future (Figure 16 & 17).[106]

Figures 16 & 17: Welcome tree at CEDA centre where the public was invited to hang a found leaf once they visited the centre. (Left: permanent installation at CEDA centre, right: detail)

l'installation c'est une action comme tel, c'est déjà un événement, c'est déjà une rencontre : les gens vont venir nous voir, nous parler."

[106] Skol-CEDA archive. Document: ojour_29nov07.doc

In notes from a meeting on November 7, 2007, Christine mentions the need to "mettre l'accent sur ce qu'on **est** plutôt que ce qu'on **fait**, alors **qui suis-je?**"

Early in 2008, the group reconvened to continue work on their next project. Gilles Brière, one of the CEDA literacy program participants who was implicated in the collaboration for all three years, proposed that there next public intervention could take place at Dunkin' Donuts.[107] The meeting notes indicate that Christine elaborated on this idea by suggesting the intervention could offer a new vision of what can be expected from life.[108] The intervention took place on April 16, 2008. Each participant decided upon a special role or particular game they would play as a way to interact with the clients at Dunkin Donuts.[109]

The eleven CEDA participants as well Adriana and Christine took buses together to the Dunkin' Donuts location. They brought with them pre-made props and accessories as well as donut decorating tools (Figures 18 & 19).

Figure 18 & 19: Workshops to build props and costumes for *Dunkin' Donuts*

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[107] Skol-CEDA archive. Document: ojour_13fevrier08.doc.

[108] Skol-CEDA archive. Document: ojour_13fevrier08.doc .
"On pourrait ensuite aller au Dunkin' Donuts ou ailleurs et les faire porter aux gens qu'on rencontre pour leur offrir une nouvelle *vision des choses*"

[109] Skol-CEDA archive. Document: ojour_16avril08.

When they arrived, the participants were easily identifiable by their colorfully self-designed aprons. The photo documentation portrays the participants decorating donuts with bright green, orange, pink, yellow, and blue icing sugar (Figures 20 &21).

Figure 20 & 21: Decorating doughnuts for *Dunkin' Donuts* action- performance

They then walked around the donut shop and offered clients their "free-form" or uniquely decorated donuts. (Figures 22 -24) The intervention became a spontaneous and colorful donut party; a playful atmosphere that was intended to break through social barriers between the people who happened to be at the donut shop. Perhaps the element of surprise provoked the Dunkin Donuts' clients to question what to expect when they are in public.

Figure 22, 23 & 24: *Dunkin' Donuts,* project participants engaging in the action-performance

As Christine expressed in her final evaluation, *Dunkin' Donuts* was a meditation on how artistic expression can, in practical terms, contribute to helping textually illiterate people reach out and break through their social isolation. For Christine, the interventions in 2008 helped to reinforce the CEDA literacy program's objective to develop self-confidence through a valorization of each participant's skills. As she wrote in her evaluation of the project, she considered the most important aspect of the collaboration to be the development of tools for self-expression other than through writing. Through a diversity of means and methods, the participants' personal strengths, their voices and their presence, were reinforced.[110]

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[110] Skol-CEDA archive. Document: éval_chris_complet.doc

Original text in Christine Brault's evaluation reads: "En leur donnant des outils d'expression autres que l'écriture tels que le dessin, la photographie, le collage, le montage d'objets, la sculpture, la peinture, l'installation et en mettant surtout leurs propres forces en valeur : leur parole, leur présence. Enfin, l'important est d'offrir à chacun-e divers moyens et façons de faire afin que chacun-e puisse s'exprimer et améliorer l'estime de soi."

4. Research Methodology

4a. Preliminary research

As I mentioned in the Introduction, I first became aware of the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration through the contents on the Skol website. The website is the most visible and accessible forum where the documents are presented. It features one photo and a project description in text summary (Figure 25). There are also downloadable .pdf versions of each annual report as well as the *List of Recommendations*. The broad strokes of the project's history are well represented and the public is introduced to thematic overtones of the artworks, however, the detailed traces of the creative process are subsumed. For example, while the summary is directly informed by the evaluations, the website does not include actual quotes or personalized comments.
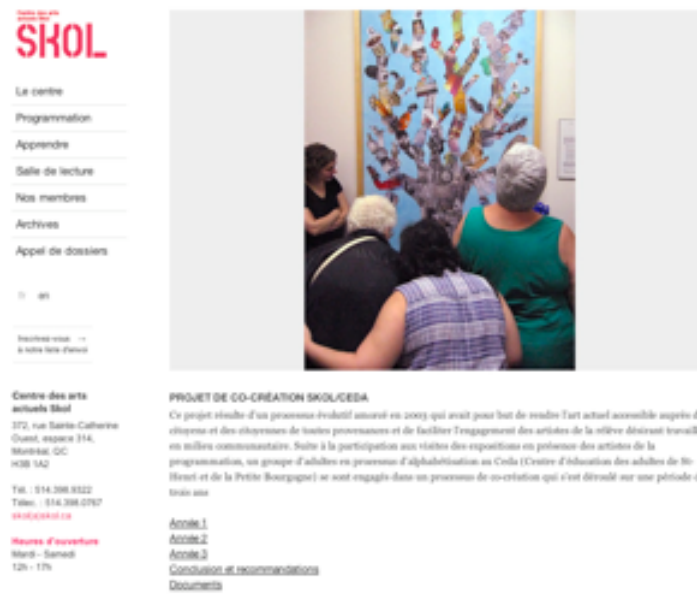

Figure 25. Screen shot of Skol-CEDA project page on the Skol-website.

After realizing I needed to dig deeper into the Skol-CEDA project archive to learn what was distinct about the documentation methodology used during the Skol-CEDA, I decided to start by expanding my knowledge of how other local community art projects approach documenting. I conducted a quasi-ethnographic comparative study that included discussions with some of my colleagues from several community art projects between 2008 and 2009 as well as a survey of on-line material. Following Sharan B. Merriam's definition of qualitative research, this aspect of my research was "inductively building" a conceptual framework based on experiential reflection rather than testing exiting theory.[111] My hope was to inform my analysis by becoming more aware of the current complexities people face when documenting community art.

An aspect of this study involved three informal interviews with local community-engaged artists, Devora Neumark, Rachael Van Fossen, and Adriana de Oliveira, which I conducted in the fall of 2009.[112] Rachael Van Fossen was the founding artistic director of Common Weal Community Arts in Regina, Saskatchewan from 1992 to 1999, and she currently teaches theatre and development courses at Concordia University.[113] Devora Neumark is a faculty member in the MFA-Interdisciplinary Art program at Goddard College (Vermont) and co-director of Engrenage Noir / LEVIER, a Montreal-based non-profit group that advocates for and offers funding to community and activist arts. Through Levier, Devora has also offered many public workshops related to community

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[111] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. (*San Franscisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 7.

[112] Informal interviews with Devora Neumark, Rachael Van Fossen and Adriana de Oliveira took place between August and September, 2009.

[113] Full biography for Rachael Van Fossen,: http://theatre.concordia.ca/Rachael_Van_Fossen.php

art practices.[114] Adriana de Oliveira is the arts educator at centre des arts actuels Skol and has facilitated several community-based art collaborations in Montreal. She also teaches at the Université du Québec à Montréal and is a member of Turbine, a center for creation, training, research and presentation of contemporary art and art education pedagogy. [115]

Initially, I chose to speak with these three artists because they are recognized leaders in Montreal's community art scene. Given they have each been involved in many types of community-engaged art projects, I also thought they could shed light on how documenting varies according to context. Additionally, as they all teach as well, I thought it would be useful to learn how they may discuss documentation with their students. Before meeting with them, I sent each of the interviewees the following set of questions by email.

1. Have you documented the projects you have been involved with - can you explain how?

2. Did you integrate strategies for documenting these projects within the beginning planning stages of the project?

3. Have you had conversations around the subjectivity of an archive - or rather, how we exert a curatorial control over memory by choosing to document certain elements of a project while omitting others?

4. What are the aspects of the project that you have deemed important to document? Has this differed dependent on the nature of the project?

5. Who chose what should be documented? Has that ever been collaborative or participatory? In other words, is the documentation something written in the voice of the artist or the coordinator? Or are at times are the participants invited to be involved?

