Landscape as Method and Model: Developing Research-Creation in Community Through Landscape Painting and Pedagogy in Montréal's Sud Ouest

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A Thesis

In the Department of

Art Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Art Education) at Concordia University,

Montréal, Québec, Canada

June, 2024

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Entitled: Landscape as Method and Model:

Developing Research-Creation in Community Through Landscape Painting

and Pedagogy in Montréal's Sud Ouest

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Of Philosophy (Art Education)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ABSTRACT

Landscape as Method and Model:
Developing Research-Creation in Community through Landscape Painting and Pedagogy in Montréal's Sud Ouest

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Concordia University, 2024

This dissertation takes up landscape theory, community-engaged art education, and research-creation methodologies to ask how the creation of artworks can reveal insights into the social, political, and economic foundations of place, and how community artmaking can be used as inductive research to document experienced changes in place over time. This thesis conducts two concurrent projects that focused on Montréal's Sud Ouest borough, the site of substantial re-development over the past 50 years. The first is a personal research-creation project using plein air landscape painting to theorize painting as fieldwork and research creation. The second was an eight-week community art class called *Landscaping the City*, which used community-based research creation methodology to conjoin participant artmaking with longform interviews. 17 participant-students engaged in a curriculum focused on the neighborhood's past, present, and future, balancing skill building with conceptual concerns. To carry out these projects, I embedded in a small community art school and a grassroots anarchist development project which gave insight to how community members have self-organized to meet citizen needs. By thinking these projects together, this thesis theorizes how multimodal engagement with the built environment can help to democratize forms of engagement, make visible contradictory demands and desires for space, and foster civic interest and participation in processes of placemaking.

Acknowledgements

Personal Acknowledgements

This research is not only standing on the shoulders of the giants of art education, oral history, and arts-based research, but years of grassroots community activism in Pointe-Saint-Charles and the countless hours of paid and unpaid labour that have kept the community vibrant and healthy for generations. No project ever takes place in isolation, and a project rooted in community implicates more people and institutions than could possibly be thanked. However, I would like to thank my fellow travellers in the active membership and administration of Bâtiment 7 and my colleagues over the years at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School–Catherine Wells, Nadia Kuehn, Kristina Urquhart, Simone Arsenault-May–as well as the numerous instructors, students, and volunteers that keep this labour of love in operation. No matter what the school looks like in five, ten, or even twenty years, the time we have spent together in the years of this thesis will forever mark my life.

To my wife Charlotte Boatner-Doane, despite facing many external challenges during the years I was in the PhD, our relationship and care for each other never wavered. I cannot imagine a more loving partner, and I thank you for your tremendous support through carrying out of all these projects.

A cohort is a beautiful thing, and despite the challenges of COVID-19, we have found a way to remain close. Nancy Long, Elsy Zavarce, Zoe Compton, Jeannie Kim, and Alex Noel to name a few, I am so grateful for our time together, and hope these are starts of lifelong professional bonds.

To my parents, Michael and Beverly LeRue, this project means I have completed one degree for each of your children, meaning I can finally call this one my own.

I would like to thank Dr. Kathleen Vaughan for being a persistent steward and supporter throughout this research. From our first discussion about a potential PhD in ‘Hagrid’s Hut’ in Blönduós, Iceland, in 2018, to your guidance on publications, grants, teaching, poodles, jobs, and the delivery of this document, I owe so much to your mentorship and friendship, and would likely still be a fledgling artist lost in the meaning of landscape without the words to articulate it. I look forward to being your colleague.

I would like to thank all the participants in this research, who have provided so much of their own thinking and rich artistic practices to this project. Beyond the interviews and artmaking,

each participant offered timely advice and discussions about the work, and many have become personal friends. I would specifically like to acknowledge Bob Kavanaugh, a participant who proclaimed having little interest in the city and drawing, for being an honorary advisor to this thesis. Your direct questions and unwillingness to take my default responses as an answer sharpened my ideas and thoughts throughout this project. This work is better off for it.

My fellow travellers in art and research, specifically Ian Funke-McKay, Breanna Shanahan, John Hanson, and Tyson Atkins, thank you for your persistent feedback and years-long commitment to practice. To Rabeya Jalil, who I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet and collaborate with, if only virtually half a world apart, I have treasured our shared contributions to art and research, and our work has been a huge influence on this dissertation. To the STAC collective, many of whom have been named in other places here, what began as a means to sneak in a few conference presentations has become an important way to think through our shared teaching practices and roles as artists and teachers. I hope this work can continue for years to come.

I would like to thank the teachers that believed in me, even when they had no business doing so. Rosemarie, my high school art teacher, and Kathryn, my grade 12 sociology teacher, I would have never attended university without your encouragement and support. The same is true for the many professors at NSCAD who opened an entire world of artistic practice to me, specifically, Sara Hartland-Rowe, Mathew Reichertz, and Eryn Foster, and those at Concordia who have guided me along from painting and drawing into art education. Particularly, Dr. Cynthia Hammond, Dr. MJ Thompson, Dr. Rebecca Duclos, Dr. Tammer El Sheikh, Dr. Lorrie Blair, and Dr. David Pariser.

Institutional Acknowledgements

This work was made possible through funding from the Concordia University Faculty of Fine Arts, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Doggone Foundation through the Elspeth McConnell Award. The Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School provided registration and support for the class, while Bâtiment 7 rented the grand atelier at a favourable members rate. The Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling provided funding for the *Landscaping the City III* student exhibition, and retired McGill architecture professor Pieter Sijpkes offered his beautiful space in the old bank that doubles as his home for two weeks so we could hang the exhibition. I would also like to thank all the members of this committee, some who

have been named twice: Dr. Lorrie Blair, Dr. David Pariser, Dr. Rebecca Duclos, and Dr. Natalie Loveless. Thank you each so much for taking the time to read and evaluate this work.

Table of Contents

Figure List

Table List

Figure 1: Whispy Pit. Digital Painting. 2022. Painting of an inlet of the Lachine Canal in Griffintonwn, Montréal.

Chapter 1 | Introduction

Context and Research Questions

Landscape as Method and Model uses landscape painting and inductive qualitative research to consider how the creation of artworks can reveal insights into the social, political, and economic foundations of place, and how changes in place are experienced over time. The landscapes of major urban centres in Canada are being substantially re-imagined and altered amid changing uses of space and compounding social and economic crises. Ongoing telework after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown is leading to underuse of critical downtown office spaces (Brail & Kleinman, 2022), while the financialization of housing is causing huge sums of money to chase a falling number of housing units per capita amid a new paradigm of housing-as-investment, leading to higher housing costs for many (Rolnik, 2019). Additionally, cities are adapting to both prevent climate change and mitigate its effects through large transit projects,

greener building practices, and disaster prevention infrastructures (Bobylev, 2013; Kirshen et al., 2015). In Montréal's Sud-Ouest neighborhood Pointe-Saint-Charles,[1] the last fifty years have seen the decline of industrialism, economic destitution, fierce grassroots activism, and presently, rapid gentrification amid increasing white-collar work (Barlow, 2017; Hammond, 2018; High, 2022; Sijpkes, 1989). As such, this thesis draws on my existing relationships to local organizations in the neighborhood–the utopian anarchist building project Bâtiment 7[2] and one of its constituting organizations, the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School,[3] a small, community-based, not-for-profit, bilingual art school for learners of all ages (LeRue et al., 2023)–to compose two projects: A personal research-creation landscape painting project and a 17-person community art class study that used oral history and community-based research-creation methodology to gather inductive participant data about their experiences in the neighborhood. This goal of this project is to democratize community engaged arts-based research, which often consults the public in the creation of projects while leaving the artmaking to individual researcher-artist. Through conducting a personal project and classroom case-study in tandem, this project argues that by democratizing the extra-linguistic insights of artmaking through the community classroom, researchers can gather stronger and more insightful qualitative insights into participant perspectives than interviewing alone.

Each of these projects constitute a form of community engagement, which is coming into vogue in institutions internationally as they consider how they ethically inhabit the cities and neighborhoods they occupy (Lawton, 2010; Koekkoek, 2021). By rooting these projects within community and making myself accountable to grassroots projects that are often studied from a distance, this work aims for egalitarian community engagement and reciprocal ethnography (Lawless, 2000; 2019) through personal implications in space. This project builds on frameworks of community-based art education, which is a method of art education dedicated to moving beyond formal education institutions into less formal contexts such as community centres and

[1] Pointe-Saint-Charles has many spellings and referents, including abbreviating Saint to St., Pointe to Point, or simply referring to it as the Pointe. I have tried to remain consistent, using Pointe-Saint-Charles and the Pointe interchangeably, but I wanted to acknowledge that these discrepancies exist.

[2] https://www.batiment7.org/

[3] https://pointestcharlesartschool.org/

grassroots institutions (Ulbricht, 2005; Lawton, 2019). What makes for community, who is considered a member of a community, and how a community is formed is often elusive and difficult to define (Plett, 2023). Far from viewing community as something inherently cohesive, this project looks to centre the contradictory perspectives and interests that come about when people are brought together in what is called a "community". Both the personal and pedagogical components of this project are informed by the work of art educators June King McFee and Rogena Degge (1977), who urged teachers to use the environments around them as the site of art education. In addition, urban planner Kevin Lynch's (1960) *The Image of the City* provides frameworks for thinking through the divergent perspectives that exist about the city and ideas for using education to gather inductive perspectives. The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (2018) and bell hooks (1994) offers methods to invite students to bring their own experiences into conversations with larger structural problems, which I employed in tandem with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Roski et al., 2021) to invite each participant to cultivate their own individual views of the city concurrently, which were often at odds with each other. To engage with contradiction, this thesis will be theoretically informed by the socio-spatial dialectic as articulated by French philosopher and geographer Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (2021a; 2021b), which theorizes how space changes people and how people in turn change space. As I will articulate in the theoretical framework, dialectics stress the interrelations between all things and provide an entry point for thinking through the interconnections between the particular and the universal. In my personal research-creation project, I took up plein-air painting fieldwork to understand the neighborhood I was working within in advance of and during the class, and a personal studio project afterward to process the experiences of facilitating the class and the data that came out of it. Dialectics stress the interrelations between all things and provides an entry point for thinking through the interconnections between the particular and the universal (Harvey, 2010; Lukács, 2013; Marx, 1981; McGowan, 2019; James, 1980). This has been an important tool for seeing the connections between the artifacts of this work and the larger movements and trends of urban spaces.

Two Intertwined Projects

These two projects braid artmaking, community engagement, and critical pedagogy to consider how the extralinguistic insights of artmaking can reveal insights about the contradictions of space when created in both a community art classroom and through structured

painting practice, with each project taking on the research questions from different perspectives. In my personal research-creation project, plein air painting as fieldwork offered ways to understanding the neighborhood I was working within in advance of and during the class, and a personal studio project afterward to process the experiences of facilitating the class and the data that came out of it. The personal research-creation project approached the city through landscape painting, and considered how painting connects to the research-creation methods of communication professors Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk (2012, 2015) and artist and art historian Natalie Loveless (2019). As I have argued elsewhere (Jalil & LeRue, 2024) and will describe in the methodology section, traditional media such as painting seldom finds a home under the research-creation banner, even as I have found painting to provide plenty of insights in my own practice. Further, painting is an ideal medium for an investigation of space in the community context due to landscapes' intertwined history with the politics of space, and its recognition as an artform for community participants and observers (LeRue & Jalil, 2024). In my personal painting project, I created about 60 small landscape paintings from plein-air, and four painting projects that first informed the community art class curriculum, and later responded aesthetically to my collected participant data and the subsequent spatial questions. These works have a fidelity to the built environment and remain recognizable as the places they represent, but also aim to find contemporary painterly and conceptual expression. These paintings are accompanied by scholarly research and fieldnotes gathered both in the studio and in plein air. Through the process of creating this project, I contribute to the arts-based research literature by considering how representational artistic practices such as landscape painting fit into frameworks of research-creation, and consider what insights are generated through this process. This component aims to bring arts-based methods into conversation with painting and provide practitioners of other traditional fine-arts media with scaffolding to consider what their approaches offer to research.

The second project studies an eight-week community class I developed and taught at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School, where 17 students from a range of abilities and ages concurrently developed landscape painting and drawing skills while reflecting on their own experiences of the city. This project used a method I developed called Community-Based Research Creation (CBRC) (LeRue, 2023b) which extends the inductive ethics and frameworks of oral history, which gathers testimony through the long-form interview (Yow, 2014), to visual

testimony that includes a visual art component. Oral history is commonly taken up in inductive arts-based research to ethically engage and represent diverse publics, yet the act of creation in such projects often remains in the hand of the leading researcher. CBRC is based on community classes I have taught over the years (LeRue, 2023a), and is founded on an argument that works made in the community classroom can provide rich examples of research-creation that are of tremendous value in a larger study. In outlining this methodology, I will propose the conditions under which the artworks made in the community classroom might be seen as research-creation, some ethics for its creation and dissemination, and how these works informed this study.

The class, titled *Landscaping the City III* after other community courses I have taught on urbanism and drawing, focused on conceptual and artistic questions concurrently. These classes are informed the foundational work of Lynch (1960), who used participant interviews and mapmaking to examine why some cities have strong cohesive images and legibility while others do not. I used exercises that focused on having students cultivate their own relationship to their neighborhood through imaginative mapmaking and reflective exercises. For the creative work, students were invited to work in any medium they liked, but the lessons focused on the principles of landscape drawing and composition from both photographs and from life. Weekly classes sent students out into the neighborhood to examine the built environment with a critical eye, culminating in the development of their own projects focused on an element of the city they wished to explore and research. I suggested that these projects could be conceptual, aesthetic, or theoretical in nature, with few direct prescriptions on what forms the projects could take.

Both the personal research-creation project and the community classroom study examine how landscape painting can help to visualize the contradictory viewpoints that exist about the past, present, and future of the Sud Ouest. While each project stands alone, the projects developed ample overlap and common themes. This was facilitated through my approach to community teaching, where I often share my own thinking and artmaking, adopting the principle of egalitarian dialogue professed by the dialectical pedagogy of Freire (2018) and hooks (1994). In this framing, students enter classrooms with extensive knowledge about the world, and the role of the pedagogue is to bring these perspectives into dialogue with the material at hand. In addition, a tradition of the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School is to have teachers work alongside students, which creates a more enriching learning environment where students work through their own projects alongside a ‘professional’ working through theirs. This allows for a more

honest interchange of ideas: through the process of making my own work, I have found that students often share wonderful insights when commenting on my work, which often informs the creation of their own. In addition to my teaching, I hold a board position at the art school and recently finished my term on the cohesion circle (legal board) of Bâtiment 7, the anarchist organization the school is located within, troubling the expected distance in ethnographic research. In Chapters 3 and 4, I considered what this means through frameworks such as reciprocal ethnography (Lawless, 2000; 2019) and friendship as method (Tillman-Healy, 2003; Owton & Allen-Collinson, 2014), and what the erosion of boundaries means for a socially implicated artist-researcher. In this project, my position as an artist-researcher in community meant that I was able to understand how issues in contemporary urbanism impacted my institutional collaborators, and how these changes were felt and interpreted by my participants, who indeed came from a plurality of social and economic backgrounds.

Urgency of the Research

Urban centers are being substantially re-imagined amid a global struggle with real-estate financialization (Rolnik, 2019), changing uses of urban space in post-industrial periods, and new uses of space such as telework post-COVID (Brail & Kleinman, 2022). Real-estate values have increased at a dizzying pace in the last twenty years and were already leading to widespread housing insecurity when I began this research in 2019. However, this was exacerbated through the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns which caused housing costs to increase between 40 and 100% nationally (August, 2021; Statistics Canada, n.d.). At the time of this writing in 2024, the downstream effects of pandemic-era policy have led to sustained inflation and high interest rates, leading to stagnantly high urban real-estate markets. As geographer David Harvey (2008 / 2017) observed in his article 'The Right to the City', the role real estate plays in capital markets led to unprecedented changes and uses of urban space, steamrolling the needs of citizens in favour of absorbing surplus capital. However, this reality is simply the present iteration of a long history of urbanism's relationship to capitalism. For geographer Henri Lefebvre (1968; 1991) spaces are organized by those with power–namely kings and capitalists–for their own needs, but the workers who come to build and occupy said spaces begin to develop their own desires for its uses. But we know that citizens encompass many people with different needs and social relations—The economic interests of a renter are vastly different than a homeowner, just as the needs of a large family with young children are

different than the needs of a two-income, no-kids couple with a dog. Nevertheless, constituents co-exist with varied and often contradictory needs that are brought to the fore in discussions around urban futures.

This thesis is deeply concerned with the contradictions that emerge when divergent desires converge in urban spaces and looks to trouble the essentialist notions that often emerge around community. Community is often invoked to describe a group of people co-existing around shared interests, representing something cohesive and whole. However, through this project and fieldwork, I found that community members seldom believed in or pushed for the same things. Instead, community was consistently in tension, with compromise and contradiction at the core of interpersonal interactions. This is important because many organizations in Pointe-Saint-Charles, including Bâtiment 7 and other organizations such as Action-Guardien (who I will elaborate on later) claim to speak for the community even as they struggle to retain engagement. As such, this research adopts inductive community-based research methods to glean insights into how the changing social structures of cities are at play. The classroom study welcomed participants plurality of viewpoints, including renters and homeowners, those who think a great deal about the city and those who do not. Through interviews, artmaking, course discussions, and activities, students were prompted to share open-ended perspectives that were generative to artmaking or generated through the artmaking. With this in mind, the research questions examined were:

Research Questions

How can personal and community classroom-based artworks developed from rooted experiences in place reveal interconnections with the wider world?

How can research-creation be adapted to landscape painting in my personal studio practice and in the community classroom?

Background to the Questions

When I began this thesis in 2019, I had planned to execute a very different project that would have conjoined my love of landscape painting with oral history to study changing land uses in Montréal amid a housing affordability crisis. The goal was to study a landscape as it changed over time, and I narrowed in on an area called the Peel Basin at the edge of downtown, Griffintown, and Pointe-Saint-Charles along an industrial man-made waterway called the Lachine Canal (“The Peel Basin,” 2023). Un(der)developed space that is owned by the federal

Canada Lands Corporation, the Peel Basin was the subject of two competing development proposals: On the one hand, billionaire Stephen Bronfman planned to build a major league baseball (MLB) stadium as part of a mixed-use housing and shopping complex, which would extend the logic of neighboring Griffintown, which is a former industrial neighborhood that transformed over the past 20 years to offer chic amenities and shoebox condominiums (Daigle, 2019). This development promised the return of the Montréal Expos, a baseball team that was relocated to Washington in 2004 after turbulent ownership, sparse attendance, and a stadium that was insufficient for a baseball team. In early 2020, both the sale of the Peel Basin land and Bronfman's purchase of a stake in the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team appeared imminent ("Businessman Confident Group Will Become Rays Minority Shareholder," 2020). On the opposing side to Bronfman was the community group Action-Gardien, whose alternative development proposed social housing, subsidised retail space, a high school, trade school, and access to the St. Lawrence River, which has been cut off from Pointe-Saint-Charles entirely by industry, railway tracks, and highways (Plan d'ensemble pour le secteur Bridge-Bonaventure, 2023). This proposal aimed to rectify trends of gentrification in the neighborhood, meeting the needs of residents who have been squeezed out over rapidly increasing property values and rents. My goal was to understand the conflicting beliefs of community members, and question both activist and developer narratives that emerged through this work. Does the community *really* want social housing? How is the prospect of baseball's return received by working- and middle-class people alike? Who speaks for the community anyway, and how would perspectives change as the development is built? In the initial project, I would have gathered oral history testimony and conducted academic and archival research to represent the changes and contradictory perspectives through landscape painting. While focus and approach to the research has changed, I have retained many of those initial curiosities in the present work.

In March 2020, a month before my initial research program was set to begin, the COVID-19 lockdowns hit Montréal and the rest of the world. Over the course of a few days, Concordia University, my home institution, shut down, and classes were cancelled. It became apparent that research involving humans would not go forward for a long time, and the organizations I had intended to partner with were closed indefinitely. As the weeks of lockdown turned to months, it was clear that the economic ramifications of COVID would implicate the planned development project. The MLB nixed Bronfman's efforts to buy a stake in the Tampa Bay Rays franchise as

part of collective bargaining a year later (Davidi, 2022), meaning the imminent decisions around the site were put on the backburner and what seemed like a timely project was no longer tenable. To compound the challenges of re-booting the research, the COVID measures in Québec were among the most extreme in North America, at various points implementing curfews, vaccine passports, and prolonged restrictions on gathering. A year into COVID restrictions, I went back to the drawing board to re-consider what my research might look like.

Landscaping the City

Fortunately, the seeds of the new research were planted in the first weeks of lockdowns. Initially, my days were spent in my small apartment with my girlfriend and cat rotating between the bedroom and the living room playing videogames and taking the odd meeting for my tutorial students who decided to complete the coursework anyway. I was offered some small teaching contracts in online contexts, participating in *Field Trip*,[4] an online initiative through national museums and galleries that invited the public to take workshops with artists, participating in affiliation with Ross Creek Centre for the Arts in Nova Scotia. It was also during this time that my supervisor suggested that I should pursue an internship with the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School and directed me toward the Elspeth McConnell Award for conducting community engaged art projects from Concordia. After a few meetings with the school, I decided to put a class together integrating components of urbanism and landscape drawing, inviting students to engage with their neighborhoods when being and gathering outside was encouraged. I decided to forego some skill building to introduce many of the theories and concepts I had been thinking about in my thesis, leaning into ideas at a time where the tactile component of artmaking would be impossible to translate through technology. The first class ran for eight weeks beginning in October 2020, while it was still warm enough to draw outside. Weekly making sessions were accented with optional homework that expanded on in class projects. Because of the limitations of using materials in the home (and widespread shortages), all that would be expected was a sketchbook and pencils, which could be purchased for under $10 at the dollar store.

In the first run of *Landscaping the City,* we attracted 20 students aged about 11-80 from a variety of artistic and social backgrounds (LeRue, 2023a). Using frameworks and exercises from Lynch's (1960) *The Image of the City*, we began with a mapmaking exercise that asked

[4] www.fieldtrip.art

participants to draw their neighborhood, with the only guiding principles being that the map need not be to scale and could include whatever elements participants liked. We then discussed Lynch's concept of the image of the city, and applied the five elements that contribute to these images–nodes, pathways, landmarks, districts, and barriers–and re-visited our maps, before discussing what individuals from the same neighborhood rendered in common, and what components were specific to individuals. From here, participants were encouraged to re-visit their named elements in person to both gather photographs and draw from life. Class exercises continued for the following four weeks, using gathered imagery to scaffold both reflection and skill building for participants, demonstrating drawing components such as thumbnail sketches, composition, armatures, value, and line, with some discussion on what landscapes are and how they are formed interjected throughout. Initially, I had little expectation for the course, believing community students would prefer tangible skills over conceptual ideas. However, participants enthusiastically engaged with all materials presented and exceeded every challenge along the way.

In week 5, I realized a final project would help to solidify the varied elements of the class and give closure to the solidarity and collective excitement the class was generating. I shared a story from artist David Batchelor's (2014) book on colour called *the Luminous and the Grey,* where he described watching a painter who visited the same site every day for a week, looking intently at *something* even though the painting appeared abstracted. After a while, Batchelor realized the he was painting a manhole cover that had flaking layers of corrosion and paint. I asked the participants to reflect on their own experiences in the course and to consider what captures their attention in the city that others might miss, and to make this into a final project in a medium of their choosing. The project was created over two working periods, a gap week, and a final critique, with collective and one-on-one feedback offered throughout the creation process.

In a word, the work produced for this course was outstanding, and displayed a plurality of perspectives and concepts on the city. Projects (both completed and incomplete) included the stairwells of Montréal, urban wildlife and ecology, urban development and displacement, storefronts of the neighborhood, compositional exercises, sound projects, animations, illumination at night, and more. Paired with participant testimony, these works created rich descriptions of neighborhoods that surpassed purely linguistic exercises expected in oral history. For example, Nouella's drawing of the unique storefronts of Pointe-Saint-Charles generated

discussion about the rich cultural diversity within the neighborhood, and the effect that rising rents have had on not only the businesses, but the communities that patronize them. Likewise, Leon made drawings of the Negro Community Center (NCC) in the adjacent neighborhood of Little Burgundy, which was an important community centre for many Black Montrealers that closed in the 1980s due to lack of funding (Currie-Williams, 2021). While there were discussions of reviving the centre for many years, one of the retaining walls collapsed in the early 2000s and the site was eventually sold to a developer. Leon first drew the collapsed retaining wall before he began noticing abstracted faces in the rubble. He ultimately drew seven charcoal drawings of faces, alluding to the spectral presence of the centre and the meanings and memories it continues to have for the centres' former attendees. During the final critique of the first session of *Landscaping the City*, I recognised that student works better realized the initial plans of my research, meaning the work presented more interesting complications than if I had remained the sole artistic proprietor of the project. This spurred further reflection on my initial project plan, considering how the lessons learned from this could welcome *visual* testimony into my research.

Community Embedding

At the end of *Landscaping the City*, I decided to get more involved with the art school, taking on a regular administrative role and two classes—A painting techniques class, and a studio class for independent projects. After my MFA concluded in the spring of 2019, I was disillusioned with painting and the artworld in general, becoming increasingly frustrated with trends such as the opaque, impenetrable language that has pejoratively been called international art English (Wolfgang, 2020), and the elitism and gatekeeping that appeared pervasive to me. In the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School however, I found a group of individuals passionate about art, having deep conversations about its meanings, and working to bring art to anyone who wanted to participate. My involvement re-ignited my passion for painting, and brought me into regular conversation with individuals who have a shared love of art. This has afforded me the privilege of teaching dozens of students outside the academic art world how to paint and draw.

From my involvement with the art school, I became an active member of the building that the school occupies, called Bâtiment 7, which is an anarchist-run community building project that was the product of years of well organized, grassroots activism that I will discuss in Chapter 2. From June 2021-2024, I served a three-year mandate on the board of directors as a legal administrator. I was elected in my first meeting, despite my own assurances that I should be

the last person they should choose for the role. This position required having a global vision over the project, understanding the plans for the development of the remaining 60,000 square feet of the building, acting as the legal landlord to seven external organizations, and as employer to about a dozen full and part time employees. Conjoined with my work at the art school, these positions provided me an insider view into the contradictions of community, the limits and opportunities of activism, the difficulties of the inner workings of community institutions, and the herculean task of creating and sustaining community projects. These positions have been thankless and challenging, requiring making no-win decisions about programs, directions, employment, and sustainability. Nevertheless, they have also been incredibly informative to my thinking. While I will not specifically discuss my work in these positions, they have directly informed my theoretical framing discussed in Chapter 3, and my chosen inductive methodologies discussed in Chapter 4.

It became clear early in the retooling of this research that my community embedding was going to look very different from being an external observer-visitor at the fringes of organizations— I was instead at the center of the very organizations I set out to study. Nevertheless, I tried to be a regular member who participated in the organizational happenings and shared in the required work. Sometimes embedding was sitting through a meeting, or staying late at the tavern to sing karaoke, developing classes for the art school, or building a shelf. One of the most memorable vignettes was October 2021, where coming off lockdowns, I co-organized a *manif d'halloween*[5] with puppet makers, including puppet-building sessions in the month leading up to the event, which culminated a night puppet walk through the neighborhood. It was not clear what was being protested or what the point of the event was, and I recall questioning what the hell we were doing up until the moment the demonstration started. But as we were waiting by the meeting point just before dusk set in, puppets started coming out of nowhere—From the back of vans, from inside churches, from around the corner. Large puppets tied to backpacks, small marionettes, professionally made puppets, amateur puppets, fun puppets, and scary puppets. What turned out to be 60 seniors, adults, and children marched with us from the churches on Centre Street through the Pointe to Bâtiment 7, where we sat by the *fermette*[6]

[5] Translated as Halloween demonstration.

[6] The name given to a small farm behind Bâtiment 7 that has a greenhouse, planters, chickens, and rabbits.

drinking beer next to a small campfire until the sky was pitch black. I was not sure what we were doing, but something happened anyway that was organic and meaningful. Even three years later, I am not sure who benefitted from participating, or what the public who saw the demonstration thought of what they had seen. But it was by all accounts successful because others found it important and meaningful enough to take part. Instances like this gave me the confidence to take on the research project you will read about here. In developing methods, there is substantial pressure to control for a million external factors and to shepherd data into a specific direction. As I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, I have tamped down on this impulse to allow organic things to happen through the course of this research.

The Plan of the Work

The first half of this thesis will take the traditional structure of a social sciences thesis. Chapter 2 reviews the literature of community art education, situates this project geographically and academically, and examines the literature of community-engaged research-creation projects. Chapter 3 will lay out a dialectical theoretical framework that positions itself in opposition to both top-down and idealized conceptions of community and education, taking up the socio-spatial dialectic influenced by Marx and Hegel to frame this work. Chapter 4 will lay out the methods and procedures of the two intertwined projects, each informed by emergent arts-based and research creation methodology. One part is dedicated to the personal painting project, while the other used community-based research-creation (CBRC), a method I have developed for community artmaking informed by the classroom study (LeRue, 2023b).

The second half chapters discuss the results of the projects themselves and extract their insights. Chapter 5 describes my developed approach for plein-air painting as fieldwork, sharing some of my initial place-based artworks. Chapter 6 describes the community class undertaken in this dissertation, *Landscaping the City III*, introducing the participants while examining the teaching methods and student experience on the one hand, and the insights that artmaking led to on the other. Chapter 7 describes Community-Based Research-Creation methodology before examining six student projects closely while considering what community-based works can contribute to knowledge. Each work will be contextualized by participant testimony, local histories, and the present configuration and realities of the neighborhood. Chapter 8 will return to my studio practice, where I will draw from my experiences in the classroom and through

fieldwork to create four landscape paintings. Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation, examining the themes and findings while charting a path for this research going forward.

Figure 2: Paul Patates. Oil on Board (Framed). Lou's final Landscaping the City project. Paul Patates is a restaurant in Pointe-Saint-Charles whose interior is preserved in 1950's style tiled walls and chrome countertops.

Chapter 2 | Literature Review

At the core of this project are interdisciplinary investigations into the many moving parts of the local physical and human geographies of Montréal's Sud Ouest borough, which is studied through the uptake of community-based art education, critical pedagogy, oral history, arts-based research, and frameworks of landscape and urbanism. The Sud Ouest today is the product of generations of development and re-development, having been heralded as the industrial capital of North America. Once considered a relatively poor working-class alcove, the borough today is home to people from many socio-economic backgrounds amid rapid changes to the physical environment. This study aims to contextualize and understand these changes through

interdisciplinary inquiry, and this chapter provides an overview of English and some French academic and grey literature to provide the fullest possible context of the varied elements of this research. This will be woven together more meaningfully into the content of the thesis as we move into the elective chapters.

Situating the Site of Research

Montréal's Sud Ouest Borough

This research takes place in Montréal, a de-centralized city with 19 boroughs, 14 suburbs, and over 400 years of history in the colonial era that has seen numerous municipal-wide re-imaginings and urbanization projects. From colonization, industrialization, the Expo 67 centenary anniversary of Confederation, the 1976 Olympics, post-industrialization (High, 2022), and the present stage of financial capital and gentrification (Rolnik, 2019), many historical infrastructures co-exist in the present (Fougères & MacLeod, 2017) along with their social and economic legacies (Shragge, Prince, & Hennaway, 2021). The fieldwork for this thesis focuses on Montréal's Sud Ouest, a borough shaped by the industrial corridor alongside the Lachine Canal, which from 1825 – 1959 handled all shipping traffic passing through the Saint Lawrence River on the way to the Great Lakes (Parks Canada, 2018). Factories were built along the canal, and the adjacent neighborhoods of Pointe-Saint-Charles, Griffintown, Little Burgundy, Goose Village, and Verdun were built up to house industrial workers and their families (Bilek & Gauthier, 2006; Burrill, 2021). When the dredging of the Saint Lawrence Seaway was completed in 1959 to accommodate bigger boats, shipping traffic no longer relied on the canal, leading industrial activity to slow and to rapid industrial decline after the canal was formally decommissioned in 1970. Griffintown was left with blocks of derelict buildings (Barlow, 2017), while Goose Village was completely leveled in 1964 to make a parking lot, high speed train route, and the Bonaventure expressway in time for Expo 67 (Portolese & Bonin, 2023; Sijpkes, 1989). These changes were overseen by Mayor Jean Drapeau, who had a keen interest in making Montréal an international city with heavy-handed urbanization projects (Barcelo, 1988; Perin, 2023). However, it was Drapeau's approach to urbanism that inspired the formation of many community activist groups, including Save Montréal, which pushed for community-oriented development and planning approaches (Perin, 2023) thereby inspiring much of the neighborhood activism seen in Montréal today.

After the closure of the Lachine Canal, Pointe-Saint-Charles entered a deep economic recession despite being spared from the physical destruction bestowed upon its adjacent neighborhoods. A National Film Board documentary by Robert Duncan (1978) titled *The Point*, focused largely on the Irish diaspora to paint a portrait of a rough neighborhood plagued by unemployment, poverty, gangs, and industrial work—A largely undesirable place that nevertheless had strong social bonds. In "The Four Lives of Pointe St. Charles," architecture professor Pieter Sijpkes (1989) speculated that the barriers of the city itself made the neighborhood difficult to tamper with due to the elevated railroad tracks boxing in the neighborhood on three sides while also cutting it in half, while the other side borders the St. Lawrence River. Only two bridges cross the Lachine canal from downtown into the Pointe, three underpasses between the tracks connect one side to the other, and two underpasses connect to adjacent Verdun and Griffintown. Until the Charlevoix metro stop was built in 1978, accessing the Pointe required navigating a maze of underpasses and bridges that made the area unappealing for large-scale development. Sijpkes also credited the Pointe's survival to its fierce social activism. Beginning the 1960s, activists, particularly women (Hammond, 2018; Kruzynsky et al., 2006), organized for public housing, a community clinic, and the preservation as a library of the decommissioned fire station, which was slated along with the Pointe's adjacent Catholic churches on Rue Centre to be demolished as part of the unbuilt Georges Vanier highway project (Hammond, 2018). Under this plan, the neighborhood would have been divided by the highway. It is the work of civic activists that preserved the neighborhood as we know it today.

The Sud Ouest is no longer threatened by grand building projects, but new challenges persist as the neighborhood moves from a de-industrial to a post-industrial economy. For oral historian Steven High and photographer Michael Lewis (2007), de-industrialization costs communities more than a paycheck and a way of life. The glass skyscrapers that rise out of the industrial rubble destroy the meaning and self-understanding communities develop over generations. Since the early 2000s, the Pointe has seen rising housing costs aligned with 'rejuvenation' initiatives in the area. The Lachine Canal, which was turned over to Parks Canada for redevelopment, opened to recreational boating traffic in 2002 (Parks Canada, n.d.). The shuttered warehouses and factories along the canal began converting to offices and condos, while the proximity of the Pointe to downtown began to attract new kinds of residents working in high paying white-collar jobs (High et al., 2020). Furthermore, the financialization of housing markets

since the 1980s, which brings the logic of investment to the construction and ownership of shelter leading to substantially higher prices (Rolnik, 2019) has been prominent in the Canadian market (August, 2020), leaving those at the lowest rungs of society particularly vulnerable to housing insecurity. In Montréal, house prices have far outpaced median salaries—In 2002, the median house was 9.8 times the median salary, whereas in 2017 that number was 16.6 (Gaudreau et al. 2020) and has risen further since the advent of the pandemic (August, 2021). Rents have followed, climbing from an average of $525 for a two-bedroom condominium apartment in 2002 (*Montréal — Historical Average Rents*, 2002) to $1420 today (*Rental Market Report,* 2022). And while data specific to the Pointe is difficult to find, the effect has compounded as the neighborhood in those years shifted from one of low desirability to one of high desirability.

Today, the Pointe is home to high and low-income individuals and families. The percentage of households who are renting are persistently dropping ("Possible Baseball Stadium Worry Pointe-St-Charles Group," 2019) with middle and upper-class owner-occupants occupying a larger share of the neighborhood. Long-time neighborhood businesses have been closing, being replaced by middle-class restaurants and amenities, such as fancy cafes, a rock-climbing gym, microbreweries, and gastropubs which have opened on main thoroughfares such as Rue Centre and Rue St. Patrick. There remains substantial infrastructure for social welfare, but these resources are depreciating. In 2012, about 37% of the housing stock in the Pointe was dedicated to social housing ("Logement Social," 2012), while by 2018 that number had dwindled to 27% (Territorial Analysis, 2019). Nevertheless, numerous community organizations exist that are dedicated to civic wellbeing, including a community clinic, the Carrefour adult education center, and Share the Warmth, which provides employment training, extra-curricular education, and a foodbank. Since the pandemic however, the social needs of the neighborhood have grown. At the advent of the pandemic, the neighborhood saw a 21% increase in year over year rents (Stewart, 2021) that has only continued to rise. This has put tremendous strain on existing community organizations. In December 2022, Share the Warmth announced that they were closing their thrift store and café to focus on their core activities amid an explosion in demand for their core services (Figures 3 and 4). In their 2022 annual report, they claimed that their food bank alone was serving 2.5x more members than pre-pandemic levels who were demonstrating more need on an individual basis, while their children's music program saw a 70% increase in participants (*The Future,* 2023). They also claimed that community solidarity remains strong,

with the same report noted taht persistent donations and volunteers have met the needs of every family seeking food-bank services. Saint Columba House, an organization with a mission to serve residents in need, has also reported persistent demand for their services after moving to focus almost entirely on food security during the pandemic (*Columba Report*, 2022).

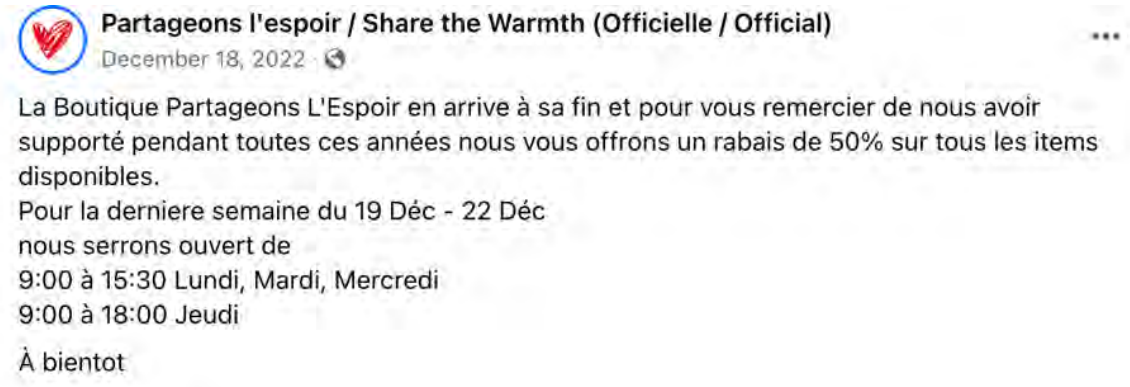

Figure 3: Facebook announcement of Share the Warmth's closing of their boutique and café.

Figure 4: A response from Share the Warmth for their reasons for closing.

Community Organization

Amid the clouds of our post-pandemic world, the community activist infrastructure that retained social services in the Pointe in the 1960s and 70s lives on in contemporary neighborhood projects which are unafraid to dream big and envision a more equitable and just future. Pointe-Saint-Charles based activist organization Action-Gardien[7] has developed

[7]Action-Gardien is a united collective of several independent community organizations dedicated to bettering the lives of residents of Pointe-Saint-Charles since 1981. Their mission is to promote equity and solidarity in the

numerous proposals for future non-profit community development. Given that the St. Lawrence River along the south-eastern boarder is entirely cut off by a fenced railway, they proposed a pedway to extend Parc Marguerite Bourgeois over the tracks and to the river into a yet to be developed second park on the other side (Lakehal et al., 2019). On the Peel Basin, their Bridge Bonaventure project proposed an alternative to trends in the area, such as developing 1000 public housing units, a trade school, affordable storefront space, and park space with access to the river (*Plan d'ensemble*, 2023), which was prepared in opposition to Bronfman's stadium mentioned in Chapter 1. Earlier but in the same spirit, the Collectif 7 À Nous[8] lodged a fight for a decommissioned CN rail building called Bâtiment 7, a 90,000 square foot former train maintenance building which had been sold to Loto-Québec and Cirque de Soleil for $1 in 2005 to build a casino (Leavitt, 2017), a plan abandoned after a huge local outcry. The building is in one of the most inaccessible areas of the Pointe, adjacent to the still expansive CN infrastructure. 7 À Nous organised numerous strikes and demonstrations that eventually won the building, receiving the keys in 2016 and opening its doors in 2018. Their vision was to create an anarchist utopia where members could contribute to the vibrancy of the neighborhood while also finding ways to bolster their own economic well-being through access to shops and services. The site now houses community workshops such as a bike garage, ceramic studio, metal, and wood shops, a photography darkroom, a screen-printing studio, the Pointe Saint Charles Art School, a cooperative grocer, a cooperative microbrewery, and a youth run organization focused on advocacy and empowerment, with new projects moving in as part of an expansion in 2024. There is a community garden and fermette with chickens and rabbits behind the building, and the adjacent lands are in the process of becoming a park and experimental water management system called a *ruelle bleue-verte*,[9] which is designed to prevent rainwater from overloading municipal water systems, which can lead to floods and overflows (Boisclair, 2023).

community, leading many demonstrations around pressing issues while developing proposals for development intended to meet citizen's needs. Some of their activities and their mission can be found here, https://www.actiongardien.org/ .

[8] I served a term as a legal administrator for 7 À Nous from June 2021 to June 2024.

[9] Translated as blue-green alleyway.

Despite positioning by some members as a utopia, Bâtiment 7 is not without its internal and external tensions. Founding member of 7 À Nous, Marcel Sévigny (2021) observed that Bâtiment 7 was won by a diverse group of broadly left-wing activists, but after the victory these forces had to pivot to address the challenges of governance and sustainability. Many individuals started burning out from the demands of managing the building, and for Sévigny, the solidarity and urgency that won the building was lost to mistrust and frustration. He argued that an overall aversion to conflict in the Bâtiment 7 ecosystem has led to a rejection of the politics that won the building in the first place. It is hard from my position to disagree with Sévigny here. Bâtiment 7 is indeed bureaucratic, with 20 circles (the name given to committees) that handle everything from building maintenance, finance, HR, and institutional governance being maintained by around 70 active members. And while the governance structure is supposedly flat and non-hierarchical, there are power players who hold both critical knowledge and critical positions. Since I joined in early 2021, I have witnessed dozens of people come and go, entering with grins of excitement and leaving frustrated and confused over topics like bilingualism, expected commitment, politics, and the confusing internal structure. There are also whispers that some community members find Bâtiment 7 alienating, with accusations that its politics uphold and perpetuate gentrification in the Pointe. In his recent book on de-industrialization and Pointe-St-Charles, Concordia-based historian Steven High (2022) observed that the membership is overwhelmingly white and affluent, while lamenting the 'for profit' art school (a factual error, given the school's non-profit status and social mission). His view is that Bâtiment 7 has turned its back on the radical roots of the Pointe, comparing the overwhelming engagement and social mission of an organization like Saint Columba House, which regularly offers things like community dinners to those in need, with the sometimes sputtering and stale engagement with Bâtiment 7. My thoughts on Bâtiment 7 will be aired through the course of this research, but for now I contend only that it is indeed not a political utopia, but both a node and amplifier for the pre-existing contradictions in the neighborhood.

The final community component to situate this research within is the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School,[10] which is a separate entity that effectively rents space from Bâtiment 7

[10] I am and have been a board member, volunteer, administrator, and instructor at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School. I do not draw a salary outside of a commission for teaching paid courses.

(LeRue et al., 2023). The art school has a mission to bring art to everybody, providing workshops and ongoing classes to children, teens, and adults that are free, paid, and subsidized through an internal scholarship program. In addition, the school offers online and outdoor clubs, and occasionally a free art therapy program run by the school's director, a trained art therapist who regularly supervises interns from Concordia University. The school's social mission is to provide high quality and accessible art lessons and therapy for anyone who wants it and maintains registered non-profit status in Canada. I have been involved with the art school since 2020, first offering courses on-line as mentioned in Chapter 1 (LeRue, 2023a), and later working as an in-person instructor for kids, teens, and adults, and as an administrator focused on expanding the pedagogical offerings while supporting our teachers. Presently, I volunteer on an as-needed basis while teaching an ongoing painting class to adults in the evenings. The art school was a key partner in this research by facilitating registrations and hosting the class.

Post-Industrialism

To consider the context of the neighborhood, we must look deeper at the social and economic contexts of post-industrialism and its present-day fallout. Post-industrialism (sometimes referred to as post-Fordism) is a term from sociology used to describe when an economy moves from manufacturing and blue-collar work to service and white-collar professions. The term was popularized in English by Daniel Bell (1974 / 1999), who observed that western economies in the mid 70's would soon see disinvestment from manufacturing, causing an economy based on semi-skilled labour to be replaced with an economy centered on knowledge. This would in turn lead to the re-creation of social structures, political governance, and culture. The new economy would be one focused on services, which included retail, and fast-food, and 'intellectual' jobs such as education, banking, and managerial positions. In this transition, knowledge would become critical for members of the workforce in the form of technology skills and college education. Whereas factory workers could be trained in a couple of weeks to complete repetitive tasks, the upper echelons of the service economy require workers to have complex skills requiring months or years of education, leading to an expansion of managerialism. Fifty years later, many of Bell's analyses and predications have been realized. Sociologist Paul Blumberg (1981) examined that the fastest growing industries in post-industrial economies were often low-wage at-will service work, as stable, union manufacturing jobs began

evaporating. Despite visions of a utopic economy that would lead to collective prosperity,[11] the associated decline of unions and new economic paradigms of neoliberalism mean wages for most employees are declining, even as certain inequalities such as those of gender have lessened (Crouch, 2019). Recent economic trends have only furthered these tendencies, with the general gaps between the economic prosperity of white collar and blue-collar and service workers continuing to polarize. For service workers, one of the fastest growing labour markets has been in the 'gig' economy wherein workers are not considered waged employees and thus afforded no guarantees of compensation for hours worked and little recourse if wronged by an employer (Però & Downey, 2024). The gig economy is the product of the knowledge economy yet has led to substantial erosions in the lower end of the working class in both wages and protections. Uber for instance has successfully created and exploited labour loopholes to avoid paying benefits and to dictate wages through opaque pricing systems (Zwick, 2018).

Post-industrialist frameworks have also found meaning beyond economic analysis, finding uptake in the humanities and social sciences to describe the changing social relations and aesthetic interest in former working-class infrastructures. For High (2013), de-industrialization "is a continuing process, as is the struggle over meaning and collective memory" (p. 140). He argued deindustrialization is a form of class warfare, wherein working-class people lose their way of life first by being made jobless through factory closures, followed by the erasure of those workers from the places they inhabit through gentrification. The arc of de-industrialization often means that neighborhoods are valued for their authenticity, leading architectural elements to be preserved over the people whose labour built and maintained them in their original uses. Sociology professor Sharon Zukin (2011) examined this contradiction of authenticity in cities. In her view, authenticity is usually imposed on those from a higher social class onto spaces that were once dominated by those from a lower social class. Elaborating on romantic philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1762 / 1968) view that authentic people are those closest to nature, she said the working class of the city are often seen as authentic by those who are upwardly mobile (Zukin, 2009). She claimed this is because those who are college educated often have a greater

[11] My own economic position is vastly improved in the "knowledge" economy. As a former low-wage service worker, under a previous paradigm I would not likely have attended university let alone conducted research. The aim here is not to propose a didactic view of economic trends, but to promote understanding of the societal changes they are leading to.

appreciation for history in the places they live, but this is an abridged history of urban objects over people. “If authenticity is a state of mind, it’s historic, local, and cool. But if authenticity is a social right, it’s also poor, ethnic, and democratic” (Zukin, 2009, p. 26).

Building on Zukin’s ideas, High (2013) argued that middle class nostalgia for working-class communities is mediated through media and cultural popularizations rather than lived experience. Equating the middle class gentrifier to the urban explorer, he said,

> Unlike industrial archaeology or steam railway enthusiasts, urban explorers [the middle class] are not at all interested in what these mills or factories did or why they closed. Their emotional appeal is aesthetic and experiential rather than historical. Ruin-gazing may therefore be more usefully understood as voyeuristic rather than nostalgic… warehouse parties, arts spaces, lofts, all become locales for cool cultural consumption (p. 147-148).

While High raises important points relating to the class perceptions of authenticity, many poor and working-class people also occupied factories in the years after their closures. In Europe, many derelict factories found re-use through right to squat laws (many of which have since been repealed) that allowed individuals and collectives to re-claim abandoned buildings for lodging and communal use. For example, independent researcher Luca Calafati (2020) noted that beyond its countercultural associations, squatted, self-managed workplaces have become more popular since the mass joblessness following the 2008 financial crash, and has been an important tool for many to find economic prosperity through self-management. Others (Davis, 2017; Vasudevan, 2015) argued that the primary reasons for squatting and infrastructures reuse are not nostalgia, but human needs such as housing and employment.

Beyond the needs that infrastructure re-use serves, is it wise to see “warehouse parties, arts spaces, [and] lofts” as a moral hazard? Buildings that would have otherwise sat empty became beacons of life and culture, with individuals taking responsibility for their livelihoods through repurposing derelict buildings. Artist Laura Grace Ford’s (2011 / 2019) *Savage Messiah* was a zine set in a semi-fictionalized version of London’s urban working class, including squatters, artists, and others who occupied abandoned and cheap spaces in the city’s post-industrial districts. In Montreal, one might write a similar zine about the post-70s industrial infrastructures, with neighborhoods such as Mile End incubating and inspiring a similar kind of inner-city bohemianism (Rantisi & Leslie, 2010). Despite the burgeoning culture that the re-use of factories offered to communities, the recent investments in real estate have once again made

the lands on which many urban factories sit valuable for new forms of corporate development such as condominiums and offices. In his introduction to *Savage Messiah*, the cultural theorist Mark Fisher (2014a) described the conditions leading up to the 2012 London Olympics, which saw the clearing out of post-industrial factories so that they could be 'restored' for uses that favoured the optics of the Olympics and global capitalism. Fisher saw this as a land seizure to create a "photo-op for global capitalism" (p. 186). The investment into industrial spaces *after* grassroots reclamation–including that of artists and the middle class–often leads to a further erasure of these newfound uses for space. This does not mean the relationship between the artist and squatter within the built environment is harmonious and unproblematic, but that those who built their lives around repurposing these architectures–many of whom were victims of de-industrialization in the first place– are often also displaced. High's own assertion that deindustrialization "is a continuing process, as is the struggle over meaning and collective memory" (p. 140) should also lead to the understanding that the political economy of place necessitates ongoing changes, and the needs and desires of those who come later are also important considerations.

On this point, Zukin's (2011) analysis was aware of the structural nature of gentrification, as she alluded to how the deregulated financial markets in the 1980's led to an influx of international money into cities for speculation and personal use, arguing that it is the very authenticity of place circulated through images and media that make one location more favourable than another. The title of Harvey's (2008 / 2017) article *The Right to the City* echoed the text of the same name by French geographer Henri Lefebvre (1968), with Harvey supporting the ideal that it should be the right of each individual living in urban spaces to have an ongoing stake in a places' present and future. However, Harvey noted that many localized right to the city movements fail in their scope because they are too dispersed to wield structural power amid massive global flows of capital, which are seeking profitable avenues of investment by using real-estate as a means to absorb surplus capital. He argued that until surplus capital is used to collective ends, the right to the city will remain an ideal amid a losing battle. This sentiment has been echoed by the UN special rapporteur on housing Brazilian geographer Raquel Rolnik (2019), who outlined how the erosion of pensions since the 80s has led many families to rely on the equity in their home for large financial commitments such as education and retirement. In her book *Urban Warfare*, she outlined how real-estate investment schemes are now international,

with microfinance schemes and the imposition of private property on the commons in much of the developing world leading many to go into large debt relative to income to get on what many call 'the property ladder.' In addition, Rolnik as well as Zukin (2011) claim the erosion of public housing has made all new housing 'market housing,' meaning that there is no baseline rent for households to opt into. While these trends are exacerbated in Canada relative to other economies (August, 2020; 2021), these are not isolated problems. The state of housing costs and redevelopment in the Pointe see similar echoes in Brazil, the United States, Europe, India, Japan, Lebanon, and China, to name a few (Rolnik, 2019), even as the specifics for *how* it is happening on a local level contain some differences.

This line of thinking on the financialization of housing poses a 'so what' problem for projects such as mine, which appear to hit bedrock in what they offer to imaginations of space and place amid large structural forces. Indeed, art critic Margaret Crawford (2011) critiqued David Harvey's deduction of the right to the city to surplus capital, claiming his Marxist ideals papered over Lefebvre's (1968) ideals of "material rights, such as those to housing, (*habitat*) and the conditions of life (*habiter*)," claiming that "social and even psychological rights such as pleasure, play (a major concern of Lefebvre's) or personal developments" (p. 35). She maintained that the city is too complex an organism to describe using reductive frameworks, and that a multitude of urban, grassroots activism could empower "urban residents and groups to act in unspecified ways to define, fight for and claim their right to the city" (p. 37). I take Crawford's point on the alienating nature of reducing civic problems to global capital, and the need for specific experiments and mobilizations in urban activism in specific locales. Likewise, there is something admirable about the anarchist urge to take ones' wellbeing into their own hands on a grassroots level. I will elaborate on the potential structural interpolation of this further in Chapter 3. But Lefebvre's context does not map so neatly onto today. Namely, Lefebvre never mentions rent in two of his most prominent texts on cities, *Right to the City* (1968) or *The Production of Space* (1991), perhaps because housing was cheap and abundant in Western economies due to the uptake of utopian urbanist projects such as the modernist housing block that Lefebvre's activism was rebelling against (Murphy, 2022). To borrow a Marxist turn of phrase that will recur in Chapter 3, the social contradictions Lefebvre was contending with are different than the ones we were facing today. Additionally, we must ask if these individualized approaches to activism are working. Have cities that have seen large scale, grassroots organizing

stopped the flow of capital investment and gentrification? Have they succeeded in statistically significant numbers in stopping displacement and urban change without democratic influence? Perhaps on a small scale, such as the victories we already discussed in Pointe-Saint-Charles, but even these have only been partial and as we are seeing now, only temporary. In my view, civic activism is important, but cannot succeed long-term unless there is a push for democratic control over resources.

Concluding these thoughts, this project does not view the engagement with urban space as proposing any kind of remedy to the economic malaise. Instead, this project aims to understand how these crises are being experienced (or not) by locals, and what artmaking offers to facilitating these perspectives. This project is informed by my political beliefs and the context in which it operates, but I am acutely aware of the limitations of artmaking in the face of large structural problems.

Inductive Urban Research

To conduct inductive research implies developing a bottom-up investigation that gathers data without imposing the meaning or values for the study ahead of time (Azungah, 2018). In urban history, inductive approaches have meant turning away from grand narratives of urban development toward methods which unpack the social meanings individuals ascribe to space and place (Hayden, 1995). Historian Dolores Hayden (1995) believed that to understand places, historians had to engage in "collaboration with the residents themselves as well as with planners and preservationists, designers and artists" to consider how the social, historical, and aesthetic components of the city come together to form "narratives of cultural identity, embedded in the historic urban landscape, [and how they] can be interpreted to project their largest and most enduring meanings for the city as a whole" (p. 13). In the inductive frame, the meanings imposed onto space are seldom coherent and unified, leading their meanings and histories to be debated and contested now and in the future (Massey, 1995; 2005). Thus, methodologies have emerged to engage directly with contradictory viewpoints. Oral history, which gathers long-form testimony through interviews to engage individual and collective memory, often converses with those at the fringes of grand narratives of history such as racially marginalized people, working class people, and women (High, 2015; Lawless, 2019; Yow, 2014). Archives have likewise been both an important resource and site of interrogation for these kinds of practices (Nieves & Senier, 2017), both in their analysis and emergent methods of archival staging (Alphen, 2014).

In addition, emergent arts-based methods have been used to engage place, including arts-based methods such as a/r/t/ography (Irwin, 2004; Rallis et al., 2024), research-creation (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012; Loveless, 2019), walking methods (Springgay & Truman, 2019), and participatory action research (Hutzel, 2007). I will examine how certain methods will be taken up in in this project in Chapter 4.

Landscape Painting

In the personal and pedagogical projects, the primary mode for engaging the city is through 2D landscape practices, which have a storied history with aestheticizing urban spaces. Landscapes here refer not only to artworks that represent a place, but as art historian W.J.T. Mitchell (2002) argued, the process of developing collective vision and meanings over land. For Mitchell, landscapes can be urban or natural, functioning like an ideology that naturalize human relationships to place over time. A question I often pose to my students is, what comes to mind when thinking of the Canadian landscape? Numerous associations might come when thinking of a coast-to-coast nation, of grand swaths of forest, the Arctic, etc. How about the Québec landscape? Or Montreal? Or, say, Mount Royal Park? If a person has any familiarity with these spaces, they are likely to have a distinct mental image of each landscape, even as each is fully contained within the other. This relates to urban planner Kevin Lynch's (1960) framework of the image of the city. For Lynch, cities develop collectively understood images that are made up of the many small images held by inhabitants. Cities, like all landscapes, are subject to ongoing aesthetic reimagining's that change over time. To develop this framework, he used three American cities with established images–Los Angeles, which has a reputation for being spread out and car dependent; Boston, which is seen as a legible city with comprehensible urban elements, and Jersey City, which is known to have little discernable character. Lynch used participatory mapmaking and interviews to understand what urban elements lead to these reputations. We will unpack this component later, but critical to Lynch's argument was the ways in which cities become represented, which are both the product of, and come to inform, the images of cities.

The Contradictory Landscape

Landscape painters have historically held up grand narratives such as nationalism and modernism. However, many contemporary landscape practices engage with the histories that were often ignored. The two prominent canonical English Canadian landscape painters are the

collective the Group of Seven, who were famous for creating modernist Canadian landscape paintings from 1920 to 1933 (O'Brian & White, 2017) and Emily Carr (1871-1945). Carr worked primarily in the pacific northwest and is most known for her paintings of Indigenous iconography such as totem poles (1913) and canoes (1912), which she saw as important to preserve amid erasure of Indigenous peoples and cultures (Baldissera, 2021; Stewart, 2005). Similar and concurrent landscape practices existed among Francophone painters, such as the work of Clarence Gagnon (1881-1942), who is known for expressive paintings of snow cover in the Québec landscape (Newlands, 2005). Further research has indicated that the English landscape painters were each intentionally elevated and circulated to foster early Canadian nation building through westward expansion, perpetuating the displacement of Indigenous peoples by 'reterratorializing' the nation through British landscape traditions (Dawn, 2002; O'Brian & White, 2017). This has led many contemporary Indigenous artists to engage with the visual culture of the Canadian landscape canon by subverting their imagery and contexts. Contemporary Indigenous painter Sonny Assu (Ligwiłda'xw of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations) was inspired by graffiti tags and created paintings that superimposed Indigenous imagery over Emily Carr paintings which intended to foster dialogue about the explicit and implicit meanings of the work (Assu, Hopkins & Nicolson, 2018). Painter and performance artist Kent Monkman inserts Indigenous stories into the North American landscape cannon both thorough performances and landscape paintings. For example, his performance *The Group of Seven Inches* (2005) employs his drag alter-ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle to poke fun at the rugged masculinity in the ethos of the Group of Seven. His genre paintings that use landscape engage in pastiche to re-imagine the North American painting canon through Indigenous stories. Some works are tongue and cheek, such as *The Triumph of Miss Chief* (2007) which references American manifest destiny paintings while inserting an array of characters committing violent and sexual acts. Others depict serious imagery, such as the 60s scoop in *The Scream* (2017), which shows members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and priests forcibly removing children from mothers. These works trouble early North American landscape tradition through subversion of the medium and visual culture, contributing to a re-telling of spatial stories that trouble the presumed neutrality of the canon.

Landscape, Post-Industrialism, and the City

The most famous Montréal urban painting movement is The Beaver Hall Group, which was an ephemeral group of men and women painters active in Montréal during the 1920s and early 1930s (Des Rochers et al., 2015; Walters, 2017). Known for having gender parity, the Beaver Hall Group was weary of the declarative nature of the Group of Seven's nationalist landscapes, and instead brought a modernist style and critical eye to urban life (Bondil, 2015). Their members used thick brush with bands of colour and a vibrant palette to depict with subjects are as varied as houses, factories, portraits, and nature as it appears in urban spaces, and the landscapes of the regions adjacent to Montréal (Trépanier, 2015). The Beaver Hall group appeared to be influenced by the movement called Synthesism that originated in France in the late 19th century and later exported internationally to provide a modern eye to adjacent landscapes. As such, the landscapes of the Beaver Hall Group sometimes resemble Group of Seven paintings, such as Anne Savage's (1920) *Country Scene*, which depicts trees over a lake with flat planes of synthetic colours. According to historian Esther Trépanier (2015), the Beaver Hall Group's approach to urbanism was unique from European movements at the time, the latter of which focused on changing skylines and the glory of emerging architectures. The Beaver Hall Group's works focused on modern life, with Montréal's unique architectures in residential and industrial areas like Old Port generally acting as a backdrop rather than subject.

Since Montréal has moved from being an industrial hub to a post-industrial city, artists have contended with the meanings of this changing landscape. Along with this has come post-modern practices, such as walking, sound, film, and performance to make commentary on the present state of the built environment. The project *Reverberations d'une crise* (2023) examined the changing soundscape of Montréal as it undergoes a housing crisis. Their album[12] used sound to tell citizen's stories, present testimony from academics, creatively interpret soundscapes, and share the pleasant noises of a summer day in a Montréal ruelle[13], providing of Montréal's urban

[12] Available for free on their website: https://www.reverberationscriselogement.org/album

[13] Ruelle translates roughly to alleyway, but in Montréal ruelles are also a critical part of the housing infrastructure in many neighborhoods. As the laneways behind houses, they create spaces that are less formal off of backyards that care used for parking, pools, children playing, and socializing.

soundscape.[14] In the Sud Ouest, artist and art educator Kathleen Vaughan (2016-2020) developed an audio walk called *Walk in the Water* that guided listeners through Pointe-Saint-Charles that offers a guided imagined tour of the neighborhood's history and connection with the St. Lawrence, which is at once disconnected from and yet shaped by the river.[15] There are also excerpts where the listener can stand at certain points in the neighborhood to observe the soundscape in real time, and an interactive textile map depicting the neighborhood that allows participants to touch areas to stories about the river. Historian Mathew Barlow collaborated with artist Scott MacLeod to create 21 short films about locations in Griffintown, with Barlow presenting a historical account of the location and MacLeod providing short animations and drawings (Barlow & MacLeod, 2017).[16] Griffintown-based art gallery *Fondrie Darling*[17], itself a former industrial building that was re-furbished in the early 2000s, hosts Nicole Fournier's (2012-3012) 1000-year performance called *Emballetoi*!, which documents the breakdown of synthetic fibres into the ecosystem making commentary on post-industrial ecologies and the ground pollution that accumulates in industrial neighborhoods like the Sud Ouest.

One of the largest post-industrial architectures left in the Ville Marie borough, Silo no. 5, is a former grain elevator and historically recognized building on the Lachine Canal near the Peel Basin and adjacent to Old Port and Griffintown, and is presently owned by the Canada Lands Corporation ("Silo no. 5," 2015). In 2000, art collective The User created the work *Silophone*, which installed microphones and speakers within the silos to allow users outside to broadcast messages that would echo through Silo no. 5, using it like an instrument (Madan & Mcintosh, 2001). Artist and researcher Marisa Portolese (2023) conducted a research-creation project on the history of Goose Village, interviewing former residents, while exploring archives and taking documentary video and photographs of the site today. As part of her PhD thesis, performance artist and curator Shauna Janssen (2014) developed a project called *Urban Occupations Urbaines*, which brought artists together to imagine the space of Griffintown ahead of its

[14] I have also reviewed this album and an event they conducted in the journal Canadian Art Teacher (LeRue, 2023c)

[15] Accessible on her website: https://www.re-imagine.ca/portfolio/

[16] https://griffintowntour.com/#/

[17] Translated as Darling Foundry

planned transformation by large-scale developments. The project explored how interdisciplinary artworks could explore the collective memory and site of place, and how artworks can engage with grand revitalization projects.

Personal Practice

The painting component of my personal research-creation practice is inspired by several traditional and avant-garde landscape painting practices beyond those already mentioned. Painter Peter Doig's landscape paintings, specifically those displayed in the 2013 exhibition *No Foreign Lands* at the Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal, were a turning point in my thinking about the connection between landscape and identity (Doig et al., 2013). The large-scale works depict figures in masterfully painted landscapes, with cues that connect the figures to global networks, which include flags, commodities, and posters throughout the works. The quote I remember from the wall, "There are no foreign lands—Only foreign people" raises questions about whose gaze is being imposed on a landscape, and who is considered naturalized in land. Painter Zoey Frank[18] produces representational paintings of people and landscapes that are at once photorealistic but are also placed into unbelievable visual planes, ultimately abstracting that which is representational.

There is a narrower list of artists who I explicitly try to imitate. Since I began painting, I have always had a 'heavy hand,' meaning that my brushstrokes seem inclined to cover more space on the canvas despite years of trying to disrupt this tendency. As such, I have begun to lean-in to this approach by referring to artists who share these inclinations. One is Philadelphia-based artist Peter Van Dyck, who produces landscapes of interiors and suburbia that are photorealistic with dedicated planes of colour that are reminiscent of the Photoshop cut-out filter, but with a more naturalistic approach.[19] Painter Fairfield Porter paints vibrantly coloured landscapes and rural life that verge between naturalistic and abstract (Porter et al., 2016). As a viewer, I feel that Porter trusts his instincts in painting while also retaining a fidelity to representation. My temperament as a painter leads to producing works in bursts, quickly finishing paintings and moving onto the next ones in short spans of time while both starting and abandoning projects quickly. My studio is full of half-finished painting projects for which my

[18] https://zoeyfrank.com/

[19] https://www.petervandyckart.com/

enthusiasm wanes and returns. I have adopted methods of painting that allow for works to be completed in one sitting, or to allow for a variety of different styles of painting. For example, my project @thedogspainter is part of an ambition to paint 1000 dogs, which provides ample visual interest with a painting being able to be completed quickly in one short sitting or over several longer sessions. There is no rush to finish the overall project, so I can let inspiration come and go. In landscape, I borrow a method from artist Remington Robinson, who is popular for creating small tin-can paintings in small Altoids brand mint tins and was the direct influence for the miniature paintings conducted with students and in my own personal practice, to be discussed in Chapters 5 and 8.[20] I will continue the discussion of my painting process in the arts-based research section of Chapter 4.

Community-Based Art Education (CBAE)

The pedagogical component of this project falls under frameworks of community-based art education (CBAE), which encompasses a wide range of prerogatives that conjoin pedagogy, art, and public engagement. CBAE traces its roots to the arts and crafts movement that came to the United States in the late 19th century, which began in response to a perceived loss of aesthetic value and technical skills caused by factory production (Lawton et al., 2019). This movement was adopted by settlement houses, which were institutions across the US that invited communities to collaborate to direct resources to the poor and offer activities that promoted self-sufficiency. According to community art educators Pamela Harris Lawton, Margret Walker, and Melissa Green (2019) in their writing about the U.S. context, the next major development in CBAE was during the civil rights movement of the 1960's and 1970's, where community organizations would collaborate with artists to make murals and exhibitions that supported the cause and empowered communities. This led to the development of permanent arts organizations with several aims, such as fostering cross cultural dialogue, giving art lessons, and developing community murals. These permanent arts organizations exist today as collectives where people gather to make and exhibit, or formal organizations with a social mission that develop an internal structure outside of the museum context. Lawton et al. credit these movements for inspiring future grassroots interventions such as the anonymous collective the Guerrilla Girls, who work within and outside of major arts institutions to advocate for better representation and treatment of

[20] https://www.remingtonrobinson.com/

women in the arts. In Canada, there have been parallel development of art in communities through not-for-profit initiatives, arts organizations, and other community groups (Conrad & Sinner, 2015). Notably, this has led to the creation of organizations such as Art City in Winnipeg[21] (Kuly et al., 2005), which offers professional arts programming and education free of charge to inner-city people of all ages, and Ross Creek Center for the Arts in Nova Scotia,[22] which is dedicated to broad arts programming and theatre to rural populations. In Québec and the French speaking world, the movement of *Médiation culturelle*[23] (Caune, 1999; Paquin & Lemay-Perreault, 2020), discussed further toward the end of this chapter, has been instrumental in developing and framing public participation in the cultural sector. Further, there have been numerous community-engaged political movements that have raised political consciousness, such as the *Idle No More* movement beginning in 2012 that aimed to bring Indigenous issues to the center of Canadian politics (Barker, 2015). This led to artworks such as Nadia Myre's (2013) photograph of beadwork called *For Those Who Cannot Speak: The Land, the Water, the Animals and the Future Generations*, which piece symbolized a wampum belt to honor a demonstration on Parliament Hill in 2013 that was led by Algonquin grandmothers who were advocating for Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protection.

Across North America, CBAE has also developed associations from within formal institutions, with many finding ways to welcome community environments, social life, and traditions into classrooms to increase relevance for students (McFee, 1965 / 2016), or institutions such as museums developing outreach programs to increase engagement with exhibitions and to invite diverse communities onto sites. Additionally, the division between social practice and CBAE is fuzzy, with many artists's practices overlapping with CBAE. Deducing these eclectic aims, Art education professor J. Ulbricht (2005) proposed five project categories that fit under the scope of community art education, which he primarily defined as art education taking place outside K-12 schools and universities. Ulbricht observed that these categories are not comprehensive, and there may be overlap between them:

[21] https://artcityinc.com/about

[22] https://artscentre.ca/

[23] Translated as cultural mediation.

1. Informal teaching encompasses that which is passed down from generation to generation, parent to child, elder to junior. This can also include handicrafts that are taught in a group, such as stitching and knitting circles. This category is generally more social and avoids expert teachers teaching students.
2. Organized community teaching brings the rigour of school to community. These classes tend to be planned and generally bring a contemporary course content to students. These programs may be targeted to certain groups, such as children, at-risk youth, mothers, the disabled, or the incarcerated. This also includes non-accredited schools that offer classes such as the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School.
3. Outreach programs are typically more targeted to specific groups and tend to focus on certain outcomes, such as empowerment, access, or resource allocation. Outreach programs might offer studio space, supplies, or classes to students who do not have an art program in their school. It may describe a museum initiative to bring in certain publics who do not typically engage with their collection. While broad, this category describes ethical imperatives to democratize artistic offerings.
4. Ethnography describes how artists learn about and with communities through artistic practice. This may be about another community, or from within a community to learn about things such as traditions, heritage, language, art styles and handcrafts. Classes from formal settings such as university also engage ethnographically with communities, as shown by artists/art educators Kathleen Vaughan, Cynthia Hammond, and Emanuelle Dufour (2016), who were part of Concordia's Right to the City project (2014-2017) working in Pointe-Saint-Charles. This project brought students from four disciplines to the neighborhood to learn with and about local concerns using ethnographic methods such as oral history, walking tours, acting exercises, and art making. Students were encouraged to critically research and engage the neighborhood, culminating in a public presentation of the artworks.
5. Public Art includes works such as murals and sculptures which engage with the public in a public place. In Canada, there is a tradition of percentage projects, where 1-3% of costs for public buildings are set aside for artworks, which are often informed by the function of the building and its neighborhood (Polat & Gökçen, 2022). Neighborhood mural projects are often collaboratively made and aim to tell a story about place. One example

is the *Murale sur le viaduc* in Pointe-Saint-Charles, created by the Collectif au pied du mur (2014). Over 80 meters of the elevated concrete wall of a railroad are covered with a mural that depicts the Pointe's history, welcoming collaboration from many community groups in its creation. Additionally, there is the mural of eight headless women on St. Gabriele's elementary school called *L'Étoffe des Pionnières, origins d'un peuple* (Hamel, 2013), which represents les Filles du Roy (the King's wards), who were 35 women sent to colonize what was then New France in 1663 who landed at St. Gabriel's farm, a historic site in Pointe-Saint-Charles. An extension of this category is also Collaborative Artmaking, encompassing projects such as Catