

Reclaiming the Darling Foundry:  
From Post-Industrial Landscape to *Quartier Éphémère*

Shauna Janssen

A Thesis

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## Abstract

In 2000, *Quartier Éphémère*, a contemporary arts organization, reclaimed the ruins of the Darling Foundry, a nineteenth-century metalworks factory located in Griffintown, Montreal's historic industrial district. Like many deindustrialized landscapes, Griffintown is a reservoir of social, cultural and architectural history that remains a part of the urban palimpsest. It is in a constant state of transition. Some changes keep its past alive while other changes, such as private redevelopment schemes, have eradicated the past. Using the Darling Foundry as a case study, this thesis examines the adaptive reuse of post-industrial architecture for cultural purposes, the relationship between contemporary art practice and architecture, and the notion of place making. The reuse and rehabilitation of industrial ruins is necessarily related to their cultural meaning, questions of urban preservation and memory. This thesis asks, how does the artistic reclamation and reuse of abandoned and ruined spaces become an act of place making that contributes to the urban imaginary and cultural landscape of the city?

A critical interdisciplinary reading of the Darling Foundry's transformation, as well as the exhibitions and interventions in relation to the sites in which they occur, shows how contemporary, site-specific art projects and performances enact historical resonances that describe the mutual relationship between the sites and interventions. Using architectural history, cultural anthropology and methods specific to oral history practice, this thesis demonstrates how *Quartier Éphémère*'s initiatives create conditions

for rethinking the mutuality between historical architecture and communities in relation to their spatial narratives and cultural meaning.



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## Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	vii
Introduction	Reclaiming the Darling Foundry.....1
Chapter One	Rethinking the Cultural Meaning of Industrial Ruins:
	i) The Imaginary of Ruins.....23
	ii) From Aestheticization Towards a Nostalgia for Ruins.....32
	iii) Ephemeral Approaches to Urban Renewal.....37
Chapter Two	Urban Palimpsest as Cultural Landscape..... 41
Chapter Three	The <i>Poésie</i> of the Post-Industrial Landscape:
	i) The Performative Agency of Ruins..... 61
	ii) Urban Interventions..... 64
Conclusion.....	81
Figures.....	86
Bibliography.....	113
Appendix.....	121

## List of Figures

Information on the source of these figures can be found in the corresponding pages.

1. Map of <i>Faubourg des Récollets</i> and Griffintown, c.1834.....	86
2. Insurance map, detail of lots 1746 and 1747.....	87
3. Darling Foundry at 735 Ottawa Street.....	88
4. Archival photograph of workers in the Foundry c. 1940.....	89
5. Archival photograph of Darling Foundry complex c. 1920.....	90
6. Archival photograph of Griffintown and the <i>Faubourg des Récollets</i> c. 1990.....	91
7. Quartier Éphémère, 16 Prince Street, c.1998.....	92
8. Map of exhibition <i>Panique au faubourg</i> , 1997.....	93
9. Projection onto Silo no. 5, 1997.....	94
10. <i>Dia logue</i> , 1997.....	95
11. Detail of exterior of the Darling Foundry post-renovation, 2008.....	96
12. Archival photograph of the Darling Foundry in abandoned state, 1997.....	97
13. The Darling Foundry post-renovation, 2008.....	98
14. Interior of Darling Foundry main exhibition space, 2008.....	99
15. Detail of interior of main exhibition space, 2008.....	100
16. Detail of ceiling in main exhibition space, 2008.....	101
17. Image of exhibition “ <i>Le Nénuphar</i> ,” in main exhibition space, 2000.....	102
18. Interior of Cluny Café, 2009.....	103
19. Interior corridor to studios, 2008.....	104
20. Kitchen and common living space, 2008.....	105
21. “To Contest the Actual Truth of an Occurrence,” urban intervention, Paris 1999..	106

22. “RIP” Griffintown, 2008.....	107
23. <i>Calèche Rides</i> , Montreal 2008.....	108
24. “ <i>Ne pense pas petit</i> ,” 2008.....	109
25. “Make No \$mall Plans,” inscription on New City Gas Building, 2008.....	110
26. “Make No \$mall Plans,” performed at “Remember Griffintown,” 2008.....	111
27. “Urban Terrace,” 745 Ottawa Street, 2009.....	112

## Introduction

When we found the Bouffes du Nord, I saw at once that it was a ‘good’ space. What is a ‘good’ space? First of all, it musn’t be cold. The Bouffes is warm, because of its walls, which bear the scars and wrinkles of all it has been through in over a century of ups and downs. A good space can’t be neutral, for an impersonal sterility gives no food to the imagination. The Bouffes has the magic and the poetry of a ruin, and anyone who has allowed themselves to be invaded by the atmosphere of a ruin knows strongly how the imagination is let loose.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis is concerned with the diverse ways in which artists are reclaiming and adapting urban spaces for creative purposes and, in particular, how modernity’s ruins located within the interstitial spaces of the city have come to serve as sites and sources of inspiration for contemporary art practice. In short, with this thesis I seek to consider the relationship between art and space. My work in the theatre and within a number of diverse and alternative performance environments have motivated this inquiry into spaces of ruin and, more specifically, since they are theatres of memory, into what makes them “performative.”

Scholarly research within the fields of theatre and site-specific performance shows that performances or events occurring outside of traditional theatre buildings began to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century. In part, the phenomenon of artists reclaiming alternative spaces throughout the 1960s and 1970s was a response to a need for workspaces. In addition, the qualities of these found spaces, such as abandoned factories and ruined buildings, made them desirable spaces, which in turn served as

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Brook, quoted in the The Open Circle: Peter Brook’s Theatre Environment, eds., Andrew Todd and Jean-Guy Lecat ( London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2003) 25. Currently, Peter Brook is the director of the International Centre of Research for Theatre and since 1974, with his theatre company, has occupied the ruins of *Le théâtre des bouffes du nord*s in Paris.

sources of inspiration to artists.<sup>2</sup> The use of unconventional performance spaces has allowed artists to experiment with the parameters of scenography, performance styles, and to reconsider the performer-audience relationship. In this way, the sites themselves are embedded into the creation process.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the work of theatre artists such as Peter Brook and Richard Schechner became highly influential in terms of their use of non-traditional urban locations or “found” spaces. In Performance Theory (1988), Richard Schechner, the pioneer in environmental theatre practices, claimed that “[t]he transformation of space into place means to construct a theater; this transformation is accomplished by “writing on the space.”<sup>3</sup> In Schechner’s view, the utilization of the city as a stage in modern times evolved into a social and political movement. His hypothesis is that public spaces were transformed into “public arenas, testing grounds [and] stages for morality plays” through “civil rights marches and confrontation.”<sup>4</sup> For Schechner, the theatre is a social construction of cultural space. The experiments of theatre artist, Peter Brook in the making of theatre and, perhaps, even in his rejection of traditional theatre spaces, have

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<sup>2</sup> Julian Meyrick’s essay, “Filthy Spaces: The Investment of Non-Theatre Venues in Melbourne, 1990-1995,” suggests that the surplus of abandoned spaces in post-industrial cities throughout the 1980s and 1990s combined with the high cost of rent in traditional theatre spaces played a significant role in the development of site-specific performance practice. See Body Show/s: Australian Viewings of Live Performance, ed. Peta Tait (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 154-176.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Schechner, Performance Theory (New York: Routledge, 1988) 156.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Schechner, “6 Axioms for an Environmental Theatre,” The Drama Review (Spring 1968): 54-55.

influenced many artists to develop their work with found spaces and specific sites.<sup>5</sup>

Brook's theatrical experiments with space emphasize his concern with the relationship between the human gesture in space and the performer's relationship with the spectator.

In her essay, "Deep Dramaturgy: Excavating the Architecture of Site-Specific Performance" (2004), Heidi Taylor discusses the "unscripted *texts*" of space, suggesting that the creative processes at work in site-specific environments place an emphasis on embracing the unpredictability of the spatial and theatrical experience for both the audience and the performer.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, archeologist Mike Pearson and theatre practitioner Michael Shanks, in their discussion of site-specific performance, place an emphasis on the "sensorium and embodiment" of space. Suggesting that "sensoria" are constituted by site-specific performances, they claim: "[f]or performer and spectator alike the performance event exists as a locus of experiences - spatial, physical, emotional - preserved in the bodies and memories of the varying orders of participants: touch, proximity, texture."<sup>7</sup> In other words, specific sites are also chosen for the sensory associations they embody. According to cultural anthropologist David Howes, "the paradigm of 'embodiment' implies an integration of mind and body [whereas the]

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Brook, one of the twenty-first century's iconic theatre artists, has spent years creating theatre in found spaces such as streets, cafés, ancient ruins, and abandoned train depots, to name a few. He has also theorized at great lengths about the phenomenon of theatrical space, the relationship between space and performance, and how both the creator and the spectator experience space. See for example, The Empty Space (England: Penguin Books, 1970), and The Open Door (New York: Random House, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Heidi Taylor, "Deep Dramaturgy: Excavating the Architecture of Site-Specific Performance," The Canadian Theatre Review 119 (Summer 2004): 16-19.

<sup>7</sup> Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, Theatre/ Archeology (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) 54.

emergent paradigm of emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment.”<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the paradigm of embodiment, Howes explains that by understanding our relationship to space, both as a physical and a social environment, *emplacement* “allows us to reposition ourselves in relationship to the sensuous materiality of the world.”<sup>9</sup> In regard to the diverse ways in which artists are reusing urban spaces for creative purposes, this notion of emplacement is particularly relevant, I would argue, to the kinds of sites in which theatre artists such as Brook and Schechner, for example, are responding to and, more specifically, the processes by which the environment becomes a character in their creation process.

This thesis focuses on the adaptive reuse of the Darling Foundry, a nineteenth-century metallurgical factory. The ruin of the Darling Foundry was reclaimed by the contemporary arts organization, *Quartier Éphémère* (QE) in 2000, and in 2002 the site was partially transformed into a permanent gallery space for the exhibition and diffusion of contemporary art. The site was further converted into workshops, studios and residencies for artists in 2006.<sup>10</sup> The objective of this thesis is to consider how ruins operate as sites of performance and, more specifically, how the ruins of industrial architecture contribute to the cultural landscape of cities. In a broader context, this thesis is also concerned with the notion of indeterminate territories and the fate of marginal communities within cities. Within this context, I also seek to consider what a critical

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<sup>8</sup> Howes, *Empire of the Senses*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Howes, *Empire of the Senses*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> In 2001, *Sauvons Montréal* (Save Montreal), awarded *Quartier Éphémère* with the *Prix Orange* for their efforts to revitalize the foundry, an important part of Montreal’s architectural heritage.



interdisciplinary study of the Darling Foundry's adaptive reuse reveals about what is reconstituted within the urban imaginary and, in particular, in Montreal's post-industrial landscape. The exhibitions, installations, and interventions discussed in this thesis cannot be critically explored without considering how they relate to the Foundry's former function, its transformation and the relevant sites in which they occur.

The heart of this project resides in my long time fascination for urban ruins and a desire to understand their cultural meaning. The overall theoretical framework for this study situates my examination of the Darling Foundry's adaptive reuse within an interdisciplinary and "spatial-cultural" discourse. I borrow this term from art historian Rosalyn Deutsche who defines "spatial cultural" discourse as the interrelationship between "ideas about art, architecture and urban design, on the one hand, with theories of the city, social space, and public space, on the other."<sup>11</sup> Within this context, I examine the Foundry's transition through the fields of architectural history, cultural anthropology, and oral history. My background as a theatre practitioner is the lens through which these fields meet.

Abandoned industrial sites and their conversion into "creative/project spaces"<sup>12</sup> in Europe throughout the 1980s initially inspired my interdisciplinary investigation into the

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<sup>11</sup> See Rosalyn Deutsche, Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998) xi.

<sup>12</sup> Established in 2002, Artfactoriess is a French initiative that supports and promotes creative "project/spaces." The organization has defined these spaces as places of creativity, artistic production and elaboration, cross pollenization, experimentation and invention. See Fabrice Lextrait's summary report, "Wastelands, Laboratories, Factories, Squats, Multi-Discipline Projects ... a New Era of Cultural Activity," <http://www.artfactoriess.net/The-report-of-Fabrice-Lextrait.html> (accessed 10 October 2006).

adaptive reuse of industrial ruins for cultural purposes. In response to artists' (re)appropriation of these spaces, the *TransEuropeHalles* (TEH), a network of independent cultural centers, was created in 1983. Since its inception, the TEH has brought visibility to the heritage value of industrial architecture and its reuse for cultural purposes throughout Europe. Moreover, the proliferation of abandoned industrial spaces in Europe throughout the second half of the twentieth century has provided artists with *places* in which to create. In her introduction to *The Factories: Conversions for Urban Culture* (2002), Fazette Bordage, a pioneer in the reuse of abandoned space for artistic production and co-founder of *TransEuropeHalles*,<sup>13</sup> writes,

At a time when the role of art in society is being radically re-examined, these places [industrial ruins], strongly charged with the history of a changing world, naturally become favoured territories for renewed links with contemporary society [...] in art, as in other realms of thought and action, [independent creative project spaces] fulfill the requirements, needs and desires to which classical cultural institutions respond poorly. They are ideal venues for art in evolution, whose form is not definitively fixed and for which one, cannot, by definition, anticipate the modes of expression.<sup>14</sup>

In order to understand the significance of the Darling Foundry's current life as a contemporary art gallery, I begin by briefly tracing the site's transition from a factory to a ruin and to its current life as a gallery space. In 1991, the Darling Foundry, located in

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<sup>13</sup> *TransEuropeHalles*, although it does not exist fiscally, is a resource platform committed to the development of an environment that supports the growth and network of artistic "project/ spaces" globally. For more information see TEH's mission statement at <http://www.teh.net> (accessed 1 September 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Fazette Bordage, *The Factories: Conversions for Urban Culture*, Trans. Leon Sagaru, Fazette Bordage ed. (Basil; Berlin; Boston: Birkhauser, 2002) 4.5.

Montreal's historic industrial district, the *Faubourg des Récollets* and Griffintown,<sup>15</sup> ceased its operations and the site sat abandoned for nearly ten years. Situated along the Lachine Canal, the *Faubourg des Récollets* and Griffintown were, historically, among the first suburbs in Montreal as well as the first neighbourhoods to develop into a locus for industrial activity beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Fig.1) The Darling Brothers Limited was an engineering corporation founded in 1880.<sup>16</sup> Specializing in the manufacture of heating equipment, elevators, steam appliances and centrifugal pumps, the Darling Brothers' operations made a significant contribution to Montreal's industrial activity throughout the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Darling Brothers established their business in the *Faubourg* at 735 Ottawa Street in a single storey building on a lot formerly owned by the Ives and Allan Company. (Fig. 2) At this time, the primary function of the Darling Foundry was the crafting of patterns and molds used in the Foundry's sand melting techniques.<sup>17</sup> As

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<sup>15</sup> Originally known as the Nazareth fief, the district was renamed Griffintown in 1799. The name is derived from Mary Griffin who illegally obtained the land rights to the district. The *Faubourg des Récollets* refers to the Franciscan monks who settled in the area in the seventeenth century. The northeast section of the district was officially renamed the *Faubourg des Récollets* in 1990. See *Récollets: Les quartiers du centre-ville du Montréal/Montreal's Downtown Neighbourhoods* (Montreal: Sauvons Montréal/Save Montreal, 1977): 30. And so, both names are commonly used when referring to the district.

<sup>16</sup> The company was co-founded by brothers Arthur J. Darling (1863-1915) and George Darling (1866-1925). Both brothers were well educated, Arthur J. Darling having trained in engineering under the employ of the Grand Trunk Railroad. In 1901, their younger brother Edward Darling (1873-1956), a trained engineer-draftsman, joined the company. See William Henry Wood, ed., *The Storied Province of Quebec: Past and Present* (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Company, Ltd., 1931).

<sup>17</sup> For an excellent description of foundry processes see Henry Bromley's *Fire In the Blood: A History of British Columbia and Alberta Foundries* (Vancouver: Asterisk Communications, 1995).

Montreal's "continental economy" continued to grow, many local manufacturers were forced to confront the increasing demand for new workspace.<sup>18</sup> In 1889, the Darling Brothers retained the services of architect John R. Gardiner (1866-1956)<sup>19</sup> to build an addition to the existing site. The multi-storey brick complex incorporates unique and decorative architectural features deriving from its industrial function and is characterized by symmetrical arched entrances, guillotine windows, a wooden cornice and doors. (Fig. 3)

In 1918, the Darling Brothers commissioned T. Pringle and Son, the first civil engineering firm in Montreal, to construct a foundry adjacent to the west side of the original building that allowed for the expansion of the Darling Brothers' metalwork production.<sup>20</sup> The addition of this building at 745 Ottawa Street facilitated a more efficient arrangement for handling materials and the choreography of the workers. Fifty to eighty workers could occupy the space at one time and the number of Darling

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<sup>18</sup> Robert David Lewis, Manufacturing Montreal: The Making of An Industrial Landscape 1850-1930 (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000) 222.

<sup>19</sup> During the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, while industrial building projects were considered to be the domain of engineers with regards to their function *and* aesthetic, these projects also became the concern of architects. In his 1956 article, "Materials Handling and Industrial Architecture," architect-engineer Irving E. Ingraham notes that the "modern integration of architecture and engineering [was] appropriately called Industrial Architecture[.]" See Buildings for Industry: An Architectural Record Book (United States: F.W Dodge Corporation, 1957) 10.

<sup>20</sup> For a thorough analysis of design concepts related to the construction of industrial architecture see Buildings for Industry. See also Jean Bélisle's discussion of vernacular architecture and industrial design techniques in his essay, "From Lac à la Loutre to the Sainte-Gabrielle Locks" in An Industrial Landscape Observed: The Lachine Canal, 14 July to 25 October 1992 (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture/Centre canadien d'architecture, 1992): 9-12.

Brothers' employees increased to nearly two hundred. (Fig. 4) By 1927, the Darling Brothers were operating out of a complex comprised of four buildings within the *Faubourg des Récollets* and employed approximately eight hundred workers.<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 5)

Following the Great Depression, Montreal, like many large industrial cities, began to shift from an economy based on industrial production to one of consumerism. Working class neighbourhoods like the *Faubourg des Récollets* were the first to be affected by the repercussions of the fluctuating economy, technological progress and the re-organization of transportation and trade routes that occurred throughout the twentieth century. A key factor resulting in the deindustrialization of the district was the closure of the Lachine Canal in 1959. However, the cultural landscape of this neighbourhood had already begun to transform with the earlier construction of the Canadian National Railway overpass in the 1940s and the Bonaventure Expressway in 1965, a development that isolated the neighbourhood from the downtown core and further severed the historic district in two. (Fig. 6) These ruptures within Montreal's urban fabric coincided with the rise of modernist planning and the city's preparations to host Expo '67. Between 1966 and 1990, nearly two hundred buildings in Montreal were destroyed, including seventy-five historic buildings situated in the *Faubourg des Récollets* and Griffintown.<sup>22</sup> In most cases,

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<sup>21</sup> Guy Mongrain, "*Le Site initial de la fonderie Darling: un siècle de métallurgie à travers des témoins remarquables*" (*Montreal: Société de développement de Montréal*, 2000) 27.

<sup>22</sup> These historical facts were taken from two different French texts and are my translation. For a thorough architectural analysis on the evolution of Montreal's built industrial heritage, specifically in Griffintown and the *Faubourg des Récollets*, see Mongrain, "*Le Site initial de la fonderie darling: un siècle de métallurgie à travers des témoins remarquables*," and Carey Luc, *Un quartier en mutation: Le sud du Faubourg des Récollets, 1930-1996* (*Montréal: Société de développement de Montréal*, 1996).

parking lots replaced the demolished buildings and sites. In addition to the erasure of many buildings, in 1963 the district was re-zoned “light industrial,” which further marginalized the neighbourhood by making it more complicated for the local population to retain their residential status. As recently as 1997, journalist Henry Lehman wrote an article for the local daily newspaper, *The Gazette*, describing the post-industrial landscape of the *Faubourg des Récollets* as “ungentrified wasteland,” a “subcontinent of brick and crab-grass,” and the “industrial Pompeii” of Montreal.<sup>23</sup> Only a small number of deteriorating and abandoned foundries, warehouses and factory spaces have escaped the depredations of urban planning and demolition over the past four decades.<sup>24</sup> The Darling Brothers’ Foundry is among these select few.

The initiatives of *Quartier Éphémère* made the Darling Foundry’s transformation possible. With a vision for bringing awareness to issues of architectural heritage, cultural identity and the collective memory of Montréal’s built environment, *Quartier Éphémère* established itself in Montreal by “invest[ing] in ‘in situ’ projects within vacant or abandoned industrial zones.”<sup>25</sup> Co-founded by Caroline Andrieux, *Quartier Éphémère* is the sister organization of *Usine Éphémère*, based in France. A native of France, Andrieux’s curatorial ambitions began with an interest in underground art movements and graffiti art. Throughout the 1980s, partly in response to the lack of resources and

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<sup>23</sup> Henry Lehman, “*Récollets* is Site for Art Among the Ruins,” *The Gazette* 21 June 1997: J6.

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed inventory of Montreal’s industrial architecture see *Communauté Urbaine de Montréal, Architecture Industrielle: Montréal (Montreal: Le Service, 1982)*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Quartier Éphémère*’s mandate at [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/quartier\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/quartier_e/index.html) (accessed 21 January 2008).

support from more established institutions, for emerging artists and under the auspices of *Usine Éphémère*, Andrieux began to curate temporary art installations in abandoned spaces and factories throughout Paris. At this time, contemporary Canadian artist and Montrealer, Marcus MacDonald,<sup>26</sup> was one of the many artists collaborating with Andrieux in Paris. Upon a return visit to Montreal, MacDonald brought Andrieux's work to the attention of Francine Royer and the *Ministère des affaires culturelles du Québec*.<sup>27</sup> An officer at the *Conseil des arts et des lettres* (CALQ), Royer was very conscious of the proliferation of abandoned spaces in the *Faubourg* and Griffintown and invited Andrieux to Montreal in 1992. In a 2008 interview, Andrieux recalled her first impression of the *Faubourg* and expressed how "[the *Faubourg*] was very interesting to me because I could see all of the potential of the spaces... I was interested in the [neighbourhood's] transition... it was very inspiring."<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, Andrieux established *Quartier Éphémère* in Montreal in 1994. The organization's first home was in an abandoned warehouse space located at 16 Prince Street in the *Faubourg*. (Fig. 7) In exchange for their occupancy and the maintenance of the space, the proprietor of the building, *Société de Développement de Montréal* (SDM), leased the space to Andrieux free of charge. The organization transformed the warehouse's 15,000 square feet of floor space into a gallery

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<sup>26</sup> Marcus MacDonald has since collaborated with *Quartier Éphémère* on projects such as "Proposition for three Tunnels." For more information about this exhibition and his work see [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir_e/index.html) (accessed 30 January 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Francine Royer, personal interview, 12 March 2009. Since 1994, Francine Royer has been chiefly responsible for the development and exchange between Quebec and international artist residencies within the *milieu* of visual arts.

<sup>28</sup> Caroline Andrieux, personal interview, 11 February 2008.

and six studios that accommodated local and visiting artists.<sup>29</sup> Between 1994 and 1996, the organization programmed a number of in situ installations, exhibitions and exchanges between French and Quebec artists.

In 1997, Andrieux conceived *Panique au Faubourg*.<sup>30</sup> The concept for this exhibition was to create an intervention within the post-industrial district that would reveal the past and potential of the overlooked neighbourhood.<sup>31</sup> Eleven artists were invited to participate and (re)interpret the history and architectural condition of a number of abandoned sites in the *Faubourg*, one of which included the Darling Foundry. (Fig. 8) Artists dealt with themes relevant to industrial ruins such as abandonment and memory. Interventions varied from industrial-themed videos projected onto the exterior of buildings, to allegorical images projected onto the grain elevator, Silo no. 5 in Montreal's port,<sup>32</sup> (Fig.9) to sculptural installations of recycled industrial artifacts recovered from the ruins of each site. (Fig.10) *Panique au Faubourg* was both an artistic and social intervention with the vestiges of Montreal's industrial history. These temporal installations transformed the abandoned spaces of the neighbourhood into poetic allusions that embraced the architectural and historical value of each site. In the words of art critic

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<sup>29</sup> Funding for these renovations came from miscellaneous sources such as local support and film rentals. The residencies were sponsored by a grant from the French government to support a visiting artists residency program.

<sup>30</sup> Images of all the installations and introductory texts can be found in the exhibition catalogue, *Panique au Faubourg* (Montreal: *Quartier Éphémère*, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> Andrieux, personal interview, 11 February 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Silo no. 5 stands in the basin of Montreal's old port. Built with clay tiles in 1905 and abandoned in 1995, Silo no. 5 is Canada's oldest standing grain elevator terminal and the last of its kind in North America. According to Heritage Montreal's sources, the Silo was named by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office as a "recognized building."



Donald Goodes, the “exhibition’s raise en scene elicits ‘panic’ – the panic of knowing that, with the passage of time, all that is valuable, prestigious and powerful in our society can be made obsolete.”<sup>33</sup>

For Andrieux, *Panique au Faubourg* was an act of reclaiming the neighbourhood’s industrial and cultural history through its architectural ruination. By temporarily transforming each site into an imaginative public space, Andrieux also explains that the exhibition was intended to heighten the public’s awareness about the cultural importance of each site:

[A]rtists reinterpret history... [they] can integrate historic points in a message that [they] want to bring out through art. It is a kind of reinterpretation of the history of the building. It is very strong especially when there is an intervention with an abandoned building... because the history is there... you can’t just separate it and do something that does not relate to it. It is a very interesting way for a visual artist, or any kind of artist, to bring to the conscience of people, how the history of a building, or this part of the city is important.<sup>34</sup>

In her exploration of collaborative processes within a community, Dolores Hayden echoes Andrieux’s sentiment and emphasizes how art and artists are key to creating new forms in the city that interpret the past in “resonant” ways. Artists, she states, “can work with missing pieces, or erasures of important aspects of history, so as to reestablish missing parts of the story.”<sup>35</sup>

In the 1999, *Quartier Éphémère*’s temporary lease at 16 Prince Street had expired and the organization was evicted from the building. At this time, Andrieux decided to

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<sup>33</sup> Donald Goodes, “The Factory,” *Canadian Art* Vol 14, 3 (Fall 1997): 100.

<sup>34</sup> Andrieux, personal interview, 3 December 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1996) 231.

focus the organization's energies into rehabilitating the abandoned Darling Foundry into a permanent center for contemporary art and artist residencies. In exchange for the organization's occupancy of the site and their efforts to raise the money for the Darling Foundry's renovation, Andrieux negotiated a twenty-year lease with the city of Montreal. By 2000, Andrieux and the organization were fund-raising from a trailer they had erected within the walls of the Foundry's ruin.

Due to budgetary constraints, the conversion of the site occurred in two phases. The architectural firm *Atelier In Situ*<sup>36</sup> realized the Foundry's conversion over an eighteen-month period. In part, *Atelier In Situ*'s approach to the Darling Foundry's renovation was inspired by the firm's 1996 conversion of the "Zone Building," an abandoned nineteenth-century ship repair warehouse located in Griffintown.<sup>37</sup> Architect Stéphane Pratte (*Atelier In Situ*) describes how the approach to their projects is based on establishing a dialogue between the old and the new.<sup>38</sup> "Our projects," he explains, are about "work[ing] with the culture of the space and memory of the site... It's important [for a city] to keep the density of its history. If we are always starting from scratch we are erasing memories."<sup>39</sup> Barry Curtis, a researcher in art, design and performing arts, echoes Pratte's engagement with the restoration of the Foundry by suggesting that the creation of a place through the

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<sup>36</sup> Architects Stéphane Pratte, Annie Lebel and Geneviève L'Heureux established *Atelier In Situ* in 1995. See <http://www.atelierinsitu.com/2006/> (accessed 21 January 2008).

<sup>37</sup> The building is owned by software giant, *Discreet Logique*. *Atelier In Situ* was awarded the *Prix Orange de Sauvons Montreal* in 1997 for the site's restoration.

<sup>38</sup> Stéphane Pratte, personal interview, 5 March 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Stéphane Pratte, personal interview, 5 March 2008.

recovery (or uncovering) of the past is inevitably linked to memory as well as “dialectically related to bringing the present into question.”<sup>40</sup>

*Atelier In Situ*'s project consisted of creating two exhibition spaces, the “Cluny” art bar and *Quartier Éphémère*'s administrative offices.<sup>41</sup> Built with brick, reinforced concrete and rebar, the exterior of the building still retains aspects of the building's decay and vulnerability. (Fig. 11) Nuanced with graffiti art, the Ottawa Street façade now incorporates a main entrance and the original guillotine windows were replaced with an expanse of modern glazed windows that wrap around the Prince Street façade. (Fig. 12 and 13) Inside, sheer volume and the natural light streaming into the main exhibition space are the most impressive aspects of the Foundry's interior. (Fig. 14) Redolent with ghosts, the building breathes an uncanny glamorous ambience. The clearest indication of the building's industrial character and ruin is found in the recesses built around the concrete columns punctured with rusting rebar, (Fig. 15) the rich patina of texture in the ceiling, and the existing masonry scarred and stained from heat and water damage. (Fig. 16) The Darling Foundry invariably evokes an aesthetic engagement and produces a sense of subjective agency, wherein as a visitor I am invited to wander freely among the art works within its post-industrial (and cultural) context.

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<sup>40</sup> Barry Curtis, “That Place Where: Some Thoughts on Memory and the City,” in The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space, eds. Iain Borden et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2001) 63-64.

<sup>41</sup> For a thorough analysis of design concepts related to the construction of industrial architecture see Buildings for Industry: An Architectural Record Book (United States: F.W Dodge Corporation, 1957). See also Bélisle.

For artists working at the Darling Foundry, the main gallery demands a certain kind of participation or “aesthetic engagement”<sup>42</sup> with the space. The art works *in relation to* the building’s former function and to its former status as *ruin* are what make the Darling Foundry unique as a gallery space. Andrieux’s curatorial approach encourages the artists to work in collaboration with the building and the space by inviting them to create with raw industrial artifacts and the material traces of the Foundry’s history. She explains: “with the [main exhibition] space, often artists tend to want to fill the volume. It is better to work with the space, [as] we say in French, in *contre-pied*.”<sup>43</sup> In so doing, artists using this space are contending with the site and the material traces of past events. To borrow from philosopher Arnold Berleant, the notion that “there is a creative reciprocity that can develop between a building and its users”<sup>44</sup> can be seen, for example, in Andréas Oldörp’s exhibition *Le Nénuphar*. (Fig. 17)

Oldörp’s installation played with the chemistry between fire, gas, copper, and the acoustic quality of the building. The exhibition consisted of small glass tubes that were strategically installed onto the north wall of the Foundry. While the installation merged with the *landscape* of the space and the beauty of its ruin, the installation simultaneously dissolved into the entropy and volume of the space. The hydrogen gas circulating through the tubes brought the acoustic qualities of the space into relief by inciting a dialogue

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<sup>42</sup> Arnold Berleant introduced the principle of “aesthetic engagement” in order to critique the “white cube” gallery and museum environments as places for the objectification and preservation of art. See *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992) 148.

<sup>43</sup> Caroline Andrieux, personal interview, 15 February 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 148.

between its industrial materials and the architectural body of the space.<sup>45</sup> Exhibitions such as *Le Nénuphar* demonstrate the mutuality of the art/ space relationship as well as the “performative” qualities of the building.

With the integration of “Cluny’s,” the Foundry has also become a social space and a scene populated mostly by people working in the Foundry and nearby high tech offices. The café’s industrial inheritance is also extensive. Obsolete industrial artifacts were recycled from leftover molds and fragments recovered from the Foundry’s pattern shop. Transformed into café tables, sculptural props and ornate objects, they lend themselves to the café’s decor. (Fig. 18) Eating at Cluny’s one would never suspect its strong (economic and social) affiliation with the exhibition spaces, because while the café is located adjacent to the main gallery and on the southwest axis of the building it remains quite separate from the rest of the complex. Eating at Cluny’s is strangely reminiscent of a factory cafeteria. Ironically, on the occasions that I was conducting fieldwork in the main exhibition space, I was keenly aware of Cluny’s as the din of the lunchtime crowd, freshly brewed coffee and the daily special wafted into the gallery, transforming the visual dimensions of the gallery into an auditory and olfactory experience.<sup>46</sup> Unintentionally and unexpectedly, Cluny’s contributes to yet another aspect of the Darling Foundry’s multi-sensory experience.

In 2004, Andrieux retained the services of *L’Office de l’éclectisme urbain et*

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<sup>45</sup> *Quartier Éphémère* curated the exhibition of “*Le Nénuphar*” in the Foundry prior to its restoration in 2000.

<sup>46</sup> For a fascinating examination of olfactory traces in architecture see Jim Drobnik, “Volatile Effects: Olfactory Dimensions of Art and Architecture,” in *Empire of the Senses*, ed. David Howes (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005) 265-280.

*fonctionnel (L'Oeuf)*<sup>47</sup> for the conversion of an adjacent building, formerly the Foundry's warehouse and pattern shops, into artist residences and workshops.<sup>48</sup> *L'Oeuf*'s creation of the artist studios was a joint project with the architectural firm Desnoyers Mercure and Associates. *L'Oeuf* was predominantly responsible for providing a redesign methodology while Desnoyers Mercure supervised the majority of the construction process.<sup>49</sup> Working with a modest budget and the building's ruin, architect Bernard Olivier explains that *L'Oeuf*'s approach to the building's adaptation was very pragmatic. In other words, there was no restorative aesthetic to their redesign methodology. Rather, the architects' adaptation of the building was based on their sensitivity towards the existing materials of the site, as well as working with the idiosyncrasies and narratives of the space.<sup>50</sup> In so doing, the building's previous functions, as well as its condition as a ruin, were integrated into the site's adaptation.

A large portion of the project's budget was earmarked towards reinforcing and

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<sup>47</sup> *L'Oeuf* is known for their expertise in the design of social housing projects and sustainable architecture. Projects include the redesign and master plans for Montreal's Benny Farm community (2002) and the St. Ambroise Residencies (1996), located in the working class neighbourhood of St. Henri. See <http://www.loeuf.com/bennyfarm/index.php.en> (accessed 1 February 2009).

<sup>48</sup> In 2004, *Quartier Éphémère* purchased the building from the city of Montreal for \$280,000.00.

<sup>49</sup> Founded in 1957 by Maurice Desnoyers, the architectural firm has been responsible for the construction and renovation of a number of buildings and notable sites throughout Montreal and Quebec in the last fifty years. Some of these sites include the Musée des Beaux Arts, 1991 (designed by Moshe Safdie), the Vendome metro (1970), the Faubourg Ste- Catherine (1993) and the renovation of the ancient Alcan Factory in Shawinigan, Quebec (2003). For a complete profile of the firm's projects see [http://www.dma-arch.com/DMA\\_fr/Home\\_fr.html](http://www.dma-arch.com/DMA_fr/Home_fr.html) (accessed 11 May 2009).

<sup>50</sup> Bernard Olivier, personal interview, 19 May 2009.

stabilizing the existing building. In order to facilitate direct access to the workshops and studios, a new entrance was cut into the building on the Queen Street façade. The building's original windows were replaced and recycled inside the corridor to the artists' studios. (Fig. 19) In order to provide as much luminosity and ventilation as possible for the common living area and shared kitchen, which are situated in the core of the building, additional skylights were installed.<sup>51</sup> (Fig. 20) The live-work studios are arranged on the second and third floors in the southeast axis of the building. Ten of these studios are reserved for local artists and three function as live-in ateliers for national and international artists. With the exception of the multi-media lab located on the second floor, workshops are situated at street level and provide artists with a diverse range of resources and materials, such as carpentry tools and metalworking equipment.

The integration of the artists' studios has undeniably reshaped the identity of the building, making the Darling Foundry a focal point for the rebirth of culture in a previously neglected neighbourhood. In this way, the Foundry's industrial past and ruin have been reclaimed. *Quartier Éphémère*'s artist residency program creates a sense of *place* within the marginal urban community, as well as locating artists and their practices *in relation to* the community and the recent struggles and controversies surrounding Griffintown's redevelopment. Griffintown is currently a contested territory because the

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<sup>51</sup> Montreal artist Antonin Sorel custom designed the interior of the live-work spaces. His concept was to create a "nest" and provide the artists with a different point of view from which they could both see and live with their work. Sorel's relationship to the Foundry began when he was invited by Andrieux to excavate the site before its transformation. For a number of months Sorel collected and gathered debris from the building. Sorel's work ranges from in situ projects to industrial design, as well as art direction for the cinema. A number of his works can be viewed online, [http://www.kezaco.ca/fr/installations/frame\\_instal.html](http://www.kezaco.ca/fr/installations/frame_instal.html) (accessed 29 May 2009).

city's scheme to revitalize the historic industrial zone could erase what remains of the architectural history of industrial, working class Montreal. In the spring of 2008, the city of Montreal gave private Montreal real-estate developer, Devimco, the green light to implement their 1.3 billion dollar project in Griffintown. Known as the "Griffintown Project," Devimco's plans include, among other things, the construction of four condo towers, two big box stores and a "*salle des spectacles*."<sup>52</sup> In response to the proposal, members of Griffintown's Community for Sustainable Redevelopment (CSR) organized public consultations with the city and staged a protest in an effort to save the historic neighbourhood.<sup>53</sup> Because these events were not isolated and because they occurred within the purview of *Quartier Éphémère*, in Chapter Three, I critically discuss artistic interventions that responded to the issues regarding Griffintown's revitalization.

Since the advent of the global economic crisis, in December 2008 Devimco announced that it has tentatively suspended its plans for the neighbourhood. However, on 22 January 2009, The Gazette published an article revealing that Devimco plans to move forward with a scaled down version of their development in the spring of 2010. The CSR remains vigilant and has insisted that should Devimco's revised plans be adopted they must be submitted to new public hearings for consultation.<sup>54</sup> Proposals such as these, tabled or not, do not consider what the cultural landscapes of cities risk losing and,

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<sup>52</sup> Michelle Lalonde, "Griffintown Developers Go Green with Plans," The Gazette, 25 April 2008: A1 and A7.

<sup>53</sup> For more information see "Save Griffintown!," <http://savegriffintown.wordpress.com/2008/02/20/the-official-csr-griffintown-site-is-live/> (accessed 11 March 2008).

<sup>54</sup> See Michelle Lalonde, "Griffintown Residents Want Heads-Up on Plan B," The Gazette, 22 January 2009: A7.



furthermore, leave marginal communities like Griffintown and the initiatives of *Quartier Éphémère* with a very uncertain future.

An interdisciplinary study of the Darling Foundry's adaptive reuse provides an opportunity for examining *and* documenting the creative practices that contemporize and poeticize the everyday experience of the built environment. While it is through the process of their ruination and, likewise, their architectural preservation (through restoration and adaptive reuse) that a continual shift in the cultural meaning of industrial ruins is manifested, it is also the marks of human agency, imagination and desire that inscribe these forgotten spaces with *new* meaning. However, the spaces of ruination are not merely passive or benign spaces waiting to be reanimated or revalorized in order to fulfill their cultural meaning. Ruins are charged with history. By virtue of their materiality and decay they are active spaces rich with sensory properties. These properties can provide clues to understanding the *spatial* and cultural meaning of ruins and why they resonate within the urban imaginary.

In order to provide a context for the cultural meaning of industrial ruins it is necessary to look at ruins from a historical perspective, and so, in the chapter that follows I discuss how aspects of memory and nostalgia are necessarily related to the preservation or erasure of contemporary ruins. In Chapter Two I use the "city as palimpsest"<sup>55</sup> as a metaphor for tracing the cultural and industrial history of the *Faubourg* and Griffintown. To contextualize the process by which the district was deindustrialized and subsequently abandoned, this chapter places a particular emphasis on urban planning in relation to

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<sup>55</sup> "City as palimpsest" is a notion I borrow from Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003).

indeterminate urban spaces. In Chapter Three, I focus on particular installations and artistic interventions that have occurred within the *Faubourg* and Griffintown in order to consider how the ruins of industrial architecture are sites that inspire contemporary art projects. How are elements of the past and present, what is contemporary and what is history converging?

## Chapter One Rethinking the Cultural Meaning of Ruins

### The Imaginary of Ruins

A useful building addresses our reason, whereas a ruined building awakens our imagination and unconscious fantasies.<sup>1</sup>

My analysis of ruins represents an attempt to better understand what makes them resonant urban sites. Ruins possess their own historical narratives, their own cultural and spatial meanings. They give occasion to re-sensitizing ourselves with a city's architectural and social history. Thus a consideration of ruins, how they resonate in the urban landscape, how they are represented, reframed and reused needs to be interdisciplinary. In order to consider how industrial ruins manifest themselves in the urban imaginary, this chapter will focus on ruins and explore the ways in which they have evoked creative responses, as well as how their fate relates to contemporary uses and the processes of urban preservation.

Throughout history, ruins and the representation of ruins often have served as metaphors for human beings' emotional and aesthetic responses to the urban landscape.<sup>2</sup> In his essay, "Nostalgia for Ruins," cultural historian and literary critic Andreas Huyssen asks, "What shapes our imaginary of ruins in the twenty-first century and how has it developed historically?"<sup>3</sup> My methodological approach begins with this notion of the

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<sup>1</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, The Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema (Helsinki, Finland: Rakennustieto Publishing, 2007) 27.

<sup>2</sup> J.B. Jackson, The Necessity for Ruins (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980) 75.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Huyssen, "Nostalgia for Ruins," The Grey Room 23 (Spring 2006): 8-9.

“imaginary of ruins” as a way to consider how ruins and the material traces of the past have become a powerful source of inspiration for contemporary artists.

As a source of inspiration, however, the “taste for ruins” can be traced back to the eighteenth century and in particular to the oeuvre of Italian architect and artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). Huyssen considers Piranesi’s work to be “the most radical articulation of the ruin problematic *within* modernity rather than *after* it.”<sup>4</sup> Piranesi’s etchings, which became popular within the romantic Picturesque, depict the ruinous and disharmonious state of classical Roman architecture in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Insofar as his etchings have been considered architectural documents of the era,<sup>5</sup> they also represent the artist’s personal (re)interpretation of his subject, reframing and re-expressing the ruins of Roman architecture. As architectural historian Christine Boyer suggests, Piranesi’s etchings reflect the artist’s subjective experience of archaic realms in an “entirely imaginary sphere.”<sup>6</sup> Piranesi’s ruin engravings are characterized by abundant vegetation, oppressive corridors, a montage of decomposed columns, dilapidated arches and vaults.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in Piranesi’s imaginary view, the original proportions of the classical

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<sup>4</sup> Huyssen, “Nostalgia for Ruins,” 9.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Zucker notes of Piranesi’s etchings that they were “considered documentary proof of the state of Roman ruins” throughout the second half of the eighteenth century in his essay “Ruins – An Aesthetic Hybrid,” The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 21.2 (1961): 122.

<sup>6</sup> Christine M. Boyer, The Collective Memory of the City: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments (London: The MIT Press, 1996) 178.

<sup>7</sup> Further reading and a complete reproduced collection of Piranesi etchings can be found in J. Wilton Ely’s book, Giovanni Battista Piranesi: The Complete Etchings - An Illustrated Catalogue Vols. 1 & 2 (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts Publications, 1994).

architectural emblems are “diverted.”<sup>8</sup> Piranesi was not alone in the creation of these “fantastical scenographic perspectives.”<sup>9</sup> For example, architect Charles-Louis Clérisseau (1721-1820) designed a “ruin room” for two French priests residing in a monastery at *Trinità dei Monti* in Rome (c.1766).<sup>10</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, architectural follies, or mock ruins, were designed for pleasure and, as was the case with *Trinità dei Monti*, the ruin became an artifice created to fulfill an imaginative desire. Through these kinds of representations, ruins became aestheticized and the oeuvre of Piranesi and his contemporaries had a major influence on the ways by which ruination became desirable and appealed to the imagination of this era.

In the nineteenth century architectural historian, John Ruskin (1819-1900) and German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918) reflected on the phenomenological characteristics of ruins. Simmel placed an emphasis on the spirit of a building and the metaphysical relationship between nature and architecture. He observes,

The ruin of a building [...] means that where the work of art is dying, other forces and forms, those of nature, have grown; and that out of what art still lives in the ruin and what of nature already lives in it, there has emerged a new whole, a characteristic unity [...] Architecture is the only art in which the great struggle between the will of the spirit and the necessity of nature issues into real peace, in which the soul in its upward striving and nature in its gravity are held in balance.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Boyer, 177-78.

<sup>9</sup> Boyer, 175.

<sup>10</sup> For more on Clérisseau, see Thomas McCormick, Charles-Louis Clérisseau and the Genesis of Neoclassicism (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Georg Simmel, “The Ruin” in Essays on Sociology, Philosophy and Aesthetics, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Harper and Row, 1964) 259.

If, as Simmel observes, there were a unity of character within the architectural ruin, it would suggest that the ruin embodies its own totality in its fragmentation. Conversely, where the fragments of the ruin or “place of decay”<sup>12</sup> are restored and preserved, the ruin’s authenticity is lost.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, John Ruskin emphatically objected to the restoration of old buildings. Believing that architecture could be read as a text of collective memory, in the sixth chapter of Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture (1907) he writes the “Lamp of Memory” and describes the restoration of ruins as acts, in and of themselves, of destruction and erasure. He writes,

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word *restoration* understood. It means the most total destruction which buildings can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a description accompanied with fake description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture... Do not let us talk then of restoration... The thing is a lie from beginning to end.<sup>14</sup>

The “Lamp of Memory” resonates with words such as memory, history, and narrative. All relevant to architecture, these words, as Richard MacCormac remarks, “emphasize the idea of recall, and invite us to find the means of recall, without losing the

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<sup>12</sup> Dylan Trigg, The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2006) xix.

<sup>13</sup> Harbison, The Built, Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning (Singapore: The MIT Press, 1991) 121.

<sup>14</sup> John Ruskin, “The Lamp of Memory,” The Seven Lamps of Architecture (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1907) 199-200.

authenticity of the architecture of the present.”<sup>15</sup> Simmel’s and Ruskin’s perspectives strongly illustrate the paradox and problematic concerning the status and fate of modernity’s ruins. If the decomposition of a building, along with its ill proportions and fragmentation were the bones of a ruin’s aesthetic integrity, it would then follow that the processes of preservation and restoration interrupt the building’s entropic metamorphosis and subsequently strip the ruin of its status.

Perhaps because of the increasing scale of war, and thus ruination, in contrast to the picturesque and romanticized views that have been attached to the history and image of ruins, Walter Benjamin (1895-1945) believed that ruins were allegories for the transience and frailty of the human condition.<sup>16</sup> “Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things,” he writes.<sup>17</sup> For Benjamin, the romantic aestheticization of ruins eclipsed and devalued their historical truth, whereas allegory was a mode from which to see, experience and contemplate a flawed world. He writes, “[i]n the ruin history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay. Allegory thereby declares itself to be beyond beauty.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Richard MacCormac, “Architecture, Memory and Metaphor,” The Architectural Review (November 1996): 79.

<sup>16</sup> See Naomi Stead, “The Value of Ruins: Allegories of Destruction in Benjamin and Speer,” Form/ Work: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Built Environment 6 (2003): 52, and Jane Rendell, Art and Architecture: A Place Between (London: I.B Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2006) 75.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama (New York and London: Verso, 1977): 177-78.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, 178.

With regard to the aesthetic integrity and authenticity of ruins in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Huyssen observes that their “[a]uthenticity seems to have become part of museal preservation and restoration.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Huyssen asserts that in an effort to preserve urban history, the “repro- and retrofashions” of industrial ruins “express[es] a fear or denial of the ruination by time[.]”<sup>20</sup> Industrial ruins may be vulnerable to “repro- and retrofashions” yet beyond Huyssen’s argument, I believe that the adaptive reuse of ruins also signifies that the buildings we reuse are the ones we care the most about. Further, Huyssen argues that contemporary preservation practices have become cultural actions that fetishize the cultural value of historic sites, often resulting in a musealization of the past. These sites then come to be viewed and experienced as little more than cultural destinations whereby the archeology and architectural histories of places become the by-product of “ruin tourism.”<sup>21</sup> The ruins of the city of Pompeii are the example *par excellence*. Conversely, J.B. Jackson has argued that the restoration and preservation of ruins are more than a movement aimed at promoting tourism. “The necessity for ruins,” Jackson contends, is “that ruins provide the incentive for restoration, and for a return to origins.”<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Salvatore Settis discloses, “ruins have come to be necessary for linking creativity to the experience of loss at the individual and collective level. Ruins operate as powerful metaphors for absence or rejection and, hence, as

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<sup>19</sup> Huyssen, “Nostalgia For Ruins,” 10. See also Mark Crinson’s introduction to Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City (London and New York: Routledge, 2005): xi-xx.

<sup>20</sup> Huyssen, “Nostalgia For Ruins,” 8 and 10.

<sup>21</sup> Huyssen, “Nostalgia For Ruins,” 9.

<sup>22</sup> Jackson, 101-102.



incentives for reflection or restoration.”<sup>23</sup> Although Huyssen’s and Jackson’s arguments are diametrically opposed, they both suggest that the practice of preserving and restoring ruins are stimulated by different reasons, by and for different groups of users.

From a socio-historical perspective, Huyssen’s argument regarding the triadic relationship between the authenticity, restoration and musealization of ruins, also signals a turn in post-industrial cities’ approaches and responses to their past. Sociologist Diane Barthel argues that it is through the social processes of selection, contextualization and interpretation that historic preservation plays a “mediative” role in shaping collective memories and societies’ encounters with a city’s historical narratives.<sup>24</sup> Boyer notes that the relationship and difference between “memory and history are both variable elements in the art of preserv[ing] and restor[ing]”<sup>25</sup> the built environment. Thus, the desire to nurture a relationship with the past is perpetuated, for example, by the need to save, rescue, recycle, rebuild, re-purpose and revitalize buildings, monuments and sites that are believed to bear some historic importance. The conservation and re-purposing of historic sites are inextricably linked to the ways in which societies and communities are embracing their heritage. The reuse and recycling of the built environment, and in this case industrial buildings, in the twenty-first century has also become a trend, in part, due to the ever-increasing emphasis on environmental issues in relation to sustainable living. These practices also go hand in hand with and typically fall under the rubric of

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<sup>23</sup> Salvatore Settis, forward. *Irresistable Decay* by Michael Roth et al. (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 1997): vii.

<sup>24</sup> Diane Barthel, “Getting in Touch with History: The Role of Historic Preservation in Shaping Collective Memories,” *Qualitative Sociology* Vol 19, no. 3 (1996): 345-46.

<sup>25</sup> Boyer, 69.

establishing sustainable design strategies that are commonly motivated by a desire to create and produce eco-friendly environments. As discussed in the introduction, in as much as the Darling Foundry's restoration was a process of conserving the past by recycling the building's fragments, the Foundry's rehabilitation, I would argue, was equally motivated by a desire to embrace the site as a source of inspiration for creative practice.

One of the objectives of this thesis is to also consider how the presence, erasure and reuse of post-industrial ruins resonate in the urban imaginary of the contemporary city. It is therefore important to briefly examine how the subject of ruins and post-industrial landscapes figure into discourses on urban memory. Cultural historian Rebecca Solnit writes,

Ruins stand as reminders. Memory is always incomplete, always imperfect, always falling into ruin; but the ruins themselves, like other traces, are treasures: our links to what came before, our guide to situating ourselves in a landscape of time. To erase the ruins is to erase the visible public triggers of memory; a city without ruins and traces of age is like a mind without memories. Such erasure is the foundation of the amnesiac landscape [.]<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, Huyssen contends that the emergence of urban memory discourses and the idea that “the preservation of old buildings is analogous with the preservation of memories in the human mind”<sup>27</sup> have significantly changed and complicated the ways in

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<sup>26</sup> Rebecca Solnit, Storming the Gates of Paradise: Landscapes for Politics (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007) 355.

<sup>27</sup> Crinson, xiii.

which a society understands its relationship to the history of its city and the past.<sup>28</sup>

Huysen's hypothesis is that "a culture of memory" has been constructed to counteract the fear of forgetting and the "agents of amnesia."<sup>29</sup> In Huysen's view, the culture of memory includes the memorialization and mediatization of a city's urban artifacts. For Huysen, memory is itself virtual and cannot be safeguarded in the built environment, or in this case, ruins. "Memory," he writes, is "always transitory, notoriously unreliable, and haunted by forgetting, in brief, human and social."<sup>30</sup>

The methods by which culture reuses industrial ruins have become equally contested. Art historian Richard Williams argues that the reuse and aestheticization of industrial spaces "involve(s) an act of forgetting" which subsequently presents a scenario of simultaneously remembering and forgetting.<sup>31</sup> What, then, does the conversion of the Darling Foundry preserve in terms of the building's historical truth and memory and what does it forget?

In many respects, the architectural transformation of the Darling Foundry was an act of preserving the site and its memories. The Darling Foundry's conversion was not, however, a planned act of musealization. Furthermore, the success of this industrial ruin's revitalization lies both in *Atelier In Situ's* and *L'Office de l'éclectisme urbain et*

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<sup>28</sup> Andreas Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003) 4-5.

<sup>29</sup> Crinson, xii.

<sup>30</sup> Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Williams, "Remembering, Forgetting and the Industrial Gallery Space," Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City, ed. Mark Crinson (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 132. See also Huyssen and James Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

*fonctionnel*'s design approaches. As described in the introduction, the firms integrated the material traces of the Foundry's past *and* ruin into the building's new function.

Moreover, what the ruin of the Darling Foundry afforded in terms of its potential for adaptive reuse rests as much in its architectural transformation as in the imagination of its users and the community.

### **From Aestheticization Towards a Nostalgia for Ruins**

Temporality and spatiality are necessarily linked in nostalgic desire. The architectural ruin is an example of the indissoluble combination of spatial and temporal desires that trigger nostalgia. In the body of the ruin the past is both present in its residues and yet no longer accessible, making the ruin an especially powerful trigger for nostalgia.<sup>32</sup>

If, as Andreas Huyssen suggests in the above quote, architectural ruins are a "powerful trigger for nostalgia," how then, do industrial ruins conjure this nostalgic response and melancholic reflection towards the image of the past? The proliferation of industrial ruins throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries stands for a negative image of history and represents the failure of modernist enterprises. Post-industrial ruins have become one of the most visible traces of history in the topography of contemporary cities, yet their status as architectural monuments is contentious in relation to their historical and cultural value.<sup>33</sup> A number of scholars in the fields of architectural history,

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<sup>32</sup> Huyssen, "Nostalgia for Ruins," 7.

<sup>33</sup> Trigg, Aesthetics of Decay, 223 and 224.

aesthetic theory, social history and critical cultural theory have come to consider industrial ruins as “alternative sites of memory”<sup>34</sup> and “sites of loss and nostalgia.”<sup>35</sup>

When industrial architecture no longer serves its original function, is abandoned and subsequently becomes a ruin, its cultural meanings change and society’s relationship to this architecture shifts. Prevailing scholarly discourse holds that abandoned, ruined and derelict urban spaces bring about feelings of nostalgia for buildings and landscapes that are disappearing.<sup>36</sup> Oral historian Steven High notes that industrial ruins speak of those who for some time made use of the building’s functions. Further, High contends, as “memory places” industrial ruins are “symbolic sites of identity for those workers who have come to identify *with* their displacement.”<sup>37</sup> As High’s extensive research shows, “smokestack nostalgia” entrenches itself in the lives of these working class communities as the ruins of these industrial places become places of memory and what Pierre Nora refers to as “*lieux de memoire*.”<sup>38</sup>

Linguist Svetlana Boym has traced nostalgia back to its seventeenth-century medical origin as a malaise and tracked its shift to a twenty-first century “socio-culture

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<sup>34</sup> Tim Edensor, “The Ghosts of Industrial Ruins: Ordering and Disordering Memory in Excessive Space,” Planning and Environment D: Society and Space, Vol. 23 (2005): 830. See also Rendell; Trigg; and Steven High and David W. Lewis, Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> High, 42.

<sup>36</sup> High, 9.

<sup>37</sup> High, 9.

<sup>38</sup> See Pierre Nora’s essay “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” Representations 26 (Berkeley: University of California Press, Spring 1989): 7-24.

disease.”<sup>39</sup> In her analysis of nostalgia’s contemporary meaning, Boym concedes that nostalgia is a modern condition and a “historical emotion,” not merely a longing or desire for the past but instead, “a result of a new understanding of time and space.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, nostalgic feelings are attached to an idea of the past, often a past that those experiencing nostalgia never themselves experienced. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that nostalgia’s currency lies in the cultural and historical perspective to which it belongs and, likewise, in the ways a community, or individuals, (re)construct meanings and their relationship to place.

While the past is a factor in nostalgic longing, Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw have argued that (industrial) ruins have also become “material object[s] from which nostalgia is constructed.”<sup>41</sup> However, Pallasmaa observes that a building in ruin or in the processes of decay reveals the “vulnerability of its structure(s)” and our experience of this space is informed by how we *invest* our feelings and empathy in the decaying

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<sup>39</sup> See Svetlana Boym’s essay “Nostalgia and its Discontents,” adapted from the author’s book The Future of Nostalgia (New York: Basic, 2001). [http://www.virginia.edu/iasc/eNews/2007\\_10/9.2CBoym.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/iasc/eNews/2007_10/9.2CBoym.pdf) (accessed January 2009). In this essay, Boym points out that nostalgia was originally a disease diagnosed by Johannes Hofer, a seventeenth-century Swiss medical student treating “various displaced people,” namely soldiers fighting abroad, who longed to return home. Nostalgia at this time was considered to be a curable disease and not unlike the twenty-first-century common cold. For more on the history of nostalgia, Boym suggests Jean Starobinski “The Idea of Nostalgia,” Diogenes 54 (1966): 81–103; Fritz Ernst, Vom Heimweh (Zurich: Fretz & Wasmuth, 1949); and George Rosen, “Nostalgia: A Forgotten Psychological Disorder,” Clio Medica 10.1 (1975): 28–51. See also Susan Stewart’s On Longing: Narratives of the Minature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984).

<sup>40</sup> Boym, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, eds., The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989) 4.

structure.<sup>42</sup> In other words, buildings and in this case, ruins, do not in and of themselves mediate feelings of nostalgia. Rather it is human beings who project their own nostalgia for the past onto the ruin.

While a source for nostalgic and melancholic contemplation, industrial ruins have equally been venerated for their aesthetic quality. As Richard Harbison has noted, “Piranesi-sensations can be triggered in the contemporary ruins of abandoned industrial buildings.”<sup>43</sup> Dylan Trigg suggests that the divergence between ancient classical ruins and modernity’s abandoned industrial ruins lies between the Picturesque, or beautiful, and the post-industrial sublime.<sup>44</sup> This sublime quality found in industrial ruins - their excess waste, unfamiliar forms and artifacts - is their allure and can be apprehended intellectually as well as sensually experienced.<sup>45</sup>

My discussion of ruins and their cultural meaning has thus far addressed their significance in terms of historical precedents within western culture. Yet another way to understand the allure of ruins may be to understand them in terms of their spatial meaning. The spatial language of ruins lies in their sensory properties and the material traces of the past. A study of the relationship between the senses and architecture has, in part, informed my inquiry into the aesthetic and multifaceted appeal of industrial ruins.

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<sup>42</sup> The italicization of “invest” in this phrase is my emphasis. Juhani Pallasmaa, Architecture of Image: Existential Space in Cinema (Helsinki, Finland: Rakennustiето Publishing, 2007) 27.

<sup>43</sup> Harbison, 121.

<sup>44</sup> Trigg, xvii. See also Steven High who describes the aesthetic of deindustrialization as the “deindustrial sublime” in Corporate Wasteland, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Edensor, Industrial Ruins, 118.

The sensual complexity of urban ruins engages the self's perceptions like few other spaces in the post-modern city. In the ruin, the "aesthetic customs of form, beauty, placing and display are reframed[,]""<sup>46</sup> writes geographer Tim Edensor. The complexity and comingling of profuse smells, unfamiliar sounds, physical debris and spatial disorder found in ruins also operates in conflict to the "sensually ordered world outside."<sup>47</sup> In this thesis, I am interested in how this sensory turn can be used to understand the spatial meaning of ruins in the contemporary city. David Howes suggests that theoretical work in sensory anthropology over the past two decades has propelled a "sensory turn" or "sensory revolution" in various disciplines and, in particular, within the fields of urban studies and architecture.<sup>48</sup> Pallasmaa's discussion of architecture and the senses is especially revealing in this regard. Pallasmaa argues that "[a]rchitecture is the art of reconciliation between our selves and the world, and this mediation takes place through the senses."<sup>49</sup> It must be noted that Pallasmaa is principally interested in embracing the materiality, "hapticity" and imperfection of buildings. He further suggests that the haptic quality of architectural surfaces and environments have a language of their own that

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<sup>46</sup> Edensor, Industrial Ruins, 76.

<sup>47</sup> Edensor, "Ghosts," 837.

<sup>48</sup> See David Howes' essay "Architecture of the Senses," in Sense of the City: An Alternate Approach to Urbanism, Mirko Zardini ed. (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2005) 322-334.

<sup>49</sup> Pallasmaa, Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses (West Sussex, England: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2005) 72.



conveys a “sensory essence.”<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to consider a sensory analysis of ruins in order to understand the imaginative responses these environments evoke.

### **Ephemeral Approaches to Urban Renewal**

Prevailing discourse on urban revitalization politics suggests that urban territories characterized by abandonment and architectural ruin are inextricably tied to processes of gentrification, to the extent that abandonment and urban ruin have become preconditions for gentrification.<sup>51</sup> Considering such issues with regard to the Darling Foundry and the role *Quartier Éphémère* has played in the revitalization of the *Faubourg*'s and Griffintown's economy is something other scholars have begun to examine.<sup>52</sup> My focus, instead, is to consider how the presence of artists in this community and *Quartier Éphémère*'s reclamation of the Darling Foundry have breathed new life into the neighbourhood by drawing attention to the physical and poetic traces of its industrial past. As transforming agents, what might the installations and exhibitions held at *Quartier Éphémère* contribute to the processes of preserving industrial ruins and,

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<sup>50</sup> Pallasmaa, “Hapticity and Time,” 79.

<sup>51</sup> Deutsche, 14 and 75.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Neil Smith's and Michelle LeFaivre's “A Class Analysis of Gentrification” for their examination of economic processes and what they call “a devalorization cycle” that begins in neighbourhoods that are “physically deteriorated” and in turn prepares the neighbourhood for gentrification in Gentrification, Displacement and Neighbourhood Revitalization, eds. John Palen and Bruce London (New York: State University of New York, 1984): 43-66. See also Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism, eds. Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), and Sharon Zukin's The Culture of Cities (Cambridge Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995).

furthermore, contribute to the cultural landscape of marginal communities like the *Faubourg* and Griffintown?

In her introduction to *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (1998), Deutsche presents the notion of “urban-aesthetics” as an interdisciplinary field through which to identify and examine the social function of art in contemporary society and its relationship to urban revitalization politics. Drawing from critical spatial and urban theory discourse, Deutsche examines public art projects that contest the hegemonic processes of urban revitalization. Deutsche’s thesis shows that there is public art that feeds dominant divisions of power and space, as well as public art interventions that contest these divisions by rehearsing the publicness of space. Following Deutsche, in Chapter Three I examine how *Quartier Éphémère* has enabled public art projects and in situ installations that have (re)sensitized the public’s engagement with the architectural and socio-cultural history of Montreal’s post-industrial landscape. I also examine how artistic interventions have the potential to transform streets into sites of performance and into a space for bringing certain community struggles into representation.

Miwon Kwon’s critical examination of the “art-site relationship” is also useful in terms of my exploration of art practice in non-traditional spaces and tracing the genealogy of site-specific work. In the context of the transformation and reuse of (industrial) abandoned buildings, both contemporary and performing artists have been creating in unconventional spaces since the 1960s. However, what I wish to draw attention to in this thesis is in situ projects that act as spatial appropriations and further

initiate what Kwon terms the “re(dis)covery”<sup>53</sup> of abandoned urban spaces. Likewise, architectural historian Jane Rendell has drawn attention to the relationship between art and architecture and how they engage “with both the social and aesthetic, the public and the private” spaces of a city.<sup>54</sup> Rendell, in reading Rosalind Krauss’ notion of the “expanded field,” asks, “[i]s it possible to expand the field, to think of art in terms of the spatial practices that occur ‘beyond’ the gallery, so that activities that are not associated with art can question what art might be?”<sup>55</sup> With this question in mind, this project examines how artists at the Darling Foundry are engaging with the cultural politics of city space and abandoned architecture.

In contrast to the picturesque, romanticized and nostalgic views that have been attached to the history and image of ruins, the reuse of the Darling Foundry as a space for the exhibition of art, as well as the installations or interventions that take place in relation to the site, portray the historical resonances of each site and unveil the mutual relationship between the site and the intervention. Thus, a critical interdisciplinary reading of the Foundry and the exhibitions are a way to resist the nostalgia that nineteenth century architectural ruins have begun to attract.

It is in the context of this body of literature, as well as the issues and questions that I have put forth regarding the cultural meaning of ruins, that I illustrate the significance of the Darling Foundry’s adaptive reuse. Post-industrial landscapes such as the *Faubourg* and Griffintown are indeterminate urban spaces and a part of Montreal’s

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<sup>53</sup> Miwon Kwon, One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002) 53.

<sup>54</sup> Rendell, Art and Architecture, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Rendell, Art and Architecture, 49.

urban palimpsest. What remains of their ruins is a reminder of the ephemeral nature of that space. What follows is based on my belief that ruins are spaces that invite, or, more strongly still, demand one to enter into a dialogue and into the project of creating their meaning together.

## Chapter Two Urban Palimpsest as Cultural Landscape

These seemingly sleepy, old-fashioned things, defaced houses, closed-down factories, the debris of shipwrecked histories still today raise up the ruins of an unknown, strange city. They burst forth within the modernist, massive, homogeneous city like slips of the tongue from an unknown, perhaps unconscious, language [...] Ancient things become remarkable. An uncanniness lurks there, in the everyday life of the city. It is a ghost that henceforth haunts urban planning.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that the past will come back to haunt us is by no means new. The idea, however, that a city is “haunted by its strangeness,”<sup>2</sup> as posited by Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard, above, ascertains that the ghosts of the past are embedded in the strata of the built environment. The *Faubourg* and Griffintown evoke a certain kind of strangeness. The historic district emerges like a grainy, black and white photograph, a wrinkle within the homogenous surface of the city. Unlike the commodified and commercial corridors of the city, visually and spatially the neighbourhood presents a rich panoply of textures and narratives that can only be truly explored and experienced on foot.

Andreas Huyssen suggests, “we have come to read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space,”<sup>3</sup> as a series of signs and imaginary spaces.<sup>4</sup> However, the

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<sup>1</sup> Michel De Certeau and Luce Giard, “Ghosts in the City,” trans. Timothy J. Tomasik, The Practice Of Everyday Life Volume Two: Living and Cooking (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998) 133.

<sup>2</sup> De Certeau and Giard, “Ghosts in the City,” 133.

<sup>3</sup> Huyssen, Present Pasts, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Huyssen uses the notion of palimpsest in this instance in his essay, “The Voids of Berlin,” to examine the history of Berlin as text after 1945. He also credits, for example, theorists such as Roland Barthes and his book Empire of Signs (1982) and writer Italo

problematic of reading the city lies in its *lisability* or, legibility, which as Huyssen argues “relies as much on visible markers of built space as images and memories.”<sup>5</sup> The processes by which cities change may not always be visible, yet these less visible changes and “unofficial histories” are also, like ruins, aspects of a city’s urban imaginary.<sup>6</sup> Further, Huyssen suggests, “[the] palimpsest implies voids, illegibilities, and erasures, but also offers a richness of traces and memories, restorations and new constructions that will mark the city as lived space.”<sup>7</sup>

With this chapter I seek to explore how the ruins of the built environment, like palimpsests, and the ruins of a community in the absence of conservation and redevelopment, become territories that contribute to the cultural fabric of the urban landscape. With the first section of this chapter, I extend Huyssen’s metaphor of city as palimpsest and locate the Darling Foundry within the layers of the working class history of the *Faubourg des Récollets* and Griffintown in order to trace its socio-cultural significance within the evolution of Montreal’s industrial landscape history. I then draw attention to the events that led to the district’s eventual ruin and its current status as an indeterminate territory within the city.

For almost a century the Darling Foundry stood witness to the intense and frequently destructive activity that has changed the topography of this historic industrial

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Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* (1974) in part, for shaping architectural discourses about the city as text throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>5</sup> Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 51.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, “Looking Backward: Nostalgia in the City,” in *Imagining Cities: Script, Signs Memory*, eds. Sallie Westwood and John Williams (London and New York: Routledge) 129.

<sup>7</sup> Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 84.

district. What remains of the buildings in the *Faubourg* and Griffintown are the physical traces of the city's industrial working-class history. From this perspective, the vestiges of industrial buildings like the Darling Foundry represent historic architectural landmarks and occupy a place in the collective memory of Montreal.

In conjunction with the ship-building industry, in the late 1800s a number of metalworking industries had firmly established themselves as important industrial labor forces in Montreal's socio-economic development.<sup>8</sup> The Darling Brothers were among the founders of these metallurgical factories and foundries. The main source of manual labour in the Foundry, as well as in the surrounding factories and dockyards, was comprised of Irish immigrants and French Canadians.

As early as 1818, Montreal's industrial revolution attracted immigrants from the British Isles. Among these immigrants were the Scots who, bringing with them technology, science and capital, went on to acquire fortunes through enterprises in railway transport and tobacco and sugar refining industries.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to this small elite, the majority of immigrants were, however, poor, uneducated and Irish. By the 1850s the population of the district increased with another wave of Irish immigrants (as many as 100,000) and the local migration of the equally poor and unskilled rural French

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed socio-economic examination of the history of Montreal's industrialization see David Lewis, Manufacturing Montreal and "The Development of an Early Suburban Industrial District: The Montreal Ward of Saint-Ann, 1851-71" Urban History Review 19:3 (February 1991): 166-180. See also Guy Mongrain, "Le Site initial de la fonderie Darling: un siècle de métallurgie à travers des témoins remarquables," and the official Darling Foundry web site, "Introduction: Revitalizing the Darling Foundry into an Art Centre", at [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/rehabiliter\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/rehabiliter_e/index.html) (accessed 23 January 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Claude Marsan, Montreal in Evolution (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981) 174.

Canadians. On average, the manual labourers working in the district's metalworking factories earned a wage of approximately \$6.00 per week.<sup>10</sup> Due to the district's rapid industrial growth, its residential density skyrocketed. For the low-income earners, living close to the factories where they worked was desirable. By the turn of the twentieth century, the *Faubourg* and Griffintown had evolved together into a burgeoning working-class neighbourhood. The hum of machinery and streets and factories thick with their smoke became visual, aural and spatial aspects of the workers' industrial landscape.

In his book, Montreal In Evolution: An Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment, Jean-Claude Marsan points out the spatial division of the ruling class from the working class throughout the nineteenth century. Marsan suggests that these divisions between Montreal's growing immigrant population were further accentuated by linguistic and racial differences.<sup>11</sup> He argues "[t]he ruling class of the 'haves' [were] usually Anglophone, whereas the proletarian 'have-not's [were] usually francophone. Even worse, this division [was] physically imprinted into the soil and [was] reflected in the quality of the buildings."<sup>12</sup> Marsan concludes that with the rise of the industrial class, "Montreal [was] divided into two distinct cities,"<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below The Hill (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972) 94.

<sup>11</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, British, Irish and French Canadians comprised the main nationalities of the district. A mix of Italian, German, Polish, Russian and Dutch immigrants began to populate the area by the turn of the twentieth century.

<sup>12</sup> Marsan, 177-178.

<sup>13</sup> Marsan, 178.



thus, the *Faubourg* and Griffintown became a “festering ground for social vices and the environment was degraded.”<sup>14</sup>

From a geographical perspective, the working-class inhabitants of “the city below the hill,” to borrow from Herbert Ames, were segregated from the middle-class society who lived in the “city on the hill.” Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Ames’ sociological study of the working class and their living conditions in Griffintown shows that the domestic buildings in this region were mainly comprised of two-storey tenement style single-dwelling houses built from brick and wood. Living conditions were overcrowded and the absence of indoor toilets and an inadequate sewage system led to poor and unsanitary living conditions.<sup>15</sup> Spring floods from the Lachine Canal submerged Griffintown and rendered the area even more uninhabitable and the neighbourhood was often referred to as the “swamp.” Humourist Stephen Leacock has commented that Griffintown became the first of Canada’s industrial “slums” and described the district as a “wretched area, whose tumbled, shabby houses mock[ed] the wealth of Montreal.”<sup>16</sup>

“Ordinary buildings” and tenement housing inhabited by the working class reveal much about their living and working conditions.<sup>17</sup> In terms of the sensory experience of the industrial class, David Howes suggests that within the hierarchal ordering of the senses, smell along with touch have ranked low and “sensory rankings are always allied

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<sup>14</sup> Marsan, 179.

<sup>15</sup> Ames, 104-105.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Leacock, *Montreal: Seaport and City* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1944) 172.

<sup>17</sup> Hayden, 33.

with social rankings and employed to order society.”<sup>18</sup> Dolores Hayden also notes that vernacular landscapes “have the power to evoke visual [and] social memory.”<sup>19</sup> Yet from a historical perspective, and within the canon of public memory, only recently have studies on the living conditions of the industrial class in relation to vernacular architecture and landscapes come into focus.<sup>20</sup>

Hayden introduced new methods for studying urban landscape histories, people’s attachment to sites, and the political dimensions of both in her book, The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History (1995). It is the intersection, Hayden suggests, of architectural theory, cultural geography and urban social history studies that provides the foundation for understanding “the history of the cultural landscape, the production of space [and] human patterns impressed upon the contours of the natural environment.”<sup>21</sup> In her chapter, “Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space,” Hayden introduces “place” as a concept for reading the cultural landscape and identifying themes of memory local to a specific site. She writes,

People make memories cohere in complex ways. People’s experiences of the urban landscape intertwine the sense of place and the politics of space. If people’s attachments to places are material, social, and imaginative, then

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<sup>18</sup> Howes, Empire of the Senses, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Hayden, 47.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley, Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2005) and Lindsay Asquith and Marcel Vellinga eds., Vernacular Architecture in the Twenty-First Century (London and New York: Routledge, 2006.)

<sup>21</sup> Hayden, 15.

these are necessary dimensions of new projects to extend history in the urban landscape[.]<sup>22</sup>

More than an aesthetic concept, “a sense of place,” as Hayden suggests, moves beyond the architectural character or image of a location.

For nearly a century the *Faubourg* and Griffintown evolved into a vibrant economic center in the city. By the 1970s it had virtually become a ghost town. Within the context of urban revitalization politics, since the 1970s the city of Montreal’s planning principles have played an important role in the changes that have occurred in the *Faubourg*. The city grew exponentially at this time and with this growth emerged citizens’ desires to participate in the politics of Montreal’s urban planning. A number of grass-roots heritage preservation groups formed, such as the not-for-profit organization, Save Montreal, comprised mostly of architects, students, artists and working class people displaced by urban development schemes.<sup>23</sup> Graeme Evans suggests that the emergence of these local organizations throughout the 1960s and 1970s was “a response to ‘progress’ and modernization which threaten[ed] the representations of the past.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Hayden, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Citizen conservation groups that emerged throughout the 1970s also included, for example: Griffintown People’s Association, Save the Main Research Committee, and the Milton-Park Citizens Committee (1968). For an excellent source of lists of conservation groups see Donna Gabeline et al, Montreal at the Crossroads (Montreal: Harvest House, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> Graeme Evans, “Living in a World Heritage City: Stakeholders in the Dialectic of the Universal and Particular,” International Journal of Heritage Studies Vol 8, No.2 (2002):119.

Under the “built heritage” section of the city of Montreal’s master plan, the city articulates its aims “for consistent recognition of all of the city’s heritage.”<sup>25</sup> But what exactly are the elements that define heritage and what does this definition exclude? On what basis is a city’s heritage composed? De Certeau and Giard have argued, “heritage is not made up of objects it has created but of creative capacities” and a “vast ensemble of things that are manipulated and personalized, reused and ‘poeticized’.”<sup>26</sup>

In their 1977 publication entitled, “*Récollets*,” Save Montreal described the *Faubourg des Récollets* as “an urban desert of dusty, old buildings” and “little more than an empty shell” consisting of “the fragments of an urban community.”<sup>27</sup> A manifesto of sorts, the document identifies the *Faubourg* as an urban wasteland and argues that through redevelopment, it has the potential to become a desirable and model community within the city. The Heritage Montreal publication lists objectives to be considered and adopted by the city in the future planning of the *Faubourg des Récollets*. Complimented by hand drawn maps illustrating the zoning and development of the area in 1977 and a map of the *Faubourg*’s future possibilities, the list of planning objectives included: re-establishing a neighbourhood where people can live and work; ensuring that redevelopment conserves pedestrian and historic street patterns; improving air quality and

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<sup>25</sup> For more information about the City of Montreal’s definition of industrial heritage and an outline of protective measures for Montreal’s heritage sites see “Master Plan” at [http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?\\_pageid=2762,3100668&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=2762,3100668&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (accessed 1 February 2009).

<sup>26</sup> De Certeau and Giard, “Ghosts in the City,” 141.

<sup>27</sup> Also known as Sauvons Montréal, the organization is devoted to monitoring the planning, development, and preservation of Montreal’s built environment. See “*Récollets*,” 3.

providing the public with access to green space; preserving “architectural landmarks” and retaining “all features that contribute to the historic atmosphere” of the district.<sup>28</sup> Yet since the “*Récollets*” was published, spatially and visually both the *Faubourg* and Griffintown have undergone dramatic changes resulting in either the erasure or modification of much of the district’s vernacular and industrial architecture. The city’s planning principles have been based on revitalizing the neighbourhood with commercial and residential, condominium projects. The prevailing approach in modernist urban planning has been predominantly based on a top-down paradigm. In Juhani Pallasmaa’s words, “the processes of [city] planning have favoured the idealizing and disembodied Cartesian eye of control and detachment.”<sup>29</sup> Michel de Certeau has also critiqued this hegemonic view of the city, by suggesting that the dominant terms of the “concept city” are derived from a voyeuristic and consequently fictitious reading of the city.<sup>30</sup> Deutsche has characterized master plans for urban redevelopment schemes as “aesthetic disguise[s] for revitalizing,” beautifying, and improving the image of the post-modern city.<sup>31</sup> “[T]he relationship among these urban and aesthetic events,” Deutsche contends, is that revitalization “is the historical form of late-capitalist urbanism[.]”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “*Récollets*,” 38.

<sup>29</sup> Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, 29.

<sup>30</sup> De Certeau, “Walking in the City,” 93. De Certeau’s “concept city” is based on the perspective from which a city is viewed. In this case the “concept city” is a formulation based on a view “from above.”

<sup>31</sup> Deutsche, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Deutsche, xiv.

The identity of the *Faubourg des Récollets* and Griffintown has been the subject of much debate among urban planners, heritage groups, academics, architects and community activists for nearly four decades. Moreover, its indeterminacy has been the subject that continues to *define* this neighbourhood as a highly contested urban locale. The politics of planning, sanitizing and redeveloping the indeterminate and less desirable aspects of the urban landscape are often predicated on vocabulary such as no-man's land, dead zones, and urban voids. As Edensor notes, industrial ruins are, "in official parlance, scars on the landscape, or wastelands whose use-value has disappeared."<sup>33</sup> Abandoned, derelict, and peripheral urban spaces described as eyesores and wastelands may very well characterize their indeterminacy, however, these nonclamentures also imply that neighbourhoods, such as the *Faubourg* and Griffintown, have been stripped of their cultural value.

Deindustrialized landscapes act as the antithesis to the aesthetic ordering of most urban spaces. Likewise, ruins contravene the regulatory modes by which the built environment is perceived. Regulated spaces, both public and private, are often surveilled, *de-sensitized* (deodorized and visually censored) and place restrictions on our sensory and social experience of urban space.<sup>34</sup> This notion of the aesthetic ordering of space implies a maintenance or purification of space.<sup>35</sup> By contrast, urban ruins are disordered spaces which offer a range of sensory experiences and "lend themselves to a myriad of

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<sup>33</sup> Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 57.

<sup>35</sup> David Sibley argues that the purification of space "involves the rejection of difference and the securing of boundaries to maintain homogeneity." See "Survey 13: Purification of space," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6 (1988): 409-421.

imaginative possibilities [that] allow for a wide scope of imaginative interpretation, unencumbered by regulated space.”<sup>36</sup>

Dougal Sheridan has analyzed indeterminate urban spaces as “the absence of deterministic forces of capital, ownership and institutionalization that, to a large degree govern people’s relationship to the built environment.”<sup>37</sup> “Indeterminacy,” Sheridan posits, “provides a space for the self-determination of the occupant [...] this indeterminacy allows the occupant a less mediated and more direct relationship with the specific qualities of a place.”<sup>38</sup> Tim Edensor and Elizabeth Wilson have argued that the nature of indeterminacy within urban space has the potential to elicit an alternative, imaginative encounter with the urban landscape.

The recent controversy over Devimco’s proposal for the district’s redevelopment is not the first manifestation of private real-estate development prospects that continue to threaten the gentrification of this historic neighbourhood. After two decades of neglect and the proliferation of vacant lots, throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s buildings in the *Faubourg* (and neighbouring Griffintown) became the subject of a highly competitive real-estate racket. Under the political leadership of Mayor Jean Doré (1986-1994) the para-municipal real-estate agency, *La Société Immobilière du Patrimoine Architectural de Montréal* (SIMPA), was formed to purchase a number of properties in the district with the intention of redeveloping the area into commercial and residential

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<sup>36</sup> Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Dougal Sheridan, “The Space of Subculture in the City: Getting Specific about Berlin’s Indeterminate territories,” *field-journal* 1.1 [http://www.field-journal.org/uploads/file/2007\\_Volume\\_1/d%20sheridan.pdf](http://www.field-journal.org/uploads/file/2007_Volume_1/d%20sheridan.pdf) (accessed 10 March 2008) 103.

<sup>38</sup> Sheridan, 104.

condominium projects. SIMPA's redevelopment plans were not submitted for public consultation and the repercussions of SIMPA's monopoly on vacant property in the district further caused the eviction of a number of small businesses.<sup>39</sup>

In continuing their efforts to garner interest and revitalize the district, both the municipal and provincial governments offered large subsidies through tax incentives to high-tech software companies who would relocate their business to the *Faubourg*. The trend of dot-comers moving their businesses to the area started with software giant *Discreet Logique*. Subsequently, in 1998 the city announced its plans to rename the *Faubourg* as "*Cité du Multimédia*."

With regard to the *Faubourg* and Griffintown's neglect, only very recently has industrial architecture been gaining recognition for its heritage value. In the beginning of the twenty-first century no buildings in the district were listed or protected at any level of government. Private developers surveyed a number of abandoned buildings and vacant lots in the *Faubourg* and Griffintown simply for their property tax value. The measures that *Quartier Éphémère* took to rehabilitate, preserve and reuse their site gained the Darling Foundry legally demarcated historic site status in 2002.

The *Faubourg* and Griffintown, as cultural heritage activist Dinu Bumbaru notes, "is not a traditional historical area comprised of grand monuments, historical sites, and

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<sup>39</sup> This information was retrieved from local newspaper clippings - located at Heritage Montreal's archives - which chronicle highly sensitive debates surrounding the politics of the *Faubourg*'s real-estate value throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. For example, during this time local newspapers revealed that certain properties in the district had changed hands seventeen times between 1986 and 1988 and almost doubled in price within the range of millions of dollars. Of particular interest was La Société Immobilière du Patrimoine Architectural de Montréal's association with private developers which ethically made the brokerage of properties questionable. For more details see for example William Marsden, "Property Prices Spiral in Area of Secret City Project," *The Gazette* [Montreal] 11 July 1990: A1.



monumental art works.”<sup>40</sup> Compared to “traditional monuments,”<sup>41</sup> defined by J.B. Jackson as objects or buildings that remind us of something (historically) important, the remaining ruins of the *Faubourg*’s and Griffintown’s industrial past are, I argue, monuments to what Jackson calls a “(private) vernacular past.”<sup>42</sup> As vernacular monuments, industrial ruins have been venerated for their aesthetic quality, as discussed in chapter one. However, as monuments to their local industrial past they incite the memory of a specific history and as Jackson notes, “a sense of the way it *used to be*, history as the chronicle of everyday existence.”<sup>43</sup> Fragments from the past that still exist in the *Faubourg* and Griffintown can be traced in their industrial ruins and abandoned factories. The Darling Foundry is host to its “factory inhabitation,”<sup>44</sup> the traces of its vernacular past and the everyday gestures and rituals of the workers who once worked there.

A study of vernacular architecture and landscapes provides different insights into the social history of urban landscapes and its inhabitants.<sup>45</sup> As Hayden argues:

[r]estoring significant shared meanings for many neglected urban places first involves claiming the entire urban cultural landscape as an important part of history, not just its architectural monuments. This means

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<sup>40</sup> Dinu Bumbaru, “The Nazareth Fiefdom, Griffintown, the Faubourg des Récollets or Quartier des Écluses... A District that is More than a Simple Side-Dish,” *Panique au Faubourg* (Montreal: Quartier Éphémère, 1997) 26 and 27.

<sup>41</sup> Jackson, 91.

<sup>42</sup> Jackson, 94.

<sup>43</sup> Jackson, 94-95.

<sup>44</sup> Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 118.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson, 103.

emphasizing the buildings types - such as tenement, factory, union hall, or church - that have housed working peoples everyday lives. Second, it involves finding creative ways to interpret modest buildings as part of the flow of contemporary city life. A politically conscious approach to urban preservation must go beyond the techniques of traditional architectural preservation (making preserved structures into museums or attractive commercial real estate) to reach broader audiences. It must emphasize public processes and public memory.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the *Faubourg's* and Griffintown's abandoned buildings and vacant lots, in recent years the memory of the neighbourhood has been rekindled by local residents and members within Montreal's community who are concerned with the preservation of the historic neighbourhood. In his essay, "Forgive My Nostalgia: The Construction of Griffintown, Montréal, as a *lieu de mémoire*," historian Matthew Barlow examines how the Irish community in Montreal have commemorated the neighbourhood. Throughout the 1960s a number of buildings demolished in the area included the original workers' row houses where the Irish immigrants lived and the notable St. Ann's Parish Church. Constructed in 1854 by celebrated Montreal architect John Ostell (1813-1892),<sup>47</sup> St. Ann's symbolized the heart of the Irish community in Griffintown.<sup>48</sup> The site where St. Ann's once existed, at the corner of rue de la Montagne and Ottawa Street, has since become a park. Traces of the church's ruins can be seen in the stone foundation that

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<sup>46</sup> Dolores Hayden, "The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History," *Strangely Familiar: Narratives of Architecture in the City*. eds., Iain Borden et al. (New York: Routledge, 1996): 49.

<sup>47</sup> The legacy of John Ostell's work in Montreal includes, among others, the McGill University Arts Building Complex (1839) and industrial buildings such as the New City Gas Company (1859) and the Canadian Sugar Refinery (1854).

<sup>48</sup> Matthew Barlow, "Forgive My Nostalgia: The Construction of Griffintown as a *lieux de memoire*," (30 May 2005) <http://elenarazlogova.org/hist306f06/barlow.pdf> (accessed 15 January 2009).

surrounds a freestanding memorial plaque located at the entrance to the park. The creation of a public memorial site to the loss of place is an articulation of memory and nostalgia that symbolizes a community's attempt to reconcile with its identity.

Memories of the neighbourhood have been given voice in the form of oral history projects such as Lisa Gasior's "Sounding Griffintown" (2007), a listening guide designed for a walking tour of the district. Gasior created a soundscape of the neighbourhood that includes Griffintown's history as remembered by former residents. As Gasior notes, "[t]he project does not attempt to recreate [the] history [of Griffintown] so much as [it] allows listeners to contemplate how soundscapes change and how people's memories differ yet combine to paint a sonic photograph of their old neighbourhood."<sup>49</sup> Socio-historical portraits of urban neighbourhoods, such as the "Sounding Griffintown" project, and the emergence of oral history projects provide alternative methods for engaging with a community and understanding what a neighbourhood means to its inhabitants.

Because "oral sources are *narrative* sources,"<sup>50</sup> they also reveal the polyvalent voices that make up a community. The relationship between memory, public history and oral history has been a major critical preoccupation in the field of history over the last three decades. Within oral history practice, projects predominantly deal with disenfranchised and marginal communities, such as victims of trauma or incarceration. In this way, oral history projects have the potential to empower and give voice to

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<sup>49</sup> The audio-walking tour can be downloaded directly from the site <http://www.griffinsound.ca/griffintown/index.htm> (accessed 14 March 2008). See also "Soundscapes," <http://www.griffinsound.ca/index-old.htm> (accessed 14 March 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Alessandro Portelli, "What makes Oral History Different," *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) 35.

individuals and communities who would otherwise not have one. Further, Hayden suggests, “people in a neighbourhood have a unique understanding of its landmarks, sights, sounds, smells, its pedestrian patterns and social organization.”<sup>51</sup>

I have used oral history as a methodology for documenting the Foundry’s transition from its original function to its abandonment and architectural transformation into a cultural site. The oral history interviews conducted for this research revealed a variety of perspectives concerning the motivation for the site’s conversion and, further, how the Darling Foundry and Montreal’s post-industrial landscape have come to be a place and source of inspiration for contemporary artistic practice. Significantly, oral history practice allowed me to construct a relationship with Andrieux, the artists, architects and members of the local community who were, and remain, intimately involved with the building and are concerned with the future of the neighbourhood’s cultural landscape.

Alessandro Portelli argues that oral history “tells us less about events than about their meaning.”<sup>52</sup> However, the oral history interviews I conducted for this project also reveal how the *events* related to Griffintown’s pending redevelopment are inextricably linked to what the proposed changes *mean* to the community. Thus the narratives woven into this thesis reveal less about the narrators’ “life story” and more about their spatial relationship to the neighbourhood. These narratives also work as a counterpoint to the nostalgic feelings that are attached to sites of ruin and urban decay (as explored in

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<sup>51</sup> Hayden, 229.

<sup>52</sup> Portelli, 36.

Chapter One) and reveal how the proposals to revitalize Griffintown have become highly politicized.<sup>53</sup>

In light of the efforts to *save* Griffintown, interviewees repeatedly expressed that there was nothing left to save. During a 2008 interview, longtime Griffintown resident, businessman and self-professed “guardian” of the New City Gas site, Harvey Lev contends,

You can’t save everything. Some things don’t deserve it. But there are things that should be saved and reused. Just because the City doesn’t know what to do with space doesn’t mean the public doesn’t know what to do with it. The public is often stonewalled or blocked by rules and regulations. There is a bureaucratic distaste for the natural evolution of urban life and space.<sup>54</sup>

Harvey Lev grew up in Griffintown. The son of a lithographer, Lev continued in the tradition of his father’s business and in the early 1980s he bought the historic New City Gas Building complex. Built between 1859 and 1861 and designed by John Ostell, the buildings are located at 956 Ottawa Street adjacent to a portion of the Bonaventure Expressway. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s the buildings produced the gas that supplied light for the local factories and neighbourhood streets. Lev has witnessed significant changes in the district and discloses,

Instead of going to the public and asking how we can integrate these existing [spaces] into something useful, something vibrant, something that’s imaginative, something that moves us forward...well there’s no interest in that. The interest is in getting a ball and chain and knocking it down, and whatever green space there is, filling it up with concrete and sticking more people in there. There’s a lack of imagination and everything of course is based on the return investment and its all short term... its not about what are

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<sup>53</sup> Steven High notes that oral history interviews, within the context of deindustrialization, “act as a crucial counterpoint to the nostalgia” that can be produced in photographs of deindustrialized landscapes. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Harvey Lev, personal interview, 21 January 2009.

we going to have in thirty years, its about what are we going to have in four years. It's mindless. And that is what you deal with when you are dealing with industrial architecture... For years when Mayor Doré was running things, he would send inspectors every three weeks who asked me why I wouldn't just tear the [New City Gas] buildings down.<sup>55</sup>

Judith Bauer is a Griffintown resident, writer and community activist who was partially responsible for the creation of Griffintown's "Community for Sustainable Development" (CSR). During our interview, Bauer shared her thoughts about the plans to redevelop the deindustrialized neighbourhood. Bauer's narrative reveals the significance of place identity and how the community was galvanized by the threat of big box stores and condo towers.

I've seen many life cycles here... but if you don't live here you don't see [the life here] and all you see is the empty parking lots. Depending on how you define Griffintown the population varies... this community loves the way Griffintown is right now... but it is going to change and organizations like the CSR and *Quartier Éphémère* want to see it develop in a way that respects what is here. It is about our City as a whole, it's about Montreal. You can't develop an area like Griffintown, adjacent to downtown, and expect it not to affect the rest of the City. Griffintown is situated in a remarkable position. Whatever we do in this neighbourhood is going to determine what Montreal is. If we turn Griffintown into a sea of condo towers and shopping malls we won't be able to see our mountain from the canal anymore. What we should be doing with this area is repurposing the existing built heritage. I'd like to see the building's that are still here [in Griffintown], like the Darling Foundry, be given a more public function... a cultural function... a historical function... something that is more than just food for the body. It is not enough to have shops, grocery stores and movie theatres. We need places that inspire us to tell and think about our own stories... to understand how they connect to the places and history we live. If we agree to what the developers want to do, to raise it all and try and build a community from scratch, what does the community have to connect to?<sup>56</sup>

Within the context of urban renewal, how cities are regulated and planned

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<sup>55</sup> Harvey Lev, personal interview, 21 January 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Judith Bauer, personal interview, 13 January 2009.

is often perceived as a privileging of late-capitalist or neo-liberalist policies. Yet, as High notes, the “pitting [of] ‘community’ against ‘capital,’ hid[es] a far more complex, local struggle over power and place identity.”<sup>57</sup> Place identity, High contends, is “constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together. When the places that define us change we ourselves change.”<sup>58</sup>

In response to Devimco’s scaled down plans which include the development of a “*L’îlot culturelle*,” (cultural island) in the Peel Basin (the southern section of Griffintown), Andrieux created a manifesto to contest the construction of new sites for cultural and commercial enterprise. In an interview, Andrieux stated,

The Devimco project will place all of the cultural activities in one area... creating a cultural ghetto. I am really against the idea of a ghetto and segregating the culture of the city... instead [we should] be looking at culture as one of the major elements of society. *Divertissement culturelle* is very dangerous. I remember politicians saying in their debate “culture is fun.” Culture is culture. Culture is ugly things and beautiful things. Culture gives you space to think. Culture gives you retrospection, imagination...<sup>59</sup>

These interviews reveal that indeterminate territories are fraught with tensions between planning and spontaneous evolution. French sociologist Fabrice Raffin, a specialist in artistic practices within urban territories, considers the hidden patterns and diverse ways in which the city is inhabited, and how these patterns are embedded invariably in the indeterminate space. He writes: “Powerful property developers aside, each citizen discretely and imperceptibly helps shape the urban space, making and

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<sup>57</sup> High, 93.

<sup>58</sup> High refers to and interprets geographer Doreen Massey’s concept of place identity. 93.

<sup>59</sup> Andrieux, personal interview, 3 December 2008.

unmaking it. Cultural workers are a part of this process, inscribing their activities in physical and symbolic spaces.”<sup>60</sup> The interstitial spaces of the urban landscape leave room to consider and reflect upon the diverse ways in which the city is inhabited. It is thus my position that developer-driven approaches to revitalizing indeterminate urban spaces deny the ephemeral and affective nature of the city, its built, lived and imaginary spaces. As Wilson notes, while urban planning is necessary and often desirable, too often the process of regulating and revitalizing the interstitial spaces of a city results in the homogenization of cultural landscapes, leaving very little space for the unexpected.<sup>61</sup>

Presently, Griffintown is an interstitial space within Montreal that allows the patina of local history to be visible; it allows the traces of past ideas about the urban landscape to remain legible, and allows for impromptu, experimental, creative and subversive actions to incite intervention.

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<sup>60</sup> Fabrice Raffin, “An Active Venue For The Arts in the Heart of the City,” The Artfactories: Conversions for Urban Culture, Trans. Leon Sagaru ed. Fazette Bordage. (Basel; Berlin; Boston: Birkhauser, 2002) 10.11.

<sup>61</sup> Wilson, “Against Utopia,” 258.



## Chapter Three The *Poésie* of the Post-Industrial Landscape

### The Performative Agency of Ruins

By virtue of the Darling Foundry's location within a post-industrial landscape, artists made exhibitions and interventions and shaped them in response and in relation to the qualities and leftover fragments of ruined and abandoned spaces. In this way, the sites also provide a context in which artists can draw attention to aspects of Montreal's urban decay. The first section of this chapter briefly considers how the imaginary of ruins is manifested in contemporary art projects in relation to the ruins of industrial architecture. Rather than leading to a nostalgic reflection of the past, I see these projects as a theatrical re-imagination of the post-industrial landscape. The second part of this chapter will examine how artists residing at the Darling Foundry engage with the city's cultural politics through urban interventions.

Following the success of *Panique au Faubourg*, *Quartier Éphémère* continued to commission artists whose projects explored the architectural and performative qualities of industrial ruins. "Obsolescence" (2005)<sup>1</sup> was created by multi-media artist and lighting designer, Axel Morgenthaler. The Canada Malting Plant, one of Montreal's more popular urban ruins,<sup>2</sup> was the site of intervention. Abandoned since 1985, the mammoth structure

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<sup>1</sup> A quick time video of "Obsolescence" can be viewed online, <http://www.axelmorgenthaler.com/content/view/16/38/lang.english/> (accessed 15 September). For more information about Morgenthaler's work see [http://www.axelmorgenthaler.com/component/option,com\\_gallery2/Itemid,26/lang.english/?g2\\_view=core.ShowItem&g2\\_itemId=23](http://www.axelmorgenthaler.com/component/option,com_gallery2/Itemid,26/lang.english/?g2_view=core.ShowItem&g2_itemId=23) (accessed 15 September 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Architect Spence D. Jerome (1873/5-1995) designed the Canada Malting Plant. Built in 1905 with brick, clay tiles and concrete, the plant is situated on the Lachine Canal on the periphery of Montreal's working class neighbourhood, Saint-Henri. For more details on the site's history and the plant's architectural features see "Canada Malting Plant," 26

bears the marks of a number of interventions, mostly in the form of graffiti. Although it is technically a historical architectural landmark, the extent of its ruin complicates its legitimacy as a historical landmark. Morgenthaler's installation was designed to commemorate the one hundred year anniversary of the site, and sought to pay homage to the culture of industrial labour and the utilitarian function of the plant. Morgenthaler installed fluorescent and strobe lights into the decaying structure to simulate a ghostly glow that symbolized the welding torches used by the workers who once inhabited the site. "The Silophone Project"<sup>3</sup> created by [The User], architect Thomas Macintosh and composer/ musician Emmanuel Maddan (2002) used the Silo No. 5 grain elevator as a container for their "sonic inhabitation" of the site. Sounds were collected from around the world via the telephone and internet and then broadcast into the Silo. The creators of the Silophone Project described their project as both an auditory and architectural experience, as well as a compositional performance that "disrupt[ed] the conventional boundaries between the creators and the audience."<sup>4</sup>

By temporarily reusing the sites, the artists insert new narratives into the existing site that allow for a different engagement with the architecture. Andrieux explains that these projects were also intended to express the *poésie* of abandoned post-industrial sites:

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March 2007, <http://urbanlookout.wordpress.com/2007/03/26/canada-malting-plant/> (accessed 18 June 2009) and <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/industrial/showbuilding.php?id=IN002> (accessed 3 May 2009).

<sup>3</sup> See "The Silophone Project: The Inhabitation of Silo # 5," <http://www.silophone.net/> (accessed 15 September 2008)

<sup>4</sup> Emmanuel Maddan and Thomas McIntosh, "Silophone," *Espace 58* (Winter 2001-2002): 23-25.

When we did the Silophone project... it was such a beautiful way to point out the acoustic capacity of this building. It is very interesting to give artists the opportunity to bring value to the architectural characteristic [of the Silo No. 5]. We also did Proposal for Three Tunnels [and] Obsolescence. [These projects] are kinds of re-interpretations that point out things... it is a kind of *décalage*.<sup>5</sup> These [interpretations] are visual or [acoustic]. So how could sound and history touch, come together... is the only way through art? [When] visual art and history [come together] they express a message or a *poésie*.<sup>6</sup>

Following Andrieux, the *poésie* of ruins is thus articulated by their ability to engender artistic intervention. In as much as these interventions created a poetic encounter with each site, they also evoked a mediation or correspondence between the past and present, the contemporaneous and historical. The insertion of contemporary objects and images into a pre-existing context, such as the architectural ruins of the *Faubourg*, can be understood in terms of Walter Benjamin's notion of a "dialectical image." He writes,

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.<sup>7</sup>

Jane Rendell cites the above passage by Benjamin in an effort to examine the construction of montage in architectural projects where the insertion of contemporary art

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<sup>5</sup> I have interpreted Andrieux's use of *décalage*, in this instance, as a gap in time or that which draws attention to the past and time passing, the past in the present, or the present reinterpretation of the past.

<sup>6</sup> Andrieux, personal interview, 3 December 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002) 462.

projects into a building's existing context "reclaim[s] or unearth[s] certain aspects of history lying buried in the present."<sup>8</sup> Further, she argues that the correspondence between contemporary art and abandoned architecture holds the potential to "reconfigure the temporality of sites [and] reposition the relationship of the past and the present in a number of different ways."<sup>9</sup>

From an interdisciplinary perspective, these interventions can also be interpreted as theatrical compositions that move beyond Benjamin's notion of the dialectical image. Each site became the material for stimulating an artistic act that simultaneously drew attention to a contested site in the city *and* transformed the site into a place of performance. For example, "Proposal for Three Tunnels" (1999),<sup>10</sup> created by Marcus MacDonald (in collaboration with Sophie Herché and Franck Légale), was an intervention with an abandoned tunnel located at the corner of rue de la Montagne and Wellington Street.<sup>11</sup> Ricardo Castro described the tunnel's temporary transformation from a deserted site into "an improvised open theatre where a continuous performance of sound, shadows and light [took] place around the clock."<sup>12</sup> In rendering abandoned spaces as sound, light, and projections the artists' interventions become appropriations of

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<sup>8</sup> Rendell, 83.

<sup>9</sup> Rendell, 75.

<sup>10</sup> See "Proposal for Three Tunnels," [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/recycler\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/recycler_e/index.html) (accessed 29 January 2008)

<sup>11</sup> The Wellington tunnel was once used to cross the Lachine Canal. Since 1993 the tunnel has been abandoned.

<sup>12</sup> Castro, "There's a Light at the End of the Tunnel," The Gazette 23 October 1999: J6.

these spaces and in the words of Nick Kaye, the “practices themselves become part of the city.”<sup>13</sup> These projects also show that creating with a city’s ruins may also present unique opportunities to expand the cultural and artistic life of a place.

### **Urban Interventions**

Within the last two decades, theorists within the fields of architecture and contemporary art, such as Malcolm Miles, Suzanne Lacy, Lucy Lippard, Jane Rendell and Miwon Kwon have drawn attention to and called into question the meanings and definitions given to public art projects and site-specific art practice. Public art works that took the form of site-specific projects throughout the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated how artists were concerned with a phenomenological and experiential understanding of a location (its dimensions, texture, lighting and climate).<sup>14</sup> The careful selection of a site placed an emphasis or “fixed” meaning on the relationship between the art object and its location.

In her introduction to One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity (2006), Miwon Kwon draws attention to the ways in which the meaning of site-specificity has been reassessed in recent years. According to Kwon, since the 1970s the term site-specificity has become “destabilized.”<sup>15</sup> Kwon’s analysis of contemporary art practice shows within the last decade how the terminology used to describe/ define and

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<sup>13</sup> Nick Kaye, Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 36.

<sup>14</sup> Kwon, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Kwon, 3.

critique the “art-site-relationship” has shifted its focus from the site and come to emphasize how these projects can also be “context-specific, debate-specific, audience-specific and community-specific.”<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, Kwon concludes that these practices not only operate as a vehicle for artistic expression, but also as a socially discursive art form. Examining the diverse ways in which site-specificity has evolved since its emergence in the 1960s, Kwon proposes three paradigms from which to examine the genealogy of site-specificity: phenomenological or experiential; social/ institutional; and discursive.<sup>17</sup>

From a performance theory perspective, Nick Kaye proposes that site-specificity is “linked to the incursion of performance into visual art and architecture.” Within the theatre milieu, site-specific performance has also been used to devise non-narrative performances that reflect upon the history of the site, and perhaps, the more pervasive myths that surround a particular site. More recently, scholars within the field of cultural geography, such as David Pinder, have begun to trace and interpret the psycho-geographical practices that take the form of artistic interventions within the urban landscape. Pinder proposes that artistic interventions can be understood as a form of urban exploration and states, “[t]o intervene through creative practice in public space is to enter into a crucial struggle over the meanings, values and potentialities of [urban] space

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<sup>16</sup> Kwon, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche’s examination, for example, of Krzysztof Wodiczko’s, “The Homeless Projection: A Proposal for the City of New York 1986,” is particularly revealing in terms of how site-specific art practice can challenge the socio- spatial politics within the urban realm.

at a time when its democracy is highly contested.”<sup>18</sup> In as much as urban interventions may be motivated by artists who are ascertaining their “right to the city,” Rendell reminds us that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, urban explorations were represented by figures such as the rambler, the prostitute, the flâneur and the detective.<sup>19</sup> In Rendell’s view, the way in which city space is traversed can reveal a city in “strangely familiar ways,” but also argues that it is our engagement with urban space that informs how “we are also creating cities [and communities] as we desire them to be.”<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, urban interventions come into relief by surprise, through circumstance and, often, are unauthored works of art that are accidentally encountered.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the exhibitions that occurred under the banner of *Panique au Faubourg* and installations that occurred within particular abandoned sites, such as “Obsolescence” and “Proposal for Three Tunnels,” urban interventions have the potential to bring particular social, political and cultural struggles into representation. In the same way public protests have a power to bring certain aspects of a city to the surface, what then, do urban interventions both aesthetically and politically give the city and its inhabitants in terms of a rhetorical space, a space for discussion? Architectural historian

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<sup>18</sup> David Pinder, “Arts of Urban Exploration,” *Cultural Geographies* 12, No. 4 2005: 383-411 <http://cgj.sagepub.com/cgi/content/short/12/4/383> (accessed 12 September 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Rendell, “Bazarr Beauties or Pleasure is Our Pursuit: A Spatial Story of Exchange,” in *The Unknown City*, 105.

<sup>20</sup> Rendell, “Bazarr Beauties,” in *The Unknown City*, 105.

<sup>21</sup> Suzanne Lacy has argued that interventionist art is characterized by either spontaneous, imaginative and anonymous acts on the one hand, or by interventions which are motivated by a political point of view and are intended to elicit an audience response on the other. See Suzanne Lacy, “Seeing Mud Houses,” in *Accidental Audience: Urban Interventions by Artists*, ed. Kym Pruesse (Toronto: The off/site collective, 1999) 73.

Cynthia Hammond proposes that urban interventions are “visual and spatial speech acts, which bring cities to articulate themselves differently.”<sup>22</sup> Further, Hammond argues that urban interventions “harness the potential of the built environment’s potential to act as *architecture parlante*, a speaking architecture that communicates in surprising and subversive ways.”<sup>23</sup>

In this section I focus on the work of German artists and urban interventionists Sylvia Winkler and Stephan Köperl.<sup>24</sup> The projects in question were created over a six-month period during Winkler and Köperl’s residency at the Darling Foundry between April and October 2008, which was the same time frame in which the city adopted the Devimco “Griffintown Project.” Winkler and Köperl devised and constructed their projects within the Foundry, however, none of the work they produced or performed occurred *within* the Foundry. Insofar as the Foundry operates as gallery for the exhibition of contemporary art, it also acts as a threshold between its artists, and the highly contested terrain in which the building is located. In this way, the Foundry creates conditions in which artists such as Winkler and Köperl can explore their practice beyond the Foundry and engage with the cultural landscape of the city.

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<sup>22</sup> Cynthia Hammond, “Urban ‘Truths’: Artistic Interventions in Post-Socialist Space.” In *The Post Socialist City: Continuity and Change in Space and Imagery*. Marina Dmitrieva and Alfrun Kliems, eds. (Berlin: Jois Verlag, 2011) 4. (forthcoming.)

<sup>23</sup> Hammond, “Urban ‘Truths’,” 4-5.

<sup>24</sup> The artists’ work is well documented on their website, <http://www.winkler-koepel.net/0englisch/heimseitee.html> (accessed 13 May 2009).



I first met Winkler and Köperl following an art history graduate symposium entitled, “Montreal as Palimpsest: Architecture, Community, Change,”<sup>25</sup> held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in April 2008. They had just arrived from Stuttgart to begin their residency at the Foundry.<sup>26</sup> Drawn to the event’s content and its examination of the morphology of Montreal’s built environment, their attendance, in many respects, is where their initial investigation about Montreal’s history began.<sup>27</sup> It is also an occasion that marks the beginning of my relationship to the artists and their work.

With every new city, Winkler and Köperl appear to absorb the mechanisms by which city space is transformed. Winkler and Köperl are politically engaged artists whose work responds to particular urban conditions. However, there is also a playful nature to these artists’ work, manifested in the contact between themselves and with the observers who, passing by, are lucky enough to catch them in the creative act. Brigit Neuer describes Winkler and Köperl’s approaches to intervening with the city as a psycho-geographic engagement with the structure of urban space.<sup>28</sup> Winkler and Köperl’s desire to communicate messages through playful tactics and humour is reminiscent of the Situationists International strategy of *dérive* and their critique of modernist planning.

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<sup>25</sup> See [http://www.canadianartinstitute.org/conf08\\_palimpsest/](http://www.canadianartinstitute.org/conf08_palimpsest/) (accessed 19 May 2009).

<sup>26</sup> The Canada Council for the Arts Foreign Residency Program (established in 2008) sponsored Winkler and Köperl’s residency at the Darling Foundry. The program supports established international artists in a six-month residency and provides the artist(s) with a production bursary.

<sup>27</sup> Winkler and Köperl, personal interview, 15 September.

<sup>28</sup> Brigit Neuer, catalogue, “Reading in the Palimpsest of the Urban Landscape,” The Pausing of Thoughts in the Moment of Indifference (Stuttgart: Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, 2006) n.pag.

More than a *dérive* however, I see Winkler and Köperl's engagement with the urban environment, to borrow from de Certeau, as a "spatial practice." De Certeau's premise is that walking is an elementary form of apprehending a city through all of the sensory modes. "The act of walking," de Certeau claims, "is to the urban system what the speech act is to language." Furthermore, he posits that walking in the city is a "pedestrian speech act" with an "enunciative function."<sup>29</sup> Rendell argues that through the act of walking, "spatial stories" are created which act "as theoretical device[s] that allow us to understand the urban fabric in terms of narrative relationships between spaces, times and subjects."<sup>30</sup> According to de Certeau and Luce Giard, the inhabitants of a city are the true "*bricoleurs*" of urban space. They argue that the two modes by which objects in the city are transformed, interrupted or displaced are through gestures (tactics) and narratives (language).<sup>31</sup> Within this logic, they assert that "[g]estures are the true archives of the city... They remake the urban landscape everyday. They shift a thousand pasts that are perhaps no longer namable and that structure no less their experience of the city."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> De Certeau, "Walking in the City," 97 and 98.

<sup>30</sup> Rendell, Art and Architecture, 188.

<sup>31</sup> De Certeau and Giard, "Ghosts in the City," 141.

<sup>32</sup> De Certeau and Giard, "Ghosts in the City," 141. "Strangely Familiar," a scholarly collective of architects, more recently formulated a theoretical framework of "filters" and "tactics" which refer to the different uses and productions of urban space. The collective posits that filters and tactics operate dialectically as tools for negotiating between oneself and the city. "Filters" are thematized by memory, experience and identity, whereas "tactics" are characterized by spatial appropriation, forms of resistance and domination. "Strangely Familiar" was co-founded in 1994 in London by architectural historians Iain Borden, Joe Kerr, Alicia Pivaro and Jane Rendell. See Iain Borden et al, The Unknown City, 12 and 13.

As a way of engaging with experiences and concepts of foreign places and cities, Winkler and Köperl begin each journey by walking through the urban landscape. How a city looks is influential to their work. Winkler explains,

We are not urbanists. [We are] interested in the social and how daily life is [affected] by the shape of the city. I am curious [about] how architecture affects life... what kind of built environment do people want to live in? Architecture has an influence on how people live... and the art we are making.<sup>33</sup>

Through their observation of everyday occurrences, Winkler and Köperl's interventions are inspired by experiencing the city as strangers and by the complex urban situations that embed themselves as images in their minds.<sup>34</sup> Neuer describes their interventions as a series of associative investigations that reveal an expression given by the city.<sup>35</sup> As Köperl explains, the inspiration to create public interventions came out of his interest in discovering hidden objects in urban spaces combined with his desire to create minute landscapes and ephemeral works in the city.<sup>36</sup>

Significantly, what makes Winkler and Köperl's approach to urban interventions unique is how their work is inspired. From the perspective of information theory, Johannes Meinhardt has described their interventions as "communication interferences"

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<sup>33</sup> Winkler, personal interview, 15 September 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Sylvia Winkler and Stephan Köperl, personal interview, 15 September 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Neuer, n.pag.

<sup>36</sup> Köperl, personal interview, 15 September 2008.

or the failure of the interaction of communication through writing, language or human behaviour.<sup>37</sup> As a text for one of their catalogues from Stuttgart, Germany, explains,

[The artists] deal with pieces of writing turning up, for instance, which are incomprehensible or not perceived as writing in the first place; or which exist in a situation without addressee or speaker, anonymous and non-referential, floating and without context; or they concern certain forms of behaviour which evade communication [and] refuse expression[.]<sup>38</sup>

These “communication interferences” combined with the artists’ integration into an urban space of foreign language, writing, signs and gestures become the material for their art and performances.<sup>39</sup> Like linguistic exercises, Winkler and Köperl’s point of entry into an unfamiliar culture is through the recreation or restructuring of (un)familiar sentences, phrases, or words and inscribing them onto the public and private spaces of the city. Examples of these phrases include: “how sweet is your friendliness to my heart” (Cairo, 2002); “to see something with dedication” (Poland, 1999); “to contest the actual occurrence of a truth” (Paris, 1999). (Fig. 21) The artists usually construct these sentences with the use of language dictionaries and random fragments of urban slogans, signs, objects and words that present themselves to the artists. Winkler and Köperl’s sentences and phrases appear disjointed, as they are “inscribed” onto inanimate objects

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<sup>37</sup> Johannes Meinhardt, “Address Unknown: An Aestheticism of Communication Interferences,” catalogue, The Pausing of Thoughts in the Moment of Indifference (Stuttgart: Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, 2006) n.pag.

<sup>38</sup> Meinhardt, n.pag.

<sup>39</sup> Meinhardt, n.pag.

and public spaces. But as Meinhardt points out, Winkler and Köperl's messages are carefully arranged in an "invisible choreography."<sup>40</sup>

During their six-month residency at the Darling Foundry the artists became increasingly involved in the "Griffintown Project" controversy. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2008, the Community for Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown (CSR) staged a mock funeral for Griffintown in protest to the city's approval of Devimco's development plans for the area. With a *calèche* carrying a coffin marked "RIP Griffintown," (Fig. 22) pallbearers dressed in black, among two hundred other protest supporters, formed a procession and marched from Griffintown to Montreal's City Hall. This gesture inspired Winkler and Köperl, who were compelled to join the procession.

In response to the "Griffintown Project" and captured by the activist nature of the community, Winkler and Köperl created an intervention whereby they offered free *calèche* rides through Montreal's old port to tourists. Situated next door to the *Faubourg* and Griffintown, the old port of Montreal is a premiere cultural destination that boasts innumerable heritage buildings, public spaces and monumental landmarks such as Place Jacques Cartier, the Notre-Dame Basilica, and the Bonsecours Market, to name a few. The city of Montreal estimates that fourteen million tourists visit the old port each year. Many of these tourists experience old Montreal by *calèche*.

Winkler and Köperl's *calèche* rides capitalized on their audiences' (and in this case tourists') willingness to collaborate in the intervention, thereby participating in the debates surrounding Griffintown's redevelopment. In exchange for a free ride, the tourists held protest signs that critiqued the monopolization of public space. Protest signs

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<sup>40</sup> Meinhardt, n.pag.

were inscribed with the tropes of consumerism, capitalism and the privatization of public space. (Fig. 23) In so doing, the artists' "staged" *calèche* rides subverted the traditional meaning of the tourist activity by transforming a cultural excursion, for both the artists and the tourists, into a site-specific performance and socio-political action.<sup>41</sup>

Meinhardt asks, "[w]hat, however, happens when apparently separated, disjointed surfaces supporting signs transport and communicate a continuous [and] coherent text [?]"<sup>42</sup> Kwon suggests that the movements of artists together with where they choose to locate their work participate in the formation of an alternative narrative and what Kwon has called a "nomadic movement" or "itinerary." She writes,

[T]hrough the nomadic movement of the artist – operating more like an itinerary than a map – the site can now be as various as a billboard, an artist's genre, a disenfranchised community, an institutional framework, a magazine page, a social cause, or a political debate. It can be literal, like a street corner, or virtual, like a theoretical concept.<sup>43</sup>

In proclaiming "[w]hat the map cuts up, the story cuts across,"<sup>44</sup> de Certeau states his belief that stories and narratives can operate as itineraries or guides which function as

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<sup>41</sup> The "Griffintown Project" is not the first time Winkler and Köperl have addressed urban revitalization politics and the preservation of architectural heritage in their projects. Their interest in issues of expropriation and urban change began in 1997 when the artists traveled to *Kunming*, a city located in the southwest part of the People's Republic of China. Here they discovered the demolition of *Jin Bei Lu* (Gold Jade Avenue), an alley in a historic part of the city where hundreds of residents were evicted from their homes prior to the area's demolition. In response to the abandonment and erasure of this neighbourhood, the artists' wrote a cover version of *Xin Tai Ruan*, a popular song at the time. With a cassette player and the new lyrics, which were hand painted in Chinese characters on placards, like mourners, they sang their song while cycling through the rubble of the neighbourhood.

<sup>42</sup> Meinhardt, n.pag.

<sup>43</sup> Kwon, 3.

<sup>44</sup> De Certeau, "Spatial Stories," 129.

“spatial syntaxes” that organize and link places.<sup>45</sup> While playing with the syntax of a foreign language, Winkler and Köperl localize a situation (with which people are familiar) and alter this situation to create new images in the memories of city dwellers. In this way, Winkler and Köperl’s work becomes a game between the familiar and the unfamiliar and a discourse between a local situation and themselves as strangers that moves their interventions beyond mere communication interferences.

Continuing their investigation into the “Griffintown Project,” Winkler and Köperl created two in situ installations and a public performance entitled “Make No \$mall Plans.” The artists appropriated “make no small plans” from a corporate slogan used by MetCap Living, a corporate real-estate company that manages Montreal’s Olympic Village. The quote belongs to MetCap Living’s founder, Michael O’Gallagher (1957-2002), who was referring to Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), a celebrated architect and city planner famous for his dictum: “Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will not themselves be realized.”<sup>46</sup> Winkler and Köperl’s research show that both the Olympic Stadium, designed by Roger Tallibert, and Burnham’s World Exposition site in Chicago, were both urban development projects operating on a mega scale at different times in history and were fraught with financial

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<sup>45</sup> De Certeau, “Spatial Stories,” 115.

<sup>46</sup> Burnham’s legacy rests in the construction of some of America’s earliest skyscrapers, his master planning of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893) and in his advocacy of the “City Beautiful Movement.” The “City Beautiful Movement,” like the “The Garden City” movement in England, emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and borrowed from the Beaux-Arts movement. The premise of the movement was that the beautification of the city would effectively bring social order and uphold society’s moral values.

crises. In part, the artists' intentions were to draw upon the historical and architectural circumstances that made these utopian projects an economic failure on some level, and to show how this resonated within their respective cities and subsequently how these events related to the revitalization of Griffintown.

On the grounds of Montreal's Olympic Village Winkler and Köperl found a commemoration to Michael O'Gallagher. Their intervention involves the inscription and French translation of "make no small plans" into the stone tablet by decrypting the memorial to create the phrase "*ne pense pas petit.*" (Fig. 24) Thematically linked to the looming redevelopment of Griffintown, "Make No Small Plans/ *Ne pense pas petit*" would become a reoccurring theme throughout the artists' residency at the Darling Foundry. The second installation of this slogan appeared on and around the historic site of the New City Gas Company in Griffintown. The artists applied each word onto an advertising billboard, a portion of the concrete wall that supports the Canadian National Railway overpass, the blade of a chainsaw, and the façade of the historic New City Gas Building. (Fig. 25) In so doing, the site was transformed into a spatial syntax.

An important aspect of Winkler and Köperl's work is the documentation of their projects.<sup>47</sup> Through documentation, the artists' interventions are captured in their entirety. However, through the removal of certain materials the intervention takes on its true ephemeral nature and allows the traces of their interventions to take on new

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<sup>47</sup> Following their residency at the Darling Foundry, Winkler and Köperl arranged the documentation of their projects in Griffintown into archival material for a multi-media exhibition in Stuttgart. See "Re: Development, Re: Considered" under exhibition views at <http://www.oberwelt.de/> (accessed 25 May 2009).



meanings. Today, what remains of “Make No \$mall Plans” on the New City Gas site reads: “no plans.”

“Make No \$mall Plans” was also arranged into a performance and presented as part of “Remember Griffintown,” a three day event that celebrated and commemorated the history of the neighbourhood.<sup>48</sup> Winkler and Köperl wrote new lyrics to Deep Purple’s 1972 pop song, “Smoke On The Water.” Their choice to use this song reflects the same historical time period that Griffintown essentially fell into ruin. The new lyrics fundamentally reflected the community’s struggle with the prospects of urban renewal.<sup>49</sup> The artists performed their parody in the vacant parking lot across the street from the New City Gas Building site. (Fig. 26) The artists’ performances also occurred and were documented at different times throughout different parts of the district, namely in vacant parking lots, underneath overpasses and on the many deserted street corners throughout Griffintown.

As Kwon suggests, these kinds of urban interventions bring “greater visibility to marginalized groups and issues, and initiate the re(dis)covery of ‘minor’ places so far ignored by the dominant culture.”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Hammond suggests that urban “interventions have the potential to articulate the deeply contested nature of civic space, and can thus frame a given space for reconsideration about what matters in the city, what has been forgotten, what is changing, and what might be reclaimed.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See <http://www.remembergriffintown.org/> (accessed 1 March 2009).

<sup>49</sup> See appendix for Winkler and Köperl’s lyrics of “Make No \$mall Plans.”

<sup>50</sup> Kwon, 53.

<sup>51</sup> Hammond, “Urban ‘Truths’,” 1.

Although the ephemeral nature of Winkler and Köperl's interventions is the potency of their projects, their interventions nonetheless resonate within the urban imaginary of Griffintown. Each performance of "Make No \$mall Plans" haunts the district's street corners. As Köperl explained, he sees their interventions as a way of leaving a trace of themselves and their work in the cultural landscape.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, Winkler and Köperl's interventions operate as "nomadic narratives"<sup>53</sup> which are articulated by their passage through space.

Embedded within Winkler and Köperl's urban interventions is an element of activism but also a poetic dimension to their actions that brings new meaning to how the contemporary city is inhabited and transformed. Because issues of place, placelessness and urban revitalization politics predominantly inspire the artists' work, their interventions most often call attention to sites of struggle within the city. In this way, Winkler and Köperl's work is not only created or performed to fulfill their own ideas and identities as artists. Rather their ideas are integrated with those of each community and the socio-cultural context in which they find themselves. Their work also "stages" us, their audience, within a contested space in the city.

As a theatre practitioner I am naturally drawn to the metaphor of the city as *mise-en-scène* or the city as "a theatre of social action,"<sup>54</sup> to borrow from Lewis Mumford (1885-1990). The notion of "city as theatre" or the "urban stage" can be traced back to

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<sup>52</sup> Köperl and Winkler, personal interview, 15 September 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Kwon, 29.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis Mumford, (1937) "What is a City?" In *The City Reader*, Richard T. Legates and Frederic Stout, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 185.

the late middle ages and early Renaissance when theatre occurred in public spaces and there were no buildings or architectural objects specifically designed for theatre performance.<sup>55</sup> Throughout this period, streets in the medieval city were used by the “everyman” for civic processions and dramatic pageants. In this way, public spaces were considered specific sites used for particular pedestrian rituals.

For Mumford, who wrote prolifically about city planning and urban culture, the city was a social institution, a venue for the development of human culture and social drama. In Mumford’s view, “[t]he physical organization of the city may deflate this drama or make it frustrate; or it may, through the deliberate efforts of art, politics, and education, make the drama more richly significant, as a stage-set, well designed, intensifies and underlines the gestures of the actors and the action of the play.”<sup>56</sup> I would argue that Mumford’s idea that “the city creates the theatre” provides a tantalizing opportunity to explore the “performative” qualities of public urban spaces. With events like “Remember Griffintown,” the staged funeral march, Winkler and Köperl’s performances of “Make No \$mall Plans” and their *calèche* rides, the post-industrial landscape of the *Faubourg* and Griffintown is made “performative” and transformed into an “urban stage.”<sup>57</sup> It is the performance of the site in conjunction with urban interventions that also “*speaks* the city.”<sup>58</sup> In so doing, the interstitial spaces of the city, such as parking lots, street corners

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<sup>55</sup> Marvin Carlson, Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture (New York: The Cornell University Press, 1989) 14. See also Boyer.

<sup>56</sup> Mumford, 185.

<sup>57</sup> De Certeau and Giard, “Ghosts in the City,” 135.

<sup>58</sup> Iain Borden, “Skateboarding and the Critique of Architecture,” in The Unknown City, 195.

and abandoned urban/public spaces become sites of performance that in turn generate cultural meanings of their own.

## Conclusion

Artists represent ... a sort of lull between two economies, as [do] ruins, and perhaps both represent ... a moment of openness in the meaning and imagination of the city, a pause in urban busyness to wonder and reflect. Artists in these circumstances often became their communities' historians, servants of memory and thus of ruin.<sup>1</sup>

Rebecca Solnit's statement is newly meaningful given the present global economic crisis that is the larger context of Griffintown, its uncertain fate, and this thesis. With the suspension of the proposals to redevelop Griffintown, the neighbourhood is at present a kind of ruin of Devimco's plans, with the effect that this post-industrial landscape once again exists in limbo, caught between urban identities. *Quartier Éphémère* as a place and a concept infers urban ephemerality and in so doing, describes the *Faubourg's* and Griffintown's *reality*. As this thesis demonstrates, however, it is in this "in-between," contingent place where the ruination of Montreal's urban history *anticipates* creative responses and its indeterminacy "facilitates imaginative uses by individuals."<sup>2</sup>

In the Introduction to this thesis I stated that one of my objectives was to consider how ruins operate as sites of performance and, more specifically, how the ruins of industrial architecture contribute to the cultural landscape. The Darling Foundry's new function acts fundamentally as a resource for the creation and exhibition of contemporary art and is a place where the salient needs of artists are being met in terms of affordable studio space, administrative support and cultural exchanges. As discussed in Chapter One, the reuse of ruins for cultural purposes may complicate (and commercialize) their meaning. Beyond this argument, however, I believe that *Quartier Éphémère's* initiatives

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<sup>1</sup> Solnit, 367.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, "Against Utopia," 256-258.

have reinvented and continues to reinvent, not lament, the cultural meanings of ruins through contemporary, site-specific art projects and performances. Just as the installations and urban interventions discussed in this thesis are of an ephemeral nature, they nonetheless are gestures that have repercussions within the public sphere. An interdisciplinary reading of ruins shows that, when sites are read as performative, rather than being viewed with nostalgic longing, the cultural meaning of ruins become complex and multiple.

The significance of the Foundry's conversion can be fully understood in relation to the community in which it is located. Exhibitions such as *Panique au faubourg* are not only framed by the *Faubourg* and Griffintown's architectural, social and cultural history, the Foundry is a *part* of these works. Installations such as "Obsolescence" and the "Silophone Project," for example, recuperate the urban imaginary of the city by bringing new form to each site's respective past. Winkler and Köperl's urban interventions, however, demonstrate that *Quartier Éphémère's* initiatives also *create conditions* for artists to engage with the community and cultural landscape of the district.

At the same time that Andrieux is responding to the larger issues surrounding the future of the district and the city's urban morphology, she is deeply committed to cultivating a sense of place within the Foundry and the community. Andrieux explains the importance of the residences, the workspaces, and how they function as links for connecting with the community:

The proximity of the artist studios [to the exhibition space] is important to us because it provides the organization and building with energy. For us it is also a way to show the public how artists work... a way to invite the public to become more sensitive to the working conditions of the artist and the work in the gallery... to demystify the creation process. For me the physical presence of the artist in the community is very important

too... artists are like philosophers... they make links in between... they create communities.<sup>3</sup>

Following Andrieux, the artist residencies therefore play an essential role in how the artists integrate themselves into society and with community development projects. In this way, the Darling Foundry becomes more than a center for contemporary art. What makes the Darling Foundry distinctly unique from other exhibition and gallery spaces are the links being made with the community, the city and *Quartier Éphémère*'s involvement in urban revitalization politics. The Darling Foundry's reclamation and transformation is an expression of local democracy that is culturally, socially, and politically related to community development and the processes of urban renewal.

“As part of the rediscovery of ‘place’ in the late twentieth century,” Barry Curtis argues, “space has been conceptualized as practice and event.”<sup>4</sup> Throughout the summer months, *Quartier Éphémère* continues to enable culturally diverse and vibrant community events by occupying the block of Ottawa Street in front of the Foundry. Here, a temporary outdoor garden has been installed and on Thursday evenings the street block is transformed into a neighbourhood square. (Fig. 27) Debris from the neighbourhood, such as abandoned furniture and discarded industrial objects, are recycled and arranged to create an “urban terrace” and stage a meeting place for the local community. These events, and the traces of these events suggest that the meanings given to a place are constituted through their ephemeral use.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrieux, personal interview, 11 February 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Curtis, “Some Thoughts on Memory,” 59.

At the risk of idealizing or romanticizing the contemporary reuse of ruins, the Darling Foundry continues to evolve into an urban project, a model perhaps, for the ways in which collaborations can emerge between artists, citizens and a city. Raffin posits the idea of collaboration between creativity and citizenship and suggests that building on the correspondences between creativity and citizenship would generate new conditions and resources for the cultural labourer. He writes,

Cultural labour has its own locations: workshops, rehearsal studios, small cramped premises at a gap in the street or the end of a cul-de-sac. Almost hidden, they are spread around the heart of our towns and generally attract little attention. Nevertheless, these enterprises sometimes multiply and group together in certain areas thereby gaining visibility and strength. Premeditated or not, these groupings remind us of the nearness, the continuities and at times the collaborations that link a city to the uncertain world of creation.<sup>5</sup>

*Quartier Éphémère*'s initiatives, in collaboration with artists, embrace the neighbourhood's ruin, indeterminacy and cultural potential. By revealing certain layers of the urban palimpsest, these collaborations have renewed the sense of place of Griffintown, giving the neighbourhood new presence, both culturally *and* politically, within the city.

It is within the indeterminate spaces of our cities where ephemeral gestures resonate, drawing our attention to the residue of the past, enticing us to rediscover their temporal value. It is through these gestures, installations and interventions that I have come to know the ruins of Montreal's industrial architecture and understand their performative agency. Just as these gestures are the "true archives of the city," as posited by de Certeau and Giard, I have often thought of ruins as the archives of a city's *soul*.

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<sup>5</sup> Raffin, 18-19.



Like palimpsests, they are the traces by which we discover our urban history, and the *soul* of a space. Metaphorically speaking, if we consider the city a body, and we understand the “heart” of a city as its centre, we might also imagine how the *soul* of a city resides in its ephemerality, interstitial spaces and ruin.



Fig. 1  
Detail of Griffintown (St. Anne's Ward) and *Faubourg des Récollets*, 1843.  
Source: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.



Fig. 2  
 Site of the Darling Foundry.  
 Lots 1746 and 1747 illustrated by Charles E. Goad in 1912.  
 Source: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.



Fig. 3  
735 Ottawa Street Façade before renovation c. 2004.  
Source: Architectural firm, *L'Office de l'électisme urbain et fonctionnel*.



Fig. 4

Workers in the Foundry c. 1940.

Source: Darling Brothers Limited Catalogue, Montreal.

Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal.

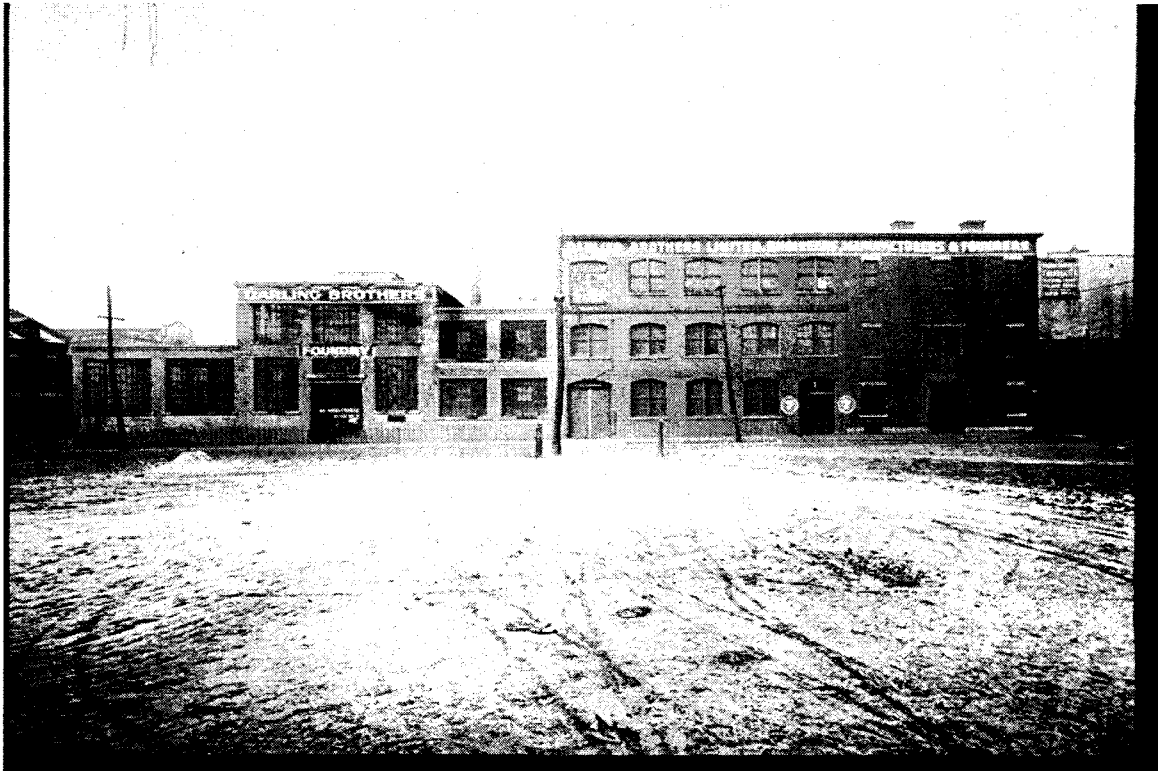


Fig. 5  
Darling Foundry c.1920.  
View looking north onto Ottawa Street.  
Source: *Quartier Éphémère*.



Fig. 6  
Aerial view of the Bonaventure expressway, showing the *Faubourg des Récollets* on the right and Griffintown on the left, c. 1990.  
Source: photo taken by Steve Graetz in *Panique au Faubourg* exhibition catalogue.  
Canadian Center for Architecture.



Fig. 7

*Quartier Éphémère*, 16 Prince Street.

Installation of the “The Flaters # 10,” Anthony Burnham and Suzanne Déry, 1998.

Vinyl swimming pool liner.

Source: photograph taken by Anthony Burnham.



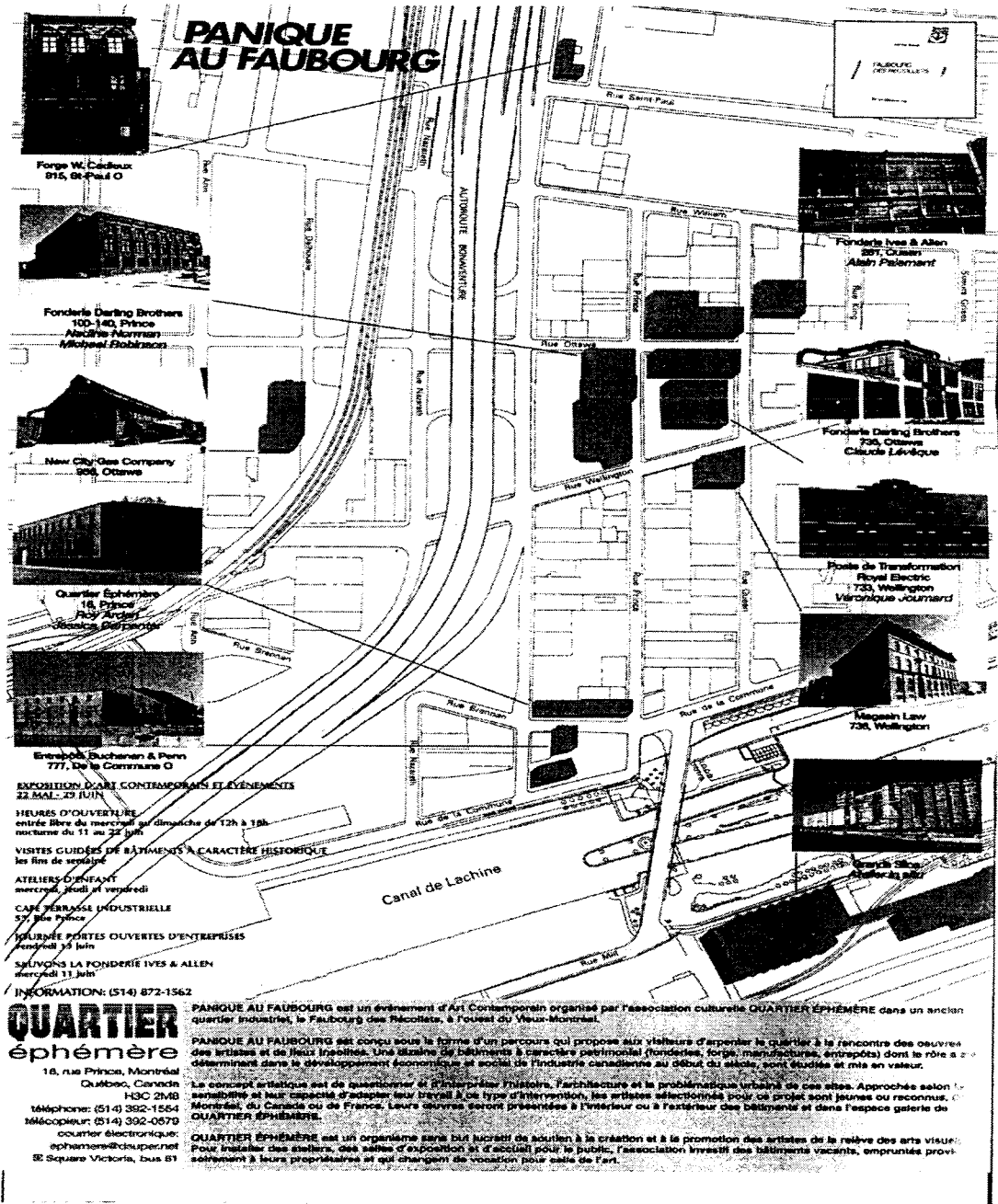


Fig. 8  
 Map of *Panique au Faubourg*, 1997.  
 Source: *Quartier Éphémère*.

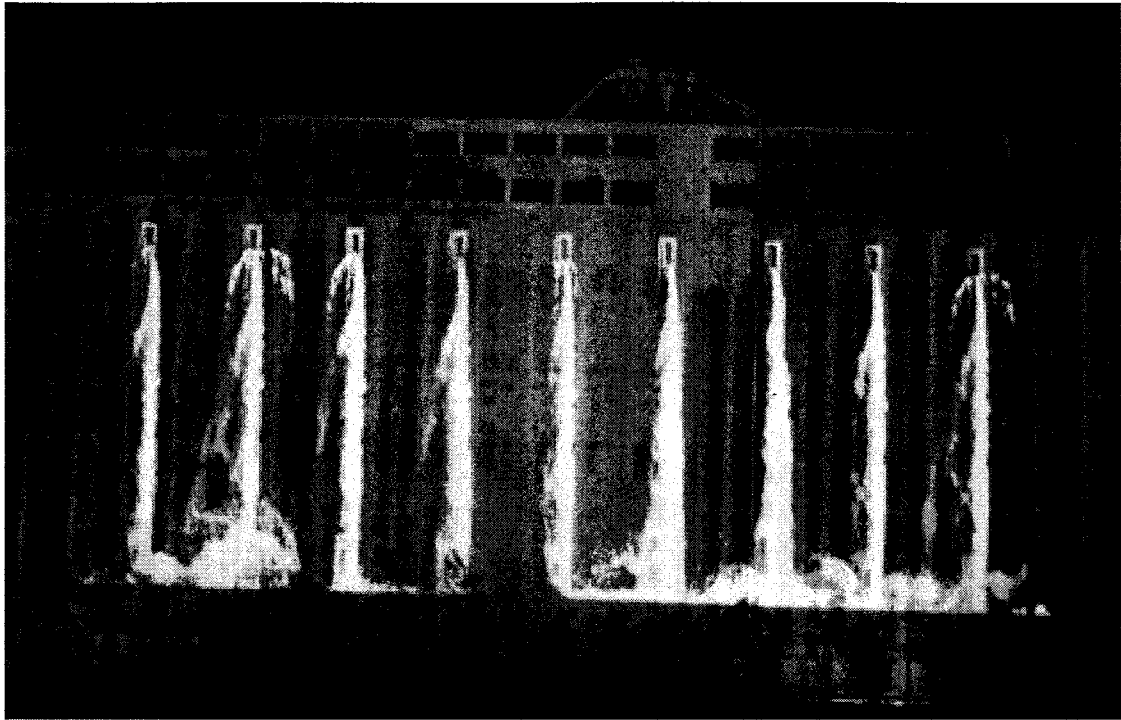


Fig. 9

*Atelier In Situ*, projection onto Silo no. 5, 1997.

Source: *Quartier Éphémère*, [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir_e/index.html).

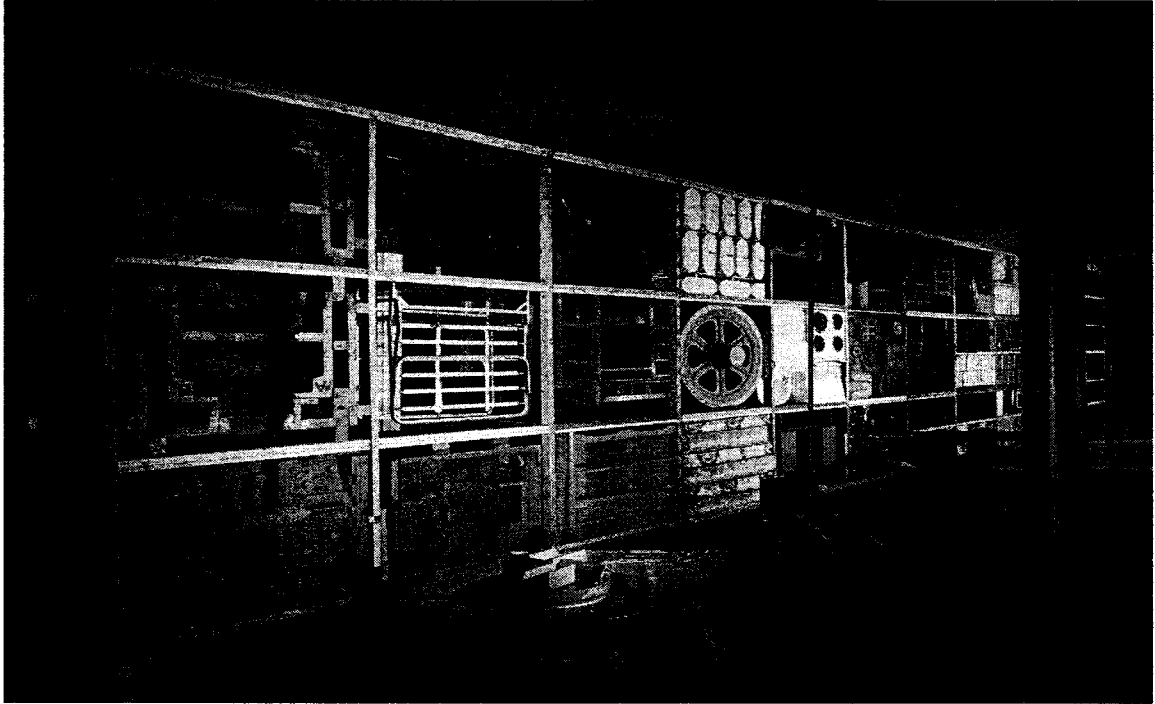


Fig. 10

Alain Paiement , *Dia logue*

Found objects recovered from the Ives and Allen Foundry, 1997.

Source: *Quartier Éphémère*, [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir_e/index.html).



Fig. 11  
Detail of exterior of Foundry after renovation.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.



Fig. 12

The Darling Foundry, pre-restoration c. 1997.

745 Ottawa Street, view from southwest corner of Ottawa and Prince Streets.

Source: *Quartier Éphémère*, [http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir_e/index.html).

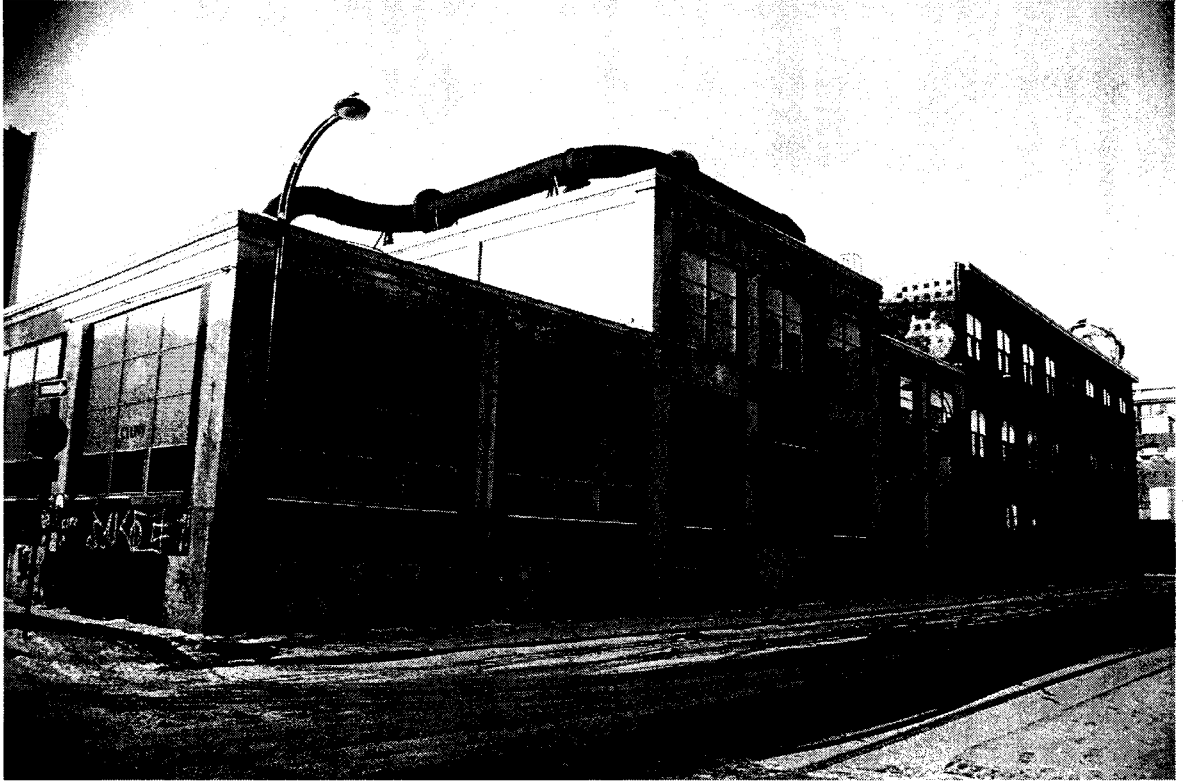


Fig. 13  
The Darling Foundry, post-transformation.  
View from south west corner of Ottawa and Prince Streets.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.

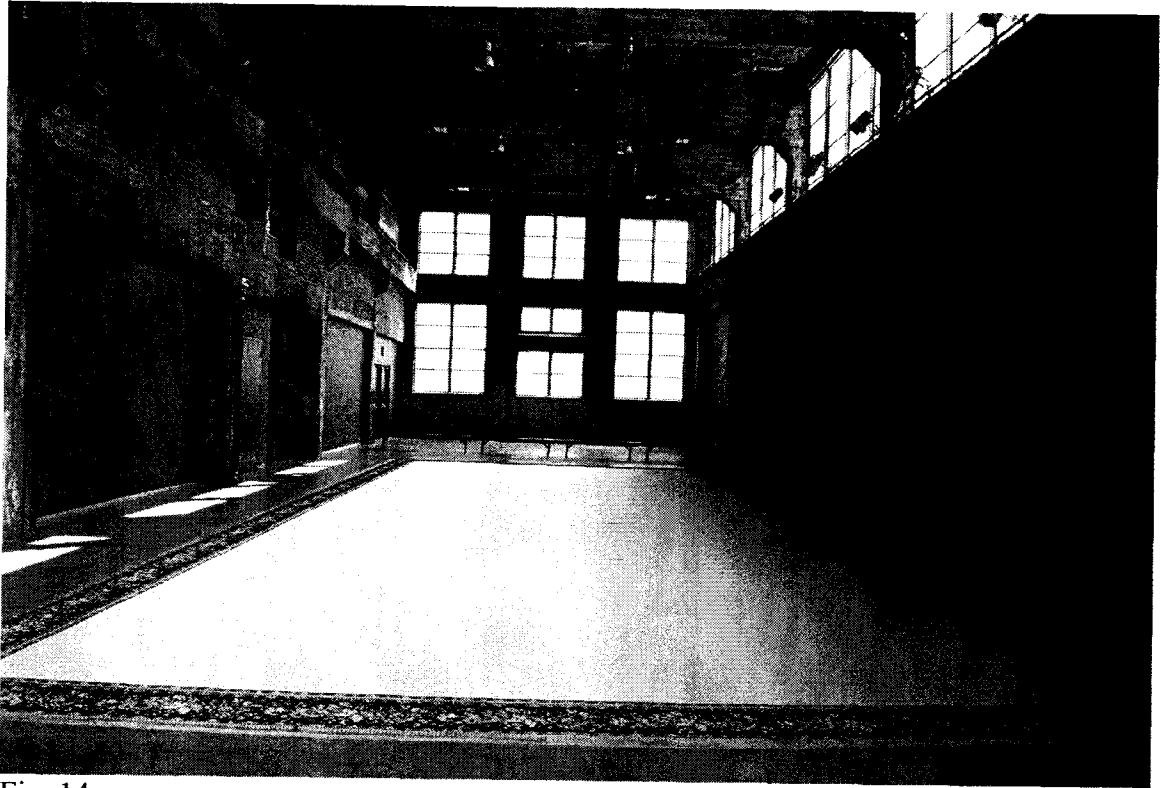


Fig. 14  
Interior of the main gallery space.  
Installation: Aude Moreau, *Tapis de sucre* # 3.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.

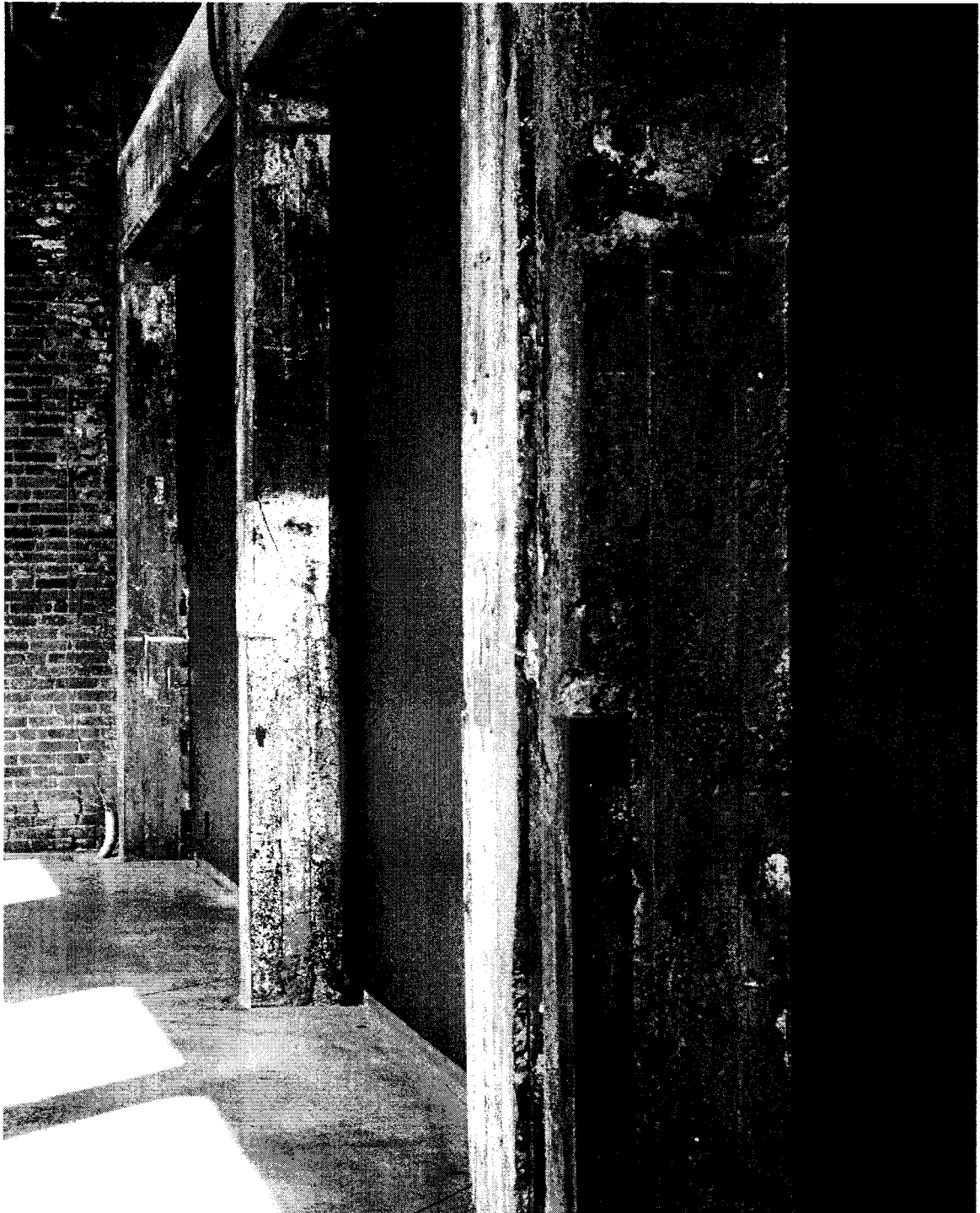


Fig. 15  
Detail of interior recess, main gallery space.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.





Fig. 16  
Ceiling, main gallery space.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.

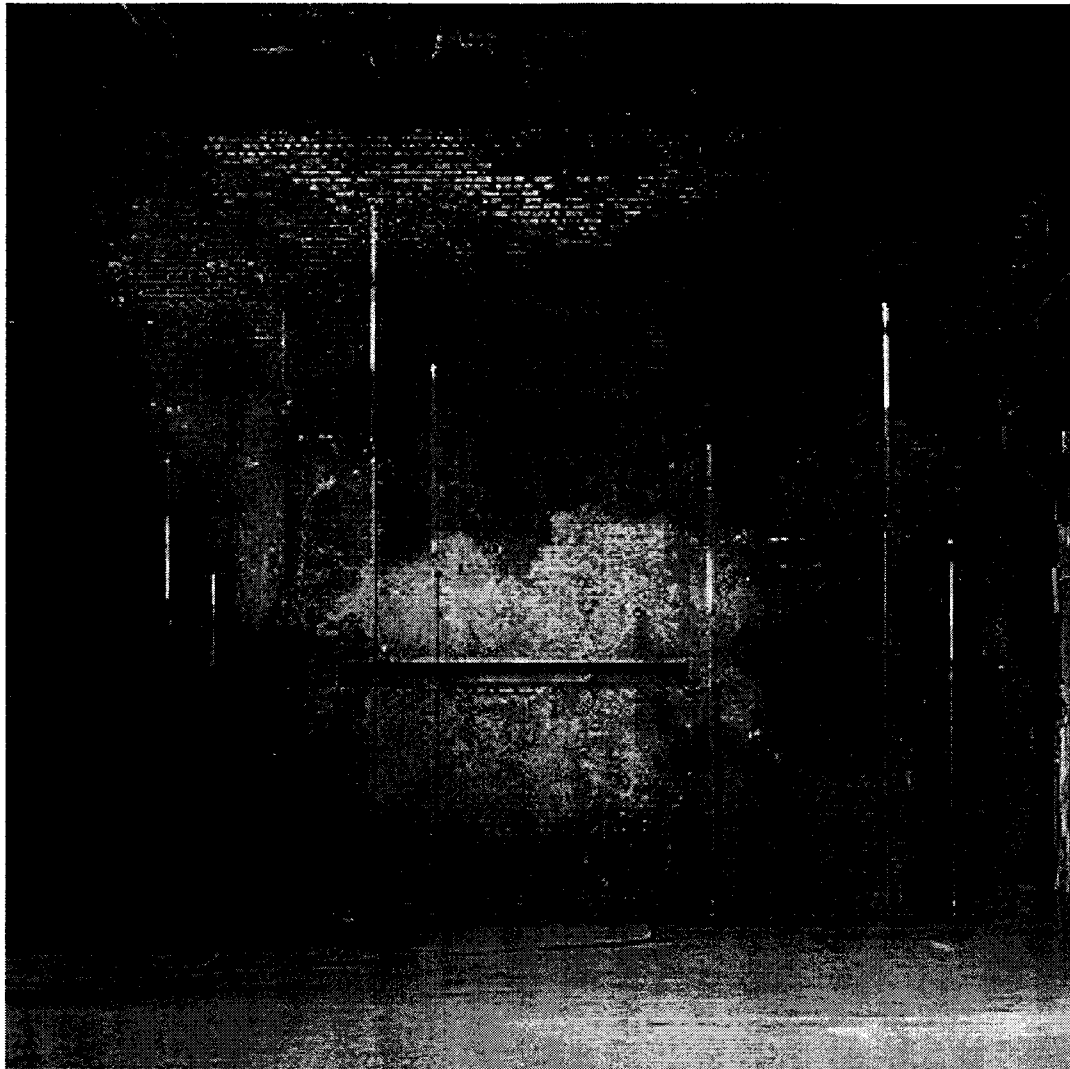


Fig. 17

Andréas Oldörp

*Le Némophar*, 2000

Glass, gas, copper and fire.

Source: photo taken by Guy L'Heureux, *Quartier Éphémère*,  
[http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir\\_e/index.html](http://www.fonderiedarling.org/soutenir_e/index.html).

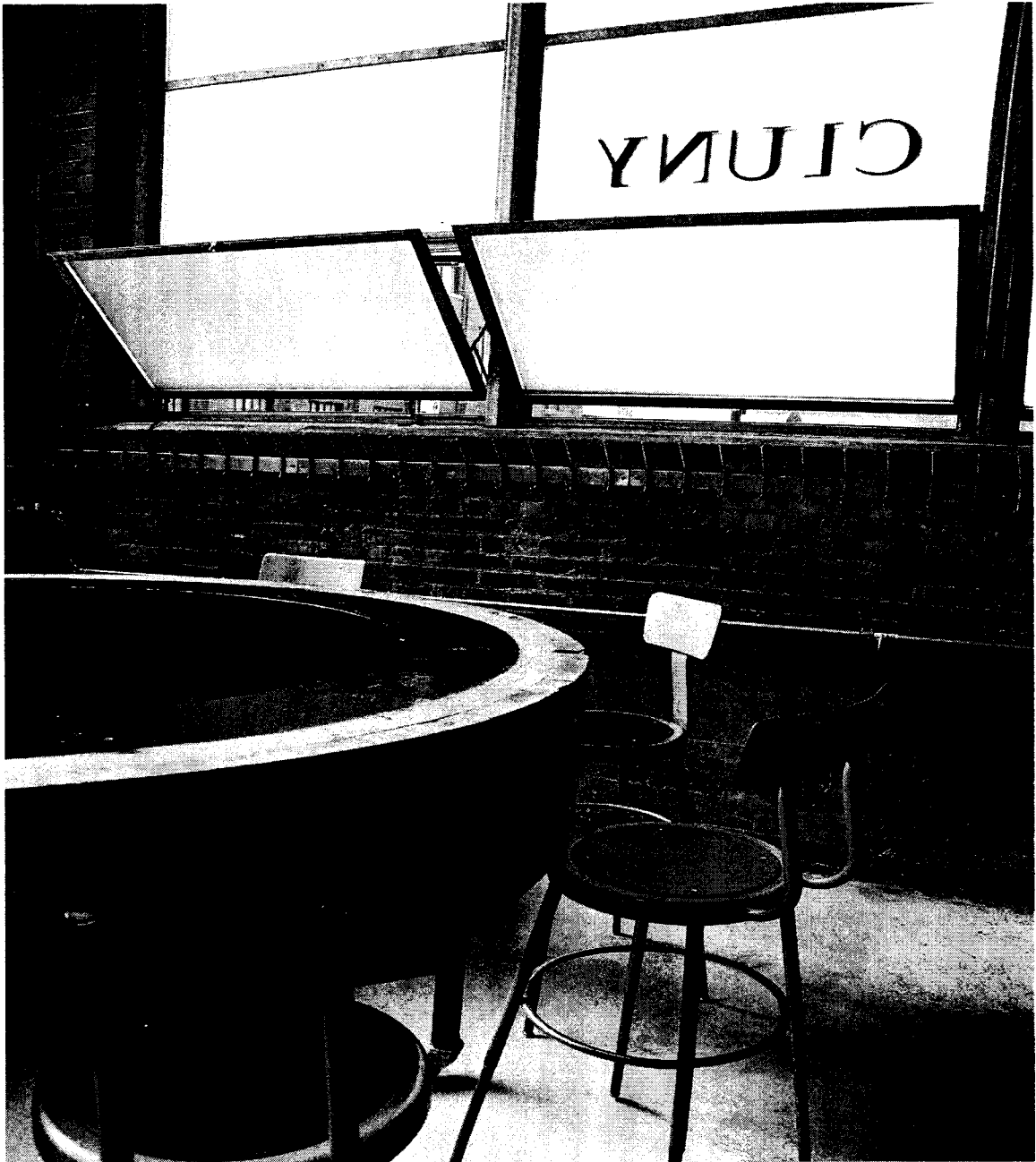


Fig. 18  
The “Cluny” art bar.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2009.



Fig. 19  
Corridor, 3rd floor studios.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.

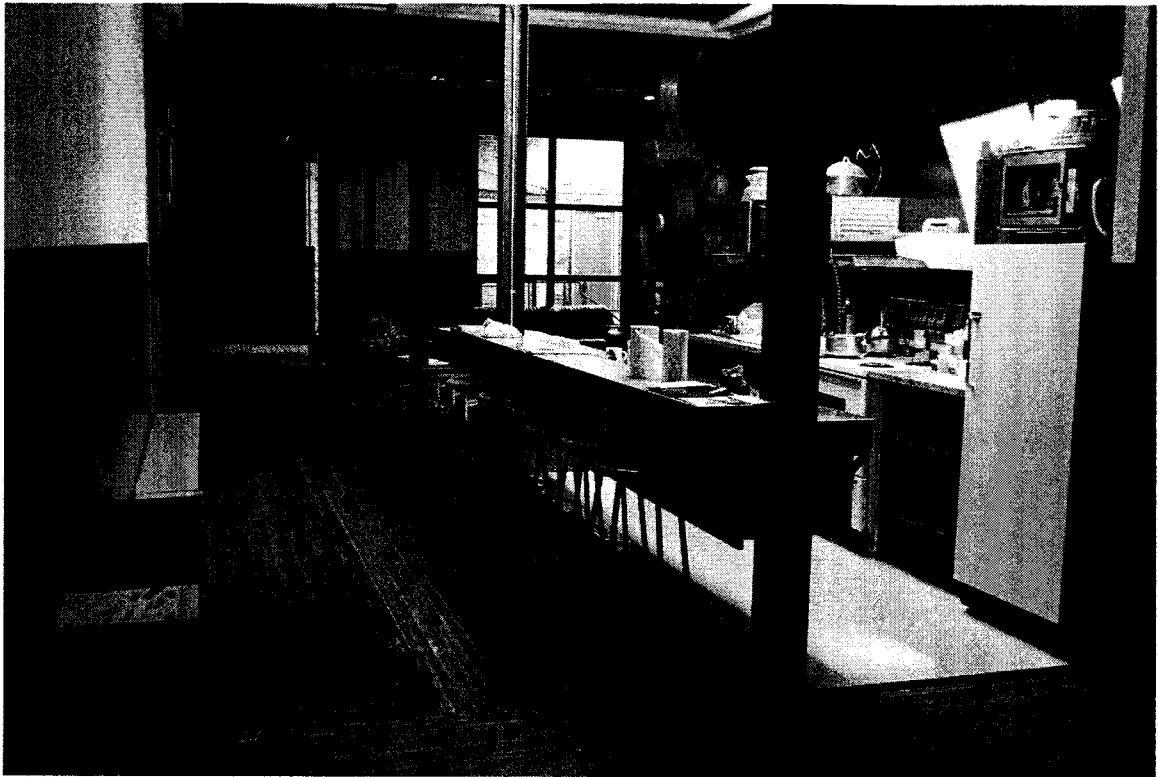


Fig. 20  
Kitchen and common living area on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, designed by Antonin Sorel.  
Source: photo taken by author, 2008.



Fig. 21

“To Contest the Actual Truth of an Occurrence”/ “*contester la véracité d’un fait,*” Paris 1999.

Sentence on anorak, car, shopping bag and poster.

Source: The Pausing of Thoughts in the Moment of Indifference, catalogue of interventions by Winkler and Köperl, <http://www.winkler-koepel.net/0englisch/heimseitee.html>.



Fig. 22

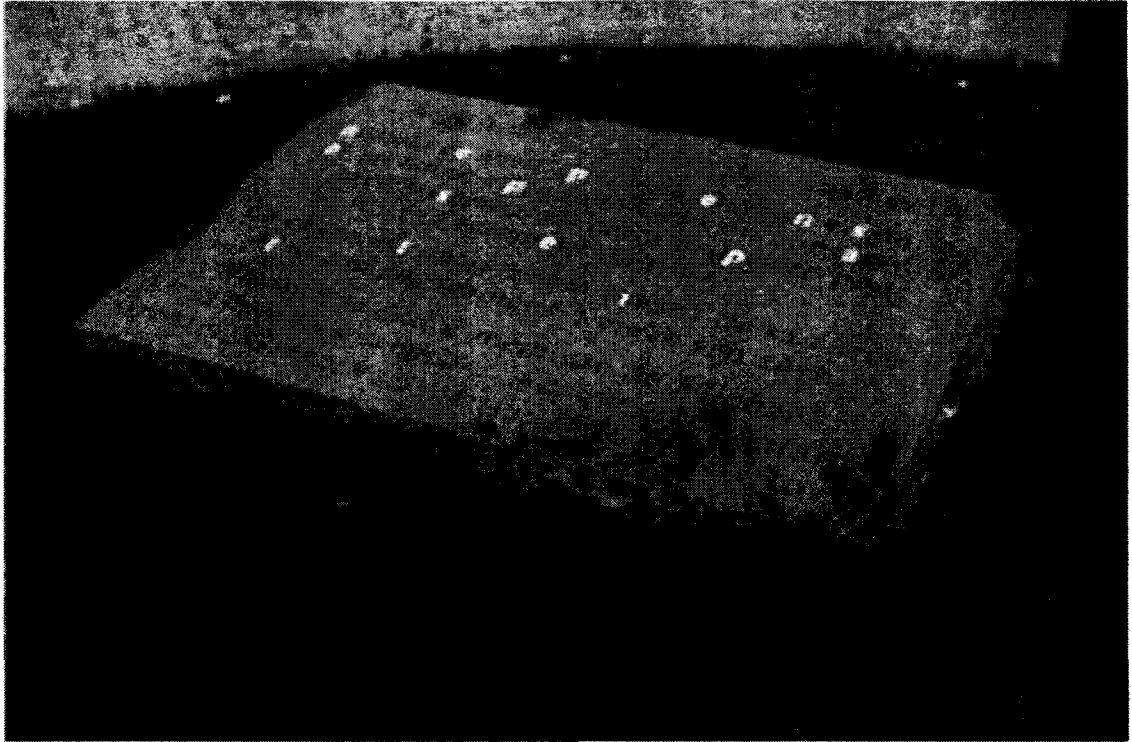
“RIP” Griffintown, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2008.

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/kinalaya/sets/72157604768274087/>.



Fig. 23  
*Calèche Rides, Montreal 2008.*  
Source: Winkler and Köperl.





*D. Michael O'Gallagher (1957-2002)*

*Fondateur de MetCap living, **etait un visionnaire**  
**et un homme passionné.** Il s'est consacré à  
l'enrichissement de cette propriété pour  
l'agrément de tous.*

*Ce chêne est un symbole vivant de sa force  
**et de son engagement à vivre son rêve.***

*Planté à la douce mémoire de Michael  
par sa famille, son épouse, Alanne, et ses enfants,  
Graham, Gregory, Breannē, Bryden et Rory.*

Fig. 24  
Memorial Stone to Michael O'Gallagher  
French inscription of "Ne pense pas petit," 2008.  
Stone Tablet with mix of chalk, tofu and water.  
Source: Winkler and Köperl.

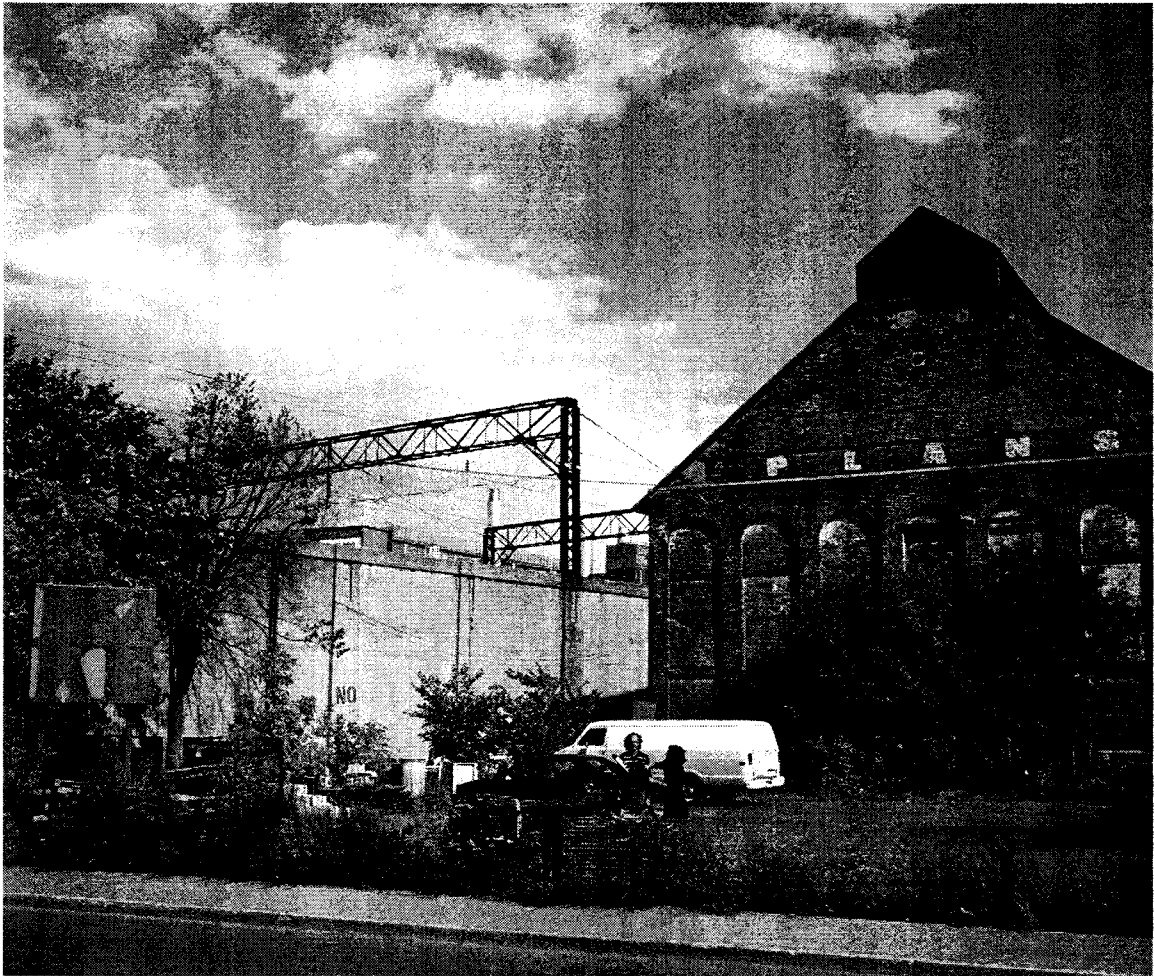


Fig. 25  
Make No \$Mall Plans, 2008.  
Print on vinyl, graffiti, on railway bridge, lacquer on metal, chalk on building.  
Source: Winkler and Köperl.



Fig. 26  
"Make No Small Plans," 2008.  
Source: Winkler and Köperl.

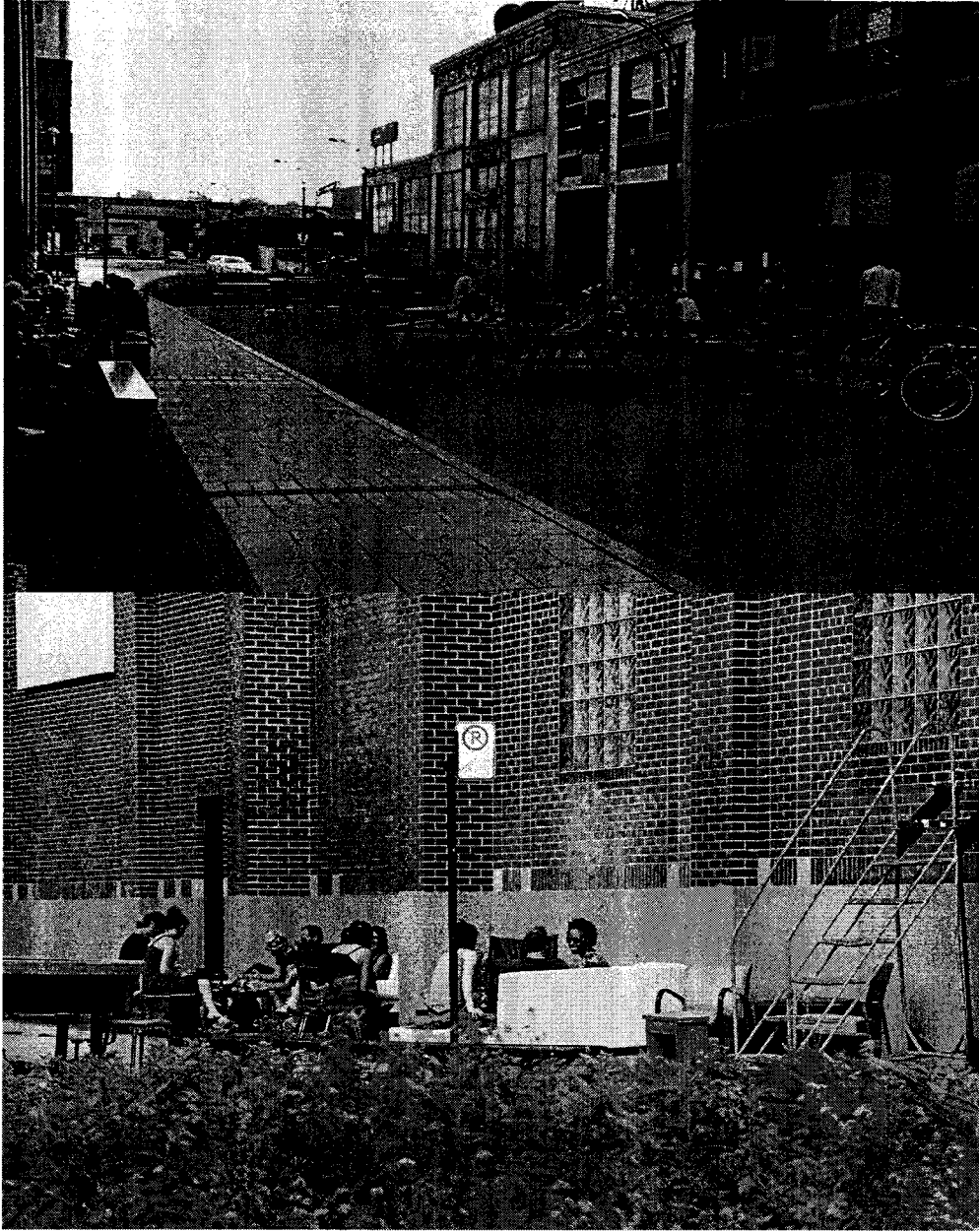


Fig. 27  
Ottawa Street "Urban Terrace," 2009.  
Source: photo taken by author.

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## Appendix

### **Make No \$Small Plans**

Music: Deep Purple 1972

Lyrics: Winkler / Köperl 2008

To Montreal we came on  
The Cultural council's call  
Next to a fairly ill kept district  
Raddled by rise and fall

Chris Gobeil and the others  
Are fighting for old Griffintown  
But big promoters' power  
Is just about to bring in down

### **Make No \$small Plans**

**Ne pense pas petit**

The governors have big ideas  
They favour a brand new start  
Revolving doors just push them in and out  
Go for another mart

On the project's webpage  
Everything looks neat and well  
But even we as strangers  
Can recognize a fishy smell  
(that doesn't come from the canal!)

### **Make No \$small Plans**

**Ne pense pas petit**

There was this march to the city hall  
All the activists were there  
They carried Griffintown's coffin to its grave  
To tell them "don't you dare!"

They want diversity, sustainability  
They want a decent grow  
Don't throw it all to Devimco® - at least let  
Gentrification flow

### **Make No \$small Plans**

**Ne pense pas petit**