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[114] Devora Neumark. http://www.devoraneumark.com/site/bio/bio.html (Accessed February 18, 2011).

[115] Turbine. http://www.centreturbine.org/Mandat (Accessed, February 18, 2011).

6. Were there surprises along the way (group dynamics, lack of resources) which shifted how you documented the projects in unexpected ways?

7. What are some of the challenges in documenting the creation process of these projects?

8. What is the function of the documentation (ie to spark memory or be able to stand alone as a full story)? What do you hope would be done with the documentation? What actually has been done with it?

9. Do you feel that there is a general underrepresentation of accounts of and discussion around community-based arts within academia and other more mainstream art spaces?

10. If so, how do you think that maintaining documentation of this work will I influence art history and social memory in general?

Each of the interviewees responded uniquely to the questions. Rachael Van Fossen commented that, although she encourages her students at Concordia University to integrate documenting into their practice, she knows that, realistically, it can be challenging to coordinate documenting while also directed a community theatre production. Therefore, she drafts a plan for documenting in advance during the grant writing stage and delegates somebody as the documenting coordinator. Consistently, visual documentation (photo and video) and text-based evaluations or creative response activities have served as effective documents. However, deciding which moment is appropriate to document, as well as how to design evaluation formats that are non-onerous for participants, must be reflective of the unique context of the collaboration. She also raised the point that the "failures" and "hard questions" that arise during collaborations merit respectful representation; through this honesty we can elaborate on public discourse and evolve the practice. In response to question five, Rachael pointed out that participant involvement in documenting results from a sense of inclusion which

is, in part, dependent on availability. Given that participant attendance and individual interest may fluctuate, the documents produced will reflect this. In fact, she also commented that perhaps the "perfect documentation scenario" that would involve "extreme inclusiveness" is realistically unachievable. In her experience, these concerns around inclusiveness also carry over into curatorial questions that arise when deciding how to later disseminate the documents.[116]

Devora reiterated the relevance of my research questions and pointed out that "one of issues that Levier has considered critically from the outset was how, why, when and by/for whom to document community, activist and humanist art projects."[117] In a similar spirit of inquiry, in 2006, Levier offered a training and exchange program on collaborative video documentaries for community art projects in preparation for the creation of five videos that will be included in the soon to be published book, *Documenting Collaboration: 69 Community Art Projects in Québec and Elsewhere.*[118] Devora highlighted the importance of participant inclusion in documentation and the need for the collaborative process to be historically represented through multiple perspectives.

During our discussion Adriana primarily reflected on the learning process she has experienced while using various methodologies to document the projects she has been involved with. She realized that her approach to documenting has evolved in response to

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[116] Rachael Van Fossen, Interviewed by Pohanna Pyne Feinberg. Audio recording. Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, August 18, 2009.

[117] The interview with Devora Neumark was not recorded, but she referred directly to this text which is quoted from: http://www.engrenagenoir.ca/blog/en/publications (Accesses March 21, 2011).

[118] *Ibid.*

the project and the characteristics of the collaboration. The Skol-CEDA project became an elaborate, hands-on reflection on how to document community collaborations. Many aspects of my interview with Adriana, including the documenting methods that were used, are further outlined and addressed in this thesis.

There were a few notable commonalities across the responses from Devora, Rachael and Adriana that directly influenced my subsequent analysis of the Skol-CEDA project archive. First, they shared a general concern that the collaborative dynamics and the creative process be well represented within the formulation of the historical narratives of community art.[119] There were also ethical considerations discussed such the potential sensitivity of documenting minors or other at-risk participants who choose to remain anonymous. How can the historical record be inclusive of these participants' perspectives while respecting their need for anonymity? Furthermore, they were all interested in finding creative documentation methods that are non-intrusive, inclusive and perhaps even collaborative.

After conducting the interviews, I then directed my research towards the Skol-CEDA project archive. I developed a qualitative analysis of a case study which, according to Sharan Merriam, can be defined by its particularistic, descriptive and heuristic qualities. By focusing on the specific instance of the Skol-CEDA project, my task was to review the primary functions of the documents and also question how documents can be presented on-line as a contribution to the public memory of community art.[120] My findings are derived from content analysis as well as interviews with the

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[119] Adriana de Oliveira, Interviewed by Pohanna Pyne Feinberg. Audio recording Skol gallery, August 14, 2009.

[120] Sharan B. Merriam. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 29-32.

project coordinators and the three professional artists that participated in the project.

These interviews with some of the project participants served to contextualize the archive

within a framework of their original intention. They also offered insight into how the

participants perceive of the role of documentation in the construction of the community's

history.

Therefore, I proceed below by summarizing the comments shared during the

participant interviews, which will provide an orientation to the intended purpose of the

Skol-CEDA project archive. I will then outline an overview of the contents in the digital

archive, so as to clearly present the various types of material I have been working with.

Chapter 5 then follows with a qualitative analysis of the two primary functions of the

documents: internal evaluation and visual memory. In Chapter 6, I will then discuss how

the documents have subsequently been used in developing a public memory of the

project.[121]

4b. Interviews with Skol-CEDA artists and coordinators

In addition to the interview mentioned above with Adriana de Oliveira on August

16, 2009, I also spoke with the three artists, Catherine Sylvain, Nancy Belzile, Christine

Brault as well as Danielle Arcand, the project coordinator of the CEDA community

centre. The interviews with Danielle Arcand, Catherine Sylvain, Nancy Belzile, and

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[121] "In one sense, all qualitative data analysis is content analysis in that it is the content of interviews, field notes, and documents that is analyzed" (Merriam, 160).

Christine Brault were conducted between September and November, 2010.[122]

Additionally, on September 3, 2010, I visited the CEDA centre for an open house where I had the opportunity to meet some of the CEDA adult literacy participants. During the three conversations with the artists and Danielle, I asked them to describe the general approach applied to documenting the Skol-CEDA project. I also asked them each the following questions:

- Who chose what should be documented? Was the process collaborative or participatory?

- What were the aspects of the project that you deemed important to document?

- Were there surprises along the way (group dynamics, lack of resources) that shifted how you documented the projects in unexpected ways?

- What is the function of the documentation (ie to spark memory or be able to stand alone as a full story)? What do you hope would be done with the documentation? What actually has been done with it?

Drawing from interviewees responses, I established the following, major points regarding the participants' perspectives of the documentation process as well as its overall perceived function. First, as was previously noted, Adriana spearheaded, coordinated and managed the documentation. However, she collaborated closely with Danielle to develop evaluation questions that would be well suited for the context of a popular literacy program. Second, while there are many texts in the archive, as well as a video and audio

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[122] Interview with Danielle Arcand was conducted and recorded on September 1, 2010, Concordia University. All interviews with artists were conducted and recorded via Skype:, Catherine Sylvain on October 27, 2010; Nancy Belzile on November 6, 2010; and Christine Brault onOctober 2, 2010.

recordings, the predominant documents are photographs, written or transcribed

evaluations and workshop outlines. Third, evaluations from the participants, the artists

and the coordinators were fundamental to the collaboration. These documents particularly

helped the participants determine and trace their shifting expectations and aspirations for

the project at regular intervals during the creative process. Fourth, it was challenging to

learn how to develop the evaluations since many of the project participants were learning

how to read and write. Thus, Adriana and Danielle decided to experiment with recording

group evaluations and saving both the audio and transcriptions of the participants'

comments. Finally, as Adriana and Danielle wanted the format of the documents to

emulate the guiding principles of popular literacy methodologies, the overall approach to

documenting was intended to be inclusive and democratic.

4c. Content analysis

After our interview on August 16, 2009, Adriana transferred the entire contents

of the digital components of the Skol-CEDA onto a USB key. She assured me that the

majority of the documents were saved digitally aside from some paperwork related to

budgets and accounting. I therefore concentrated my content analysis on the digital files.

I will outline below my procedure for reading the files.

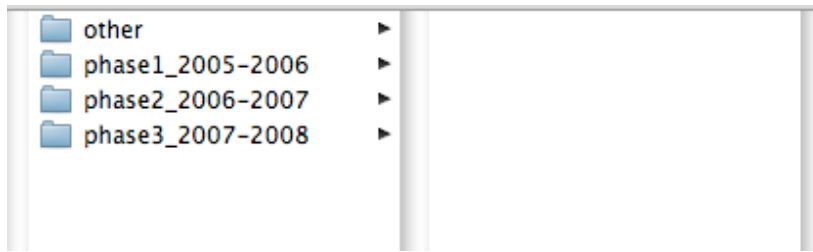The files initially appear as such on the computer screen:

Figure 26

I reviewed the folders chronologically, beginning with the contents of the folder titled "other":
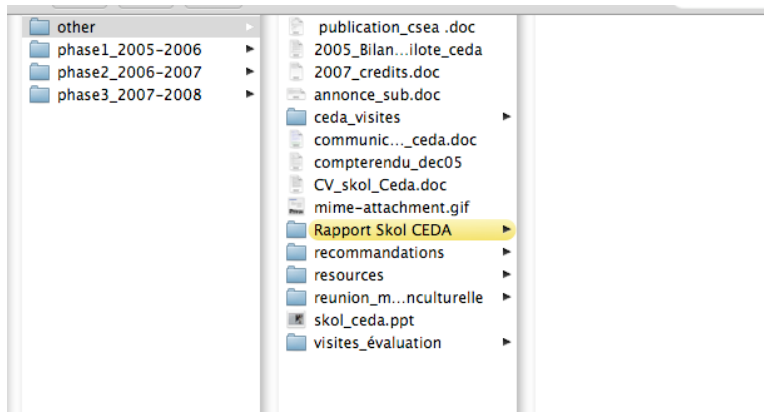

Figure 27

The documents in "other" include background information on the educational programs at Skol and other local initiatives involving art literacy with which Skol was involved. These documents include a text with a list of current definitions of community art from diverse sources; a case study entitled, *Art & Literacy: Connecting People with the Montreal Art Community,* by Skye Maule-O'Brien in Partnership with Frontier College; and evaluations of visits to Skol gallery in the context of the community outreach programme 2005. However, in addition to supplementary background information, the "other" folder also contains draft material for the final report titled, *Programme de*

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partenariat Culture et communauté 2007/2008 - Rapport final. There is also a copy of the *List of Recommendations*.

Overall, the contents in the "other" folder provide somewhat scattered yet insightful information about some contemporary issues related to the intersections between contemporary art and adult literacy. These documents also helped me to establish a brief introduction to the cultural and educational context out of which the project emerged. After reading the included reports, I also realized that the Skol-CEDA project was only one of many overlapping projects and activities with which Skol was involved during this period. However, more detailed information specific to the Skol-CEDA project (such as an outline of the creative process, the participants' perspectives on the collaboration, as well as descriptions of the artworks) are found in the individual folders for each year of the project.

Each folder of saved materials from the three years contains a unique organizational structure as well as various documentary indices. My method for reviewing the contents in the subsequent folders ("phase 1," "phase 2" and "phase 3") was cross-referential. I simply read the texts and at regular intervals. I browsed the photos to ground the project in a visualization of the workshops and the participants interacting during the collaborative process. This cross-pollination of media proved successful in my efforts to discern a narrative of the project's evolution.

After opening the Skol-CEDA digital archive, the folder "phase 1_2005-2006"
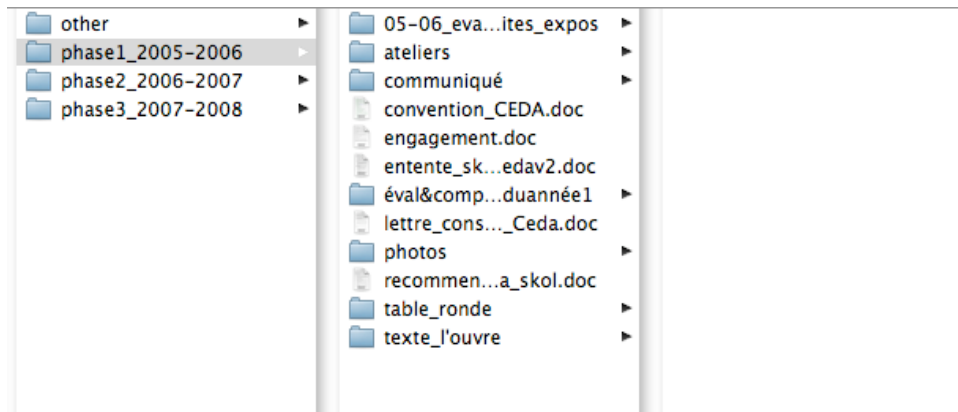
appears like this on screen:

Figure 28

Nearly all of the documents found in this folder are text based (individual and group

evaluations, press releases, and pedagogical outlines for the workshops), with the

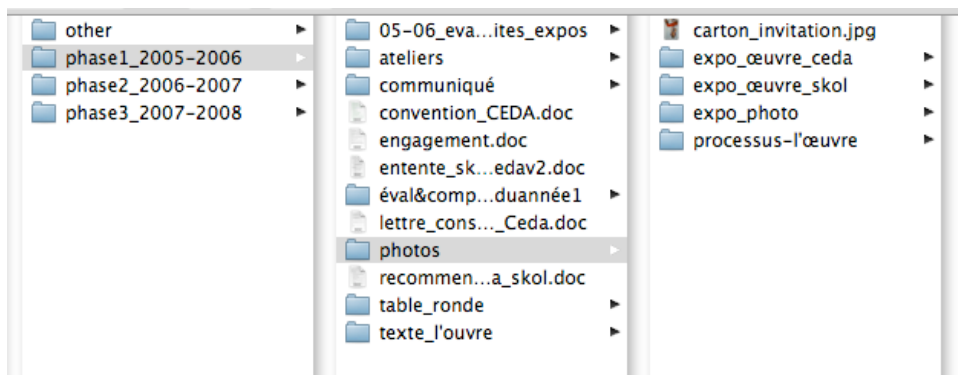exception of the "photos" folder:

Figure 29

As you can see, there are photos documenting the creative process as well as the two

public exhibitions of the photo collage in the Skol gallery and at the CEDA community

centre.

The folder for the second year is similar in that it is comprised primarily of texts and related photos. However, there are some notable differences, specifically, an audio recording of the final group evaluation and a video recording of the public performance. These inclusions, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, reflect an apparent shift in the approach to documenting. For example, the folder "phase 2_2006-2007":
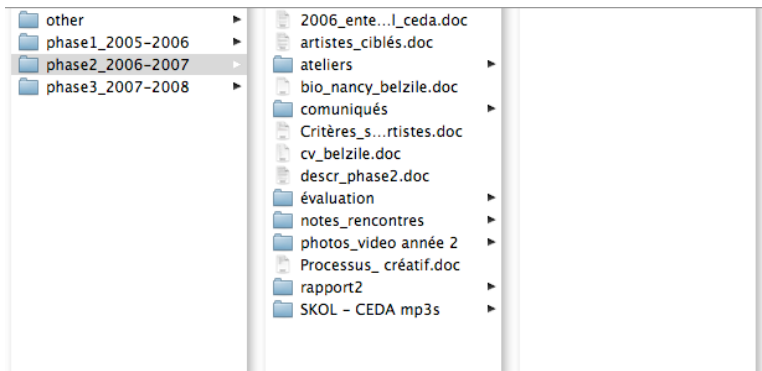

Figure 30

As the folders indicate, the text documents include one pedagogical outline for the workshops, press releases, evaluations, notes from meetings, and reports for the donors. However, there is a curious absence of workshop outlines such as are found in the folder for 2005-2006. Despite this lack, there is an abundance of visual documentation from the creative process including multiple photos, a video recording of the *Concierge Demandé* performance, as well as the original PowerPoint presentation that was used to create the visual environment designed in the workshops. Additionally, the folder with audio files "Skol-CEDA mps" contains recordings from the final group evaluation with the CEDA program participants.

The folder for the final year of the project, "phase3_2007-2008" contains the following:
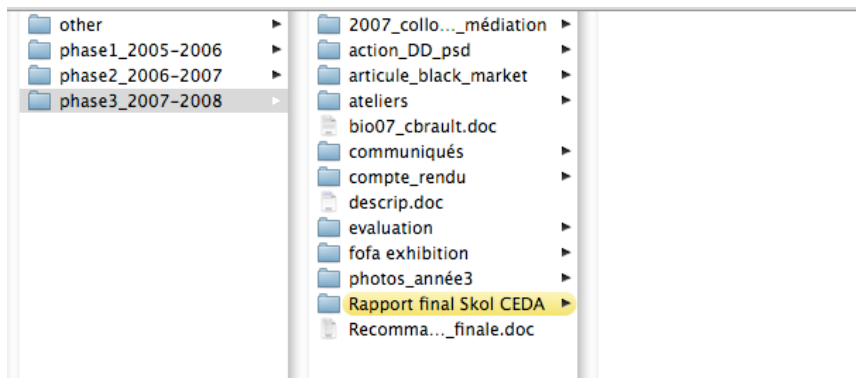

Figure 31

In addition to the texts and photos documenting the collaboration and the produced artworks, there are also documents from two additional events. The folder "2007_colloque_médiation" includes texts from Adriana's presentation at a local conference entitled *Meetings on Cultural Mediation*. While these documents summarize the project's goals and achievement, they also provide some background information on the cultural climate in Montreal during this period. There is also a folder called "articule_black_market" which is dedicated to one of two group trips that were organized in the context of the Skol-CEDA project. This workshop explored text-based art and took place at articule, the artist-run centre in Montreal. Thirteen CEDA program participants were present during this activity, as were Adriana de Oliveira, Danielle Arcand, Chirstine Brault and Anne Bertrand, the artistic coordinator of Skol. The inclusion of the documentation from this event indicates its significance to the group and its potential influence on the subsequent artworks created in 2008.

As I continued to read through the folders from the third year, I found texts such as evaluations, several pedagogical outlines for workshops, meeting notes, and press

releases. However, in contrast the first year of the project which includes only four saved

folders of photographs, the archive from the third year include thirteen image folders that

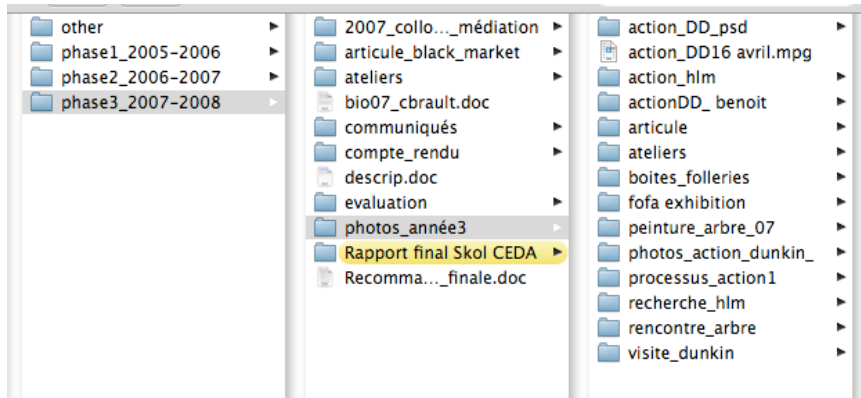are either dedicated to distinct events or depict the workshops:

Figure 32

However, in the third year, while the list of questions posed to the group were saved,

there is also a notable omission of evaluations (either audio or text transcription) from the

CEDA literacy program participants. Adriana de Oliveira explained that, although

informal discussions amongst the project participants did take place, the lack of a

transcription from these discussions can be attributed to the group's fatigue at the end of

the project.[123]

     After reading the documents and speaking with participants, my next challenge

was to decipher what other community art projects could glean from the Skol-CEDA

approach to documenting. In the following chapter, I identify which documents in the

archive contribute most to descriptively narrating the collaborative exchange and

successfully leave traces of the creative process.

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[123] Comment from Adriana was offered informally while we spoke at the CEDA community centre during an "open house" event on September 3, 2010.

5. Documenting the co-creative process

"Is it possible to make the invisible visible in a co-creative process? Is it through documentation and what kind of documentation? Is it through narratives? Storytelling? Evaluations? Photographs?"

- Adriana de Oliveira[124]

During the interview with Adriana de Oliveira in 2009, she made a poignant comparison between the co-creative process and performance art: they are both ephemeral and intangible forms of cultural heritage.[125] Adriana posited that she was confronted with some of the same challenges performance artists face when deciding which media to use and which moments to record when documenting their art. As Matthew Reason states, "given the ephemeral nature of live performance, except by being there in person it is only through its documentations – which in terms of post modern theory and language we might usefully think of as resonances, traces and fragmentations – that is possible to know, question or see performance at all.[126] However, what types of documents can effectively provide traces of community art – the collaboration as a lived experience – rather than represent it as a final object or static work?[127] How can documents represent the inter-subjective exchange of ideas and actions from which a community art project is generated?

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[124] Adriana de Oliveira, Interviewed by Pohanna Pyne Feinberg. Audio recording Skol gallery, August 14, 2009

[125] *Ibid.*

[126] Matthew Reason. *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance.* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. 2006), 6.

[127] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: mediation_culturelle_final.doc:
Quote paraphrased from the following: "On doit penser à comment 'rendre visible l'invisible', comment communiquer la démarche processuelle et non pas seulement montrer l'objet, l'œuvre (statique). "

5a. Making the invisible visible

My analysis of the Skol-CEDA project archive suggests that documenting the co-creative process involves producing a combination of media that, as they are juxtaposed, can be activated discursively in the archive. As I started my study of the Skol-CEDA project archive by reading the reports on the Skol website, I became broadly familiarized with the project's objectives and results. Written in a style common to funding reports, the major points were summarized succinctly. Afterwards, I read through the following archived digital documents with an applied triangulation: workshop outlines, participant evaluations (both audio recordings and text) and visual documentation (photo and video). The workshop outlines oriented me towards the intended artistic direction of the project and outlined the conceptual framework that informed the discussions during the workshops and thus the produced artworks. The evaluations then offered insight into the participants' impressions of how the group dynamics affected the actualization of the project. Finally, the visual depictions provided by the photos and videos recordings, both vivid mnemonic devices, confirmed the narrative's status as a lived and shared experience.[128] The pictures also contributed a visual representation of the artworks and a more intimate understanding of the spatial layout of the workshops.

As Adriana, Danielle and the three contributing artists indicated during the interviews I conducted with them, the documents were primarily created as referential tools for internal group evaluation, as visual memory for the participants and to aid in

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[128] The notion of photography and film as a realist mnemonic device can be attributed to Alun Munslow. *Narrative and History*. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 67.

writing the grant reports. The evident benefit to this approach was that their focus was on

maintaining inclusion and communication with the participants as well as gaining their

trust. However, the afterlife of the documents, or how the archive may eventually be

interpreted to inform social memory, was a secondary consideration.

The individual and group evaluations were instrumental in providing a vehicle for

constructive criticism and for measuring how well the participants' aspirations were

being met. Introduced into the collaboration directly after the public presentation of

L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre,

> the evaluation process began with the CEDA literacy program participants,
> the artist Catherine Sylvain, Adriana de Oliveira and Danielle Arcand.
> Adriana and Danielle created a questionnaire together for the CEDA
> participants. As a means of insuring objectivity in the participants' responses,
> the group evaluation was conducted by a colleague from CEDA who did not
> participate in the project but was affiliated with the literacy program.[129]

Evaluations were employed as a means of facilitating negotiations and developing a sense

of trust amongst the participants. As the annual report from 2006 states, "the energy of

the project was located as much in the production of the artwork as in negotiations with

one another and in the development of a sense of mutual confidence. This process

involved a significant investment of time. Nevertheless, it resulted in a better

understanding of our respective cultures."[130]

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[129] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: 2007_rapport_CEDA.pdf. Original text is translated from French to English: " Suite au lancement nous avons initié le processus d'évaluation du projet avec les participants en alphabétisation ainsi qu'avec l'artiste Catherine Sylvain, l'éducatrice en art Adriana de Oliveira et l'animatrice en alpha Danielle Arcand. Ces dernières ont collaboré à l'élaboration d'un questionnaire d'évaluation adapté à la specificité du groupe (voire Annexe 1). Afin d'assurer l'objectivité des réponses, l'évaluation auprès des participants en alpha a été menée par une collègue de l'animatrice Danielle Arcand, aussi du secteur alpha du CEDA."

[130] Original text translated from French to English by author: "l'énergie du projet s'est située autant dans la production de l'oeuvre que dans la négociation avec l'autre et le développement de la confiance mutuelle. Un tel processus nécessite un important investissement en temps. Il en résulte toutefois une meilleure compréhension de nos cultures respectives." From document founding folder phase2_2006-2007 > rapport2 > 2007_rapport_CEDA.pdf

The evaluations from Catherine Sylvain, Adriana de Oliveira and Danielle Arcand were originally typed and are saved as texts. The CEDA participants' group evaluation was conducted orally and then transcribed by the CEDA literacy facilitator who oversaw the conversation. After the CEDA participants' comments were paraphrased, they were typed and saved as text (Appendix 3). During the second year, the frequency of these evaluations increased to include an informal group evaluation at the end of each workshop in addition to the evaluations conducted after the artwork was presented at the end of the session. Again, most of the evaluations were saved as texts, however the group evaluation with the CEDA participants was also recorded in audio format. As the report from 2007 indicates, because the collaborators had cultivated trust and a rapport, Adriana and Danielle felt that the responses from CEDA participants were less likely to be self-edited. The evaluation therefore consisted of a critical group dialogue based on a questionnaire "adapted to the group and the nature of the project"[131] (Appendix 4). In the folder for the final year, the individual evaluations for the artists and coordinators were again saved as text. The CEDA participants' evaluation was conducted as a group conversation in presence of all co-creators. The resulting conversation was noted in transcribed, summary format and saved as written text only.[132]

While workshop outlines and the photographs certainly contribute illustrative aspects of the collaboration, the evaluations are instrumental in highlighting the personal

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[131] Skol-CEDA project digital archive: phase3_2007-2008 > Rapport final Skol CEDA > Rapport final_skol_ceda.doc

Cette année, nous avons convenu de faire une évaluation finale en présence de tous les co-créateurs.[131] Le rapport de confiance « récolté » dans cette déuxième phase du projet a facilité l'objectivité des réponses des participants en alpha, en présence de l'artiste et de l'enseignante en arts. L'évaluation consistait en un dialogue critique à partir d'un questionnaire d'évaluation adapté à la specificité du groupe et à la nature du projet.

[132] I did not find the notes from the last group evaluation in the digital files. After consulting Adriana about this, she suggested that perhaps the notes were hand written only and saved on paper. She attributed fatigue to why there was not more discipline in saving a recording or typing the notes.

and social significance of pivotal moments during the collaboration. Consequently, when the comments from the participant evaluations are cross-referenced with the other documents, the project's narrative is nuanced with a depth afforded by joyous sentiment as well as expressions of frustration. For example, during the first year, after reading Danielle's first evaluation, I gained a deeper appreciation for how challenging it may have seemed to interweave the "cultural differences" between the CEDA community and the contemporary art contexts.[133] She indicated that there were tensions around how to ensure that aesthetic decisions were made as a group and not manipulated by the artist. She was concerned that the tenets of popular literacy education espoused by CEDA could also otherwise be compromised while the Skol collaborators developed a better understanding of how to work according to this pedagogical model.[134] Furthermore, in the evaluations from Adriana and Catherine, they both noted that they struggled with how to strike a balance between the role of the artist and the CEDA participants. Meeting notes also indicate that conversations were instigated specifically to address this concern. The following two items included the *List of Recommendations* also indicate that this on-going process of negotiation informed the group's collaborative process:

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[133] Skol-CEDA project digital archive. Document: phase1_2005-2006 > éval&compterenduannée1 > évaluations_fin > évaluation_sylvain.doc. Catherine Sylvain wrote in her evaluation:
"Nous avons réussi à co-créer et à tisser des liens entre le milieu communautaire et celui de l'art actuel. Les participants semblent s'être réalisés, les animatrices aussi et le CEDA lui-même s'est teinté de cette rencontre. Ce projet qui fut en quelque sorte un laboratoire permet l'amorce d'une définition de la co-création en milieu communautaire. Cette expérience aidera Skol à orienter ses prochains projets de co-création."

[134] Skol-CEDA project digital archive. Surmised from comments in Danielle's evaluation. Document: phase1_2005-2006 > éval&compterenduannée1 > évaluations_fin > éval_danielle_1.doc

- Define each collaborator's role
- With members of the community, define the decision-making process to be used in the artistic collaboration[135]

During the second and third year, the evaluations continue to provide traces of how the participants experienced their involvement in the project. For example, in 2007, during the final group evaluation with the CEDA participants, they were asked what they liked most about the project. Gérald Allaire commented that,

> C'est bien de rencontrer du nouveau monde tu sais. Ce que tu fait comme travail, quoi que tu nous emmène l'expérience que vous avez aussi tu sais. C'est plus facile à voir les artistes, c'est quoi leur travail exactement. T'es pas tout le temps là pour savoir comment c'est monté, comment c'est fait, déjà là, avec un atelier comme ça c'est fort parce que t'apprend.[136]

Because the artists and Adriana contributed their experience as well, it was now easier for Gérald to see how artists worked. Essentially, through the workshops, he was able to learn how to create projections like those they created for *Concierge Demandé.* From Gérald's comments, one can derive that the collaboration between the artists and CEDA participants was appreciated. There was an exchange of ideas and skills that was meaningful to all parties involved. The participants were encouraged to elaborate on their conception of stage design according to their skill level and aesthetic inclinations. This demonstrates that as the project progressed, the co-creative process was adapted to the participants' experience and working rhythms. There also seems to be a working balance amongst the participants' skills and interests.[137]

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[135] Skol-CEDA project digital archive. Document: other > recommandations > Recommendations - Skol-CEDA ENG.doc

[136] Skol-CEDA project digital archive. From transcription of audio recording (on mp3), August 6, 2007. Document: phase2_2006-2007 > évaluation > Éval_participants_2006.doc

[137] The *List of Recommendations* includes these two observations:

As is evident from the project description in Chapter 3, the photos compliment the evaluations by depicting the participants at work as they make objects, rehearse for the projections, and simply interact during the creative process. Also, because the photos show what the collaborators look like, it becomes easier to imagine the project's narrative. Particularly during the final year of the collaboration the large number of photographs and the multiple workshop outlines provide ample content for deciphering what took place. However, it is only while reading the evaluations that I learned, for instance, that there were challenges presented by the group's cognitive dissonance. [138] There were also problems related to absenteeism, group fatigue, the search for a common vocabulary, and how to best determine the steps to follow for each project. The artist Christine Brault articulated some of these concerns in her evaluation in response to the question, "what were the challenges to note in collaborative art endeavors?" Christine wrote that she needed to simplify her vocabulary so that everybody could understand the artistic intention and the creative process she was proposing. [139] She also mentioned that she needed to be a good listener and give maximum attention possible to each person. However, she also raised the point that the amount of leadership granted to the artist was unclear in relation to the expectations of the two respective organizations, Skol and CEDA. She felt it was also necessary that the limitations of each coordinator and the

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Adapt the concept and creative process to community members values, experiences, abilities, and working rhythms; and Ensure an equal balance between the artist's expertise and the community members' interests and experiences

[138] UC Berkley Library. Regional Office for Oral History. http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/cba/index.html. (Accessed February 19, 2011)

The term "cognitive dissonance" should be attributed to Noah Purify, a California-based community art activist. He explains that "cognitive dissonance" [...] occurs when two world views come into contact as a positive force generating productive change on the artist's conception of what art can do as well as on the community's understanding of how "aesthetic process" contributes to clarifying the problems communities face."

[139] Skol-CEDA project digital archive. Document: évaluation_christine.doc. April 7, 2008.

artist be better clarified. Finally, she also strongly suggested that artists should attend the

literacy classes before the creative collaboration began. Thus, while doing this might

enable the participants to familiarize themselves with one another before they began the

project, they might also adapt better as a group once in the co-creative environment.[140]

While I cite only a few examples here, my objective is to tease out the voices

nestled within the evaluations. Through the personal accounts I have become privy to a

multiplicity of impressions; various facets of the narrative prism have been revealed. The

descriptions of interactions and revelations help to animate the Skol-CEDA project

archive and represent the co-creative process as a lived experience. However, it is

important to acknowledge that, because the evaluation questions were formulated by

Adriana and Danielle, the responses were specific to the parameters of the framework

they devised. While the primary function of the evaluations was to help establish a

healthy collaborative dynamic between the participants, once they became archived

documents, they entered the realm of public memory and are now vital resources for

historical research.

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[140] *Ibid.* Original text in French reads:
  "Quel était le(s) défi(s) à relever dans cette démarche artistique collaborative?
  Simplifier le vocabulaire que j'utilisais afin que tous puissent comprendre la démarche artistique, la marche à suivre selon les étapes des divers projets; être à l'écoute de tous et donner un maximum d'attention à chacun, en quelque sorte de développer une notion périphérique.
  De plus, la question du leadership accordé à l'artiste VS les attentes des représentants de SKOL et du CEDA ; nécessité de baliser et de clarifier les mandats et les limites d'interventions de chaque partie. Pour répondre à cet important défi, je crois fermement que l'intégration de l'artiste aux ateliers d'Alpha avant de débuter le processus de co-création serait nécessaire afin que l'artiste puisse prendre sa place au sein du   groupe et être à l'aise de la prendre. Il-elle connaîtrait ainsi davantage la problématique avec laquelle il-elle aura à travailler et les participants qui la vivent."

5b. The sphere of public memory

Returning once more to the impetus for this thesis topic, the 2006 project report indicates that one of the group's objectives was to develop a methodology for "documenting traces of the creative process for co-creative projects in the community context."[141] My analysis of the Skol-CEDA archive indicates, through their experimentations, three types of documents produced were the most successful in conveying the creative process: participant evaluations, visual records through photos and video, and workshop outlines. The archive effectively provides descriptive evidence that the creative process was generated from an intersection of personal interests, skills and aesthetics amongst the participants.

However, the individual evaluations and most of the photos are currently only accessible if one knows to ask if they can access the digital archive. It is also not readily evident from the website content that an archive even exists or may be available to the public. My introduction to the archive came when Adriana informally mentioned during our interview in 2009 that she was interested in further developing how the project was represented on the website. She then mentioned that there were many documents that were not featured on the website, including many more photos, audio recordings and videos. We briefly brainstormed about adding a photo-essay or presenting the video recording of *Concierge Demandé*. However, there are practical and ethical considerations that might preclude this initiative. For example, because Adriana is well occupied with on-going educational programming at Skol she would have to dedicate time to creating a

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[141] Skol-CEDA project archive. Document: 2006_rapport_CEDA_phase1

publication. There is currently no funding for such an endeavour. Also, because the

evaluations were never intended for public consumption it could be a breach of privacy to

extract comments.

The experimentations devised during the Skol-CEDA project for establishing a

documenting methodology can certainly provide helpful solutions for how to leave traces

of the creative process, but this case study also raises questions around how to best to

employ documents as representational devices for public memory initiatives. How can a

documentation methodology account for the eventual publication of the archive contents?

Since the Skol website is currently the most accessible source of information about the

project and Adriana expressed an interest in developing the current content, it seems

relevant to explore how on-line publications might integrate documents that depict the

co-creative process.

For comparative purposes, I searched the web for other examples of on-line

projects that featured comments from the project participants and seemed to be guided by

a spirit of shared authorship similar to that of the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration.

Through a link on the Community Art Network website, I learned about the Mount

Shasta Peace Mural Oral History Project. Unveiled on September 30, 2007, The Mount

Shasta Community Peace Mural is located in Visitor's Bureau Park, Mount Shasta,

California (USA). It is 8' x 20' and depicts what various community members see as their

"Vision of Peace."[142]

There are, in fact, two websites dedicated to the Mount Shasta Peace Mural. The

first website is hosted by the Siskiyou Arts Council, the non-profit corporation which

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[142] Peace Walls and Murals Around the World. http://peace.maripo.com/p_walls.htm (Accessed February 18, 2011)

serves as the local arts planning and programming agency for Siskiyou County, California, where the town of Mt. Shasta is located. The website features a photo gallery which follows the creation of the piece mural as well as text interviews with the mural project coordinator and the ceramic artist, Jenny Johnson. There are also two off-site links, one an audio recording of a public radio piece and another to a related published article (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Mt Shasta Peace Mural project page on Siskiyou Arts Council website

However, there are an additional twelve interviews with the lead artist, project coordinator and ten community members featured on a separate website hosted by the Regional Oral History Office at the Bancroft Library, University of California Berkley.[143]

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[143] UC Berkley, Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office:
http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/cba/index.html (Accesses February 18, 2010).

As is explained on the Bancroft Library website, during the interviews with the

coordinator and artist they explained the "process of designing the mural, enlisting

community support, coordinating the contributions of volunteers, and then finding a

permanent site for the mural."[144] The interviews with the community members,

accessible as transcripts on the website (Figure 34), elaborate on the story by describing

"how one community responded to the beginning of the Iraq war by participating in a

public art project that required sharing the many different ideas of peace held by residents
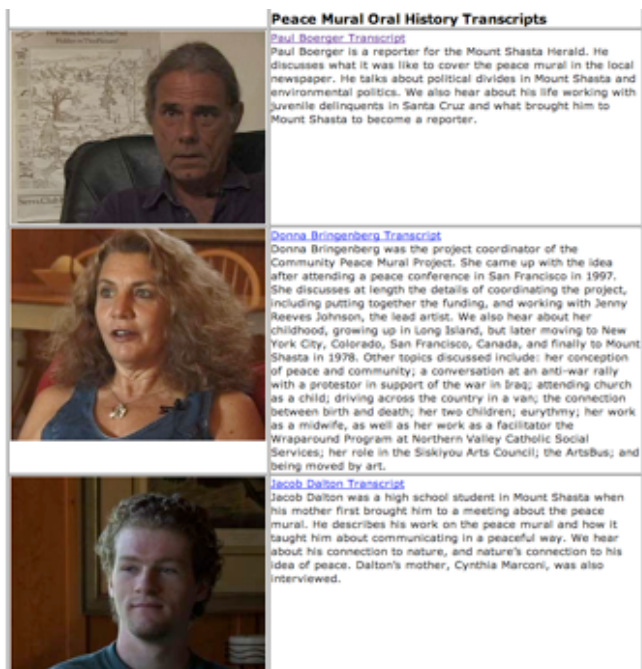
of this largely rural county."[145]

Figure 34: Mt. Shasta Peace Mural oral history project website

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[144] UC Berkley, Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office:
http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/cba/index.html (Accessed February 18, 2011)

[145] *Ibid.*

The interviews were conducted between 2006-2007, when the mural was still in production. This collection of interviews is similar to those compiled through the Skol-CEDA evaluations in that they provide personal anecdotes and subjective descriptions of the creative process. They are also both guided by questions proposed by an assigned interviewer/oral historian. That said, the evident distinction is that the interviews from the Mt. Shasta oral history project were conducted with the purpose of informing the public about the mural's historical significance. Also only a select number of participants were interviewed. The technique for recording the Mt. Shasta mural interviews also differed from that used by Skol-CEDA team in that it followed a specific protocol designed for oral history methods. In fact, each interview is introduced with the following text that offers an orientation about the interviewing process and the objectives of oral history:

> Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. [...] Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.[146]

The interview is emphasized as an important document in the article "How to Document an Event" written by Linda Frye Burhnam and further corroborated by the Skol-CEDA approach to documented. Given the interviews' narrative potential, I would

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[146] Regional Oral History Office. UC Berkley, California. *Mount Shasta Community Peace Mural Oral History Project.* Interview with Paul Boerger. Interviewed by Jess Rigelhaupt, 2006. http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/boerger_paul.pdf (Accessed February 18, 2011)

argue that an increased awareness of oral history techniques could prove useful for composing historical narratives of community art projects. For example, while the evaluations saved from the Skol-CEDA collaboration were for a very specific purpose, there could have also been a dedicated period for a collection of anecdotes that were intended for the public to read or hear. While the Mt. Shasta Peace Mural interviews were transcribed, it is also feasible and perhaps less labor intensive to present the interviews on-line in the original recorded audio. The resulting interviews could be accompanied with a combination of complimentary documents collected during the creative process, such as more photographs and perhaps even some scanned images of material that remains from the projects (ie. the paper leaves). However, as I indicated in the introduction, I am well aware of the time, commitment and funding this type of documentation project requires. If already, the collaborative experience can be demanding and perhaps draining, it is reasonable that no matter how simple or complex it may seem, an oral history project or an on-line public history initiative would merit further coordination, perhaps some technical support as well as funding dedicated to a period for public presentation.[147]

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[147] During the interview I conducted with Devora Neumark as part of the preliminary research for this thesis, she generously shared forty-six unedited transcribed interviews with participants from the community art projects that were funded and facilitated by Levier between 2002 and 2007. While I did not read all of the interviews, Devora informed me that the interviews were inspired by oral history methods, but were conducted in a less linear and guided fashion as the Skol-CEDA evaluations and the Mt. Shasta Peace Mural Oral History Project.

My impression is that Levier invested impressive amounts of time and resources into the conducting and collaboratively transcribing these interviews, all of which should be included in the publication, *Documenting Collaboration: 69 Community Art Projects in Québec and Beyond,* which is anticipated for publication in Spring 2011. The Levier team has been preparing this publication for over three years.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this case study was to investigate what can be learned from the approach to documenting employed during the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration. I reviewed the methods and media that were used to document traces of the creative process. I found that a referential triangulation between visual mnemonic devices, workshop outlines, and participant evaluations provided a multi-faceted depiction of the collaboration's development. In particular, I discovered that the participant evaluations serve a critical narrative function by contributing first hand accounts that help illustrate the project's lived history.

According to Adriana de Oliveira, Danielle Arcand and the three collaborating artists, the primary function of the documents produced during the project was to assist the participants with monitoring if the project was progressing well and determining how it could be improved. While the photos and videos were saved to record events, it was unclear if they would be reused or distributed in a context other than for grant reports. The workshop outlines, meeting notes, and other items such as press releases were also useful in that they left an administrative trail which complimented the documentation and helped maintain organizational transparency. The documentation methodology used by the Skol-CEDA group was, as the *Community Art Handbook* suggested, effectively an extension of the work process and an important consideration from the beginning of the project.

However, there was limited consideration granted to how the archived documents would be presented to the public in a format that could communicate the project's historical significance. After the conclusion of the collaboration, the collection of

documents were simply gathered into an archive and stored for historical posterity and a few select items were published on the Skol website. Given that the Skol website is the only and most accessible space in the public sphere where the documents are referenced, I was compelled to research how other collaborative community art projects have presented their project histories on-line. A comparison to the on-line information about the Mt. Shasta Peace Mural pointed to the possibility of featuring multiple media on the website and demonstrated that interviews can enhance public memory initiatives when oral history practices are applied to the documentation methodology.

Based on the analysis of the Skol-CEDA project, if I were to draft a list of recommendations specifically geared towards documenting the co-creative process in a community context, I would include the following points of consideration:

- Documents influence how we learn about our past and shape how histories are constructed.

- Recording or documenting community artwork is valuable to those who participate in the project, to the future of the communities involved, and to art history in general.

- Documents provide tangible material that can be shared between communities and increase awareness about community art practices.

- Participants want to recognize themselves in the story of the project. By employing methods of auto-documentation, a spirit of shared authorship is acknowledged in the historical narratives of community art collaborations. Inclusive documentation that

is integrated into subsequent public memory projects reiterates that, as communities, we have the power to shape our future.[148]

- If possible, share knowledge by asking other groups how they documented and how they would recommend approaching it.

- Ideally, funding should be allocated for materials and human resources needed to document during the project as well as for public memory initiatives that are produced from the resulting documents.

- Announce the presence of the archive on your website or in another public forum. There may be somebody interested in learning about the project.

- Address the idea of documenting with the participants from the beginning of the project. Ask the participants what approach they think would best suit the group dynamic. All participants can be invited to suggest what, when and how they would like to document. Members of the group can be given responsibility for specific tasks.

- It is helpful to appoint one or two people to guide the documentation process and ensure that items are well saved and organized. Actually dividing labour and acknowledging an expertise is an asset for documenting. For example, one participant could be comfortable contributing photographic services while another may be astute with archival indexing. Identify your interests and abilities and delegate accordingly.

- Decide where the documents will be saved and who will be the person delegated for continuity. In other words, this person will be the contact for those who would like to access the archive in the future.

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[148] This was inspired by comments shared by Dr. David Scobey during *History & Memory as Media of Citizenship,* the workshop he presented at Concordia University, March 18th, 2011.

- Also, you can organize the documents by simply labeling folders chronologically, by event and by document type (ie photos, evaluations, audio recordings). Often the meta-data for photographs can also be edited to assist with computer-based searches. As the Skol-CEDA digital archive exemplifies, vast amounts of material can be saved and made publically accessible by being diligent with your archival system. However, if some documents should remain private, place them in a safe separate place.

- Documentation should not be more labor intensive than the creative process. It is an extension of the collaboration and should be in line with the group's estimated abilities, time and resources.

- Try to use documenting media such as digital photography that is relatively affordable and easily transferrable to a digital platform. In combination with scanned images of collecting scraps (ie. pieces of the artwork or promotional material) and recording group discussions with an inexpensive mp3 recorder, the photos can be compiled for a slide show on a basic editing software such as, for example, imovie on Macintosh.

- As the collaboration evolves, be open to modifications in the approach to documentation. The methodology should reflect the same principles of inclusion and respect that are endorsed by the project, however as group dynamics shift, so too may the method of documenting.

- Encourage honesty in evaluations and inclusion of the contestations that may have arisen. What were the "hard questions" or frictions that arose? What can be learned from them?

- If documenting during particular moments feels intrusive or if participants suggest they are uncomfortable, respect their right not to be photographed or otherwise recorded. Experiment with means of gathering accounts of experiences that maintain anonymity while providing great detail and personal reflection.

While the Skol-CEDA co-creative collaboration was officially completed in 2008, traces from the project still reside within the memories of the participants and the people close to them. *L'œuvre et la main-d'œuvre* is still hanging in the CEDA hallways, as is the welcome tree from *HLM Les Fleurs* which displays the colorful leaves found by local residents who were compelled to visit the centre. The audience present for *Concierge Demandé* can recall their impressions of the visual environment during the performance. There are also clients at *Dunkin' Donuts* who will remember a unique day when a sudden donut party broke out and disrupted their normal routine with a renewed appreciation for the potential of surprise. However, for those of us who will learn about the Skol-CEDA project in retrospect, the documents are our windows of insight into the past, invaluable narrative fragments to preserve. They shed light on shared memories and, as they influence publications such as this thesis, they enrich public dialogue and contribute to the formulation of social memory.

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APPENDIX 1:

PDF downloaded from the Skol website:

SKOL

Recommendations — Skol/CEDA Co-Creative Project

Our observations, shared experiences and the following recommendations[1] may help to orient subsequent collaborative projects:

- Be sensitive to the culture and mandate specific to each partner;

- Establish appropriate time and means for conception , preparation and evaluation of hands-on workshops;

- Identify from the outset the collaborators! personal and collective motivations and expectations;

- Define each collaborator!s role;

- With members of the community, define the decision-making process to be used in the artistic collaboration;

- Become familiar with the challenges that individual members of the community group face;

- Ensure that the individual members of the community group play an active role;

- Agree on group!s operating guidelines during creative workshops;

- Communicate to non-artist collaborators that risk-taking is a necessary part of the creative process;

- Adapt the concept and creative process to community members! values, experiences, abilities, and working rhythms;

- Ensure an equal balance between the artist!s expertise and the community members! interests and experiences;

- Ensure pedagogical support to artists;

- Guarantee the necessary time to integrate the artist into the community;

- The artist should be ready to make concessions regarding his or her personal aesthetic, as the work!s aesthetic will emerge from the general values of the community;

- Consolidate the relationship between the community group and Skol;

- Establish an agreement with regards to ownership of the work, copyrights, moral rights andacknowledgements, conservation and responsibility, access, and loans of the work.

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[1] These recommendations are based on the evaluations provided by the project collaborators (art educator, artists, "workshop participants," and Ceda facilitators).

APPENDIX 2:

From Skol-CEDA project digital archive :

Document: phase2_2006-2007 > Processus_ créatif.doc

Processus créatif: La créativité, l'œuvre ne se produit pas avec un éclair de génie. Elle est étroitement dépendante d'un processus qu'implique:

- L'identification de l'intention
- Motivation
- L'exploration et l'engagement avec des idées, questions…
- Différentes façons de voir et interpréter le monde
- Explorer son imagination
- "Parler" avec des images
- Choisir, manipuler et combiner des images/matériaux
- Voir, décrire et s'exprimer sur une image/œuvre
- L'exploration, la maîtrise et l'application des techniques/procédés
- Faire des liens entre les éléments formels (ex: ligne, forme, couleurs…) et le contenu (l'intention, but, idée…)
- Les prises des risques
- La résolution des problème (s)
- Faire des choix
- Faire des découvertes
- Le sense du jeu
- La confiance en soi et au processus
- Une pensée critique
- Les surprises
- L'émerveillement

From Skol-CEDA project digital archive :
Document: phase2_2006-2007 > évaluation> Questionnaireparticipants.doc

Questionnaire d'évaluation auprès de participants du projet année 2:

Participants: Gérald Allaire, Roland Cyr, Yves Doyon, Henriette Robertson, Gilles Brière et Alain Gervais

Objectives de l'atelier

- Créer un/des éléments de décors projetés pour la pièce de théatre *Concierge Demandé*.

- Ouvrir de pistes qui vont au-delà du décor plus traditionel.

- Consolider et élargir l'explorations artistiques explorés au projet précédent.

1. Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le plus dans les ateliers du jeudi?

2. Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le moins?

3. Qu'est-ce que tu as appris?

4. C'est quoi la différence entre les "décors meubles" et le "décors projetés"?

5. Qu'est-ce que tu ressens/penses des images/décors projetés?
                          -Images sur le plan individuel.
                          - vue d'ensemble

6. Qu'est-ce qu'il pourrait être améliorer?

7. Selon toi, as-tu fait de l'art ?

Questionnaire participants en alpha

1. Est-ce que les ateliers se sont déroulés comme vous pensiez que ça allait etre ?

2. Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le plus?

3. Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le moins?

4. Qu'est-ce que tu as trouvé le plus difficile?

5. Qu'est-ce que tu as appris?

6. T'es-tu senti écouté quand tu voulais parler?

7. T'es-tu senti compris quand tu disais ton idée?

8. Selon toi, pourquoi Adriana était là, c'était quoi son role dns l'atelier ?

9. Selon toi, pourquoi Danielle était là?

10. Selon toi, pourquoi Catherine était là?

11. Qu'est-ce que tu ressens/penses en regardant notre arbre?

12. Selon toi, as-tu fait de l'art ?

13. À quoi ça sert faire de l'art?

Évaluation SKOL
présence : Roland , Henriette, Sylia, Yves Doyon, Gérald

1. Déroulés comme vous pensiez?

   - Gérald & Henriette : Aucune idée précise de ce que ça pourrait être.

   - Roland : Danielle nous a simplement invités pour nous dire qu'on ferait un cadeau au Ceda pour le 35ième

   - Tout le monde : on savait qu'on ferait un cadeau au CEDA
   - Tout le monde on savait qu'on ferait une chose ensemble sauf
   - Syria : quand ils nous ont demandé d'amener un objet je pensait qu'on travaillerait avec le même matériel mais chacun un objet.

2- Qu'est-ce que tu as aimé le plus?

Syria : utiliser la caméra, prendre les photos personnes, ateliers...

Roland : Collage, utiliser la caméra, coller les photos sur l'arbre

Gérald : utiliser la caméra, prendre les photos personnes, ateliers..

Yves Doyon : utiliser la caméra, prendre les photos personnes, ateliers..

Henriette : j'ai tout aimé

3- Qu'est-ce que tu as moins aimé?

Henriette : décollér les photos

Syria :
- décollér les photos

- elles nous ont montré des catalogues avec les photos, je croyait qu'on ferait comme dans les livres mais il fallait les couper. On prend une belle photo et on la découpe.

Roland & Gérald : C'est nécessaire de négocier de dealer, c'est difficile mais pas le choix

Tous : Difficile de défaire le choix des autres

4- Qu'est-ce que tu as trouvé le plus difficile?

Collage décollage de photos, difficile de défaire ce que les autres on fait

5- Qu'est-ce que tu as appris?

Henriette : prendre des photos et se promener dans le CEDA

Gérald : faire un travail ensemble, faire de l'art ensemble, appris qu'on pouvait faire des choses avec des photos découpées,

Syria : l'utilisation de la caméra, travailler avec des photos pour faire quelque chose.

Roland : beaucoup aimé le catalogue, on peut faire des choses auxquelles il n'avait jamais pensé, faire une chose avec les photos, travailler ensemble.

Yves : utiliser la caméra mais difficile d'ajuster.

Le hibou : tout le monde a trouvé ça super

Henriette : la robe de mariée c'est fou

6. T'es-tu senti écouté quand tu voulais parler?

Roland ou Gérald : quand les gens disent ce qu'ils ont à dire pas de problème mais il y a qui boudait (Yves D'Aragon) c'est négatif, on est là pour faire des choses ensembles, mais il ne les faisait pas et regardait les autres. S'il n'est pas intéressé il peut s'en aller.

Unanimité là dessus : les gens n'ont pas aimé son attitude ça a eu un impact sur le groupe, pour eux il faut que les gens participent si non pas d'affaire là.

Syria : elle a préféré ne pas toujours dire ce qu'elle pense quand ça risquait de défaire ce que quelqu'un avait fait.

Henriette : a trouvé ça dure mais disait son idée pareille.

Roland, Gérald : pas de problème à dire leurs idées

Yves : j'ai pas réussit à le faire parler là-dessus

Gérald : Ce qui aidait c'est que c'était pas permanent on pouvait toujours rechanger.

Roland : oui on avait du contrôle

7. T'es-tu senti compris quand tu disais ton idée?

Tout le monde oui

8- Façon : processus décisionnel

- choisir les photos

Henriette : c'était dure

les autres : pas le choix il y en avait qui n'étaient pas bonnes, ils se sont sentis consultés sauf quand c'était évident que la photo est pas bonne Catherine décidait mais c'était correct parce qu'évident.

- construire l'arbre

On ne savait pas comment commencer, ils avaient vu les livres et le catalogue alors ils pensaient que ça serait dans le même genre mais pas rapport finalement.

- couleur de fond
ça a beaucoup aidé de voir sur l'ordinateur et les échantillons

9- Selon toi, pourquoi Adriana était là, c'était quoi son role dns l'atelier ?

C'est elle qui s'occupe des réunions, qui fait qu'on travaille ensemble, qu'on est un groupe, qu'on prend des décisions ensemble.

10. Selon toi, pourquoi Danielle était là?
Participante comme nous autres

11- Selon toi, pourquoi Catherine était là?

c'est le regard de l'artiste (Roland ou Gérald)
c'est elle qui choisissait les matériaux, elle a l'idée de base mais toujours elle nous consulte.

12- Qu'est-ce que tu ressens/penses en regardant notre arbre?

Ils ne peuvent répondre parce qu'ils ne l'ont pas vu l'arbre fini

13- Selon toi, as-tu fait de l'art ?
oui tout le monde

14-- à quoi ça sert?

Roland : on a fait une chose unique

Autres :

- faire de ses mains

Roland : ça représente beaucoup de choses, du sens, ça répond à des questions

- c'est bizarre impressionnant

Sylia et Henriette : on a fait de l'art

Gérald : Le titre est très bon

L'arbre parle de plein d'affaire : du CEDA des activités, de nous autres, du fait qu'on l'a fait de nos mains

Henriette : on l'a fait avec coeur

Notes :

J'ai l'impression que pour Roland et peut-être d'autres ce n'est pas clair si l'atelier est terminé ou non. Ça semble être lié au fait que l'arbre n'est pas terminé mais qu'eux ne sont plus dans le coup. Roland a clairement dit : ce qu'on ne savait pas c'est qu'on finirait pas l'arbre.

Syria a nommé les absences mais ça ne représente pas un problème quand on sait que la personne est intéressée.

Gérald a dit que c'est mieux de pas être nombreux parce qu'on travaille tous dans la même région de l'arbre trop de monde c'est pas bon. 4 personnes c'est correct mais en bas de ça moins bon.

Je leur ai demandé si 8 personnes étaient un bon nombre : oui
8 ou 9 correct mais psa beaucoup plus parce que plus difficile de travailler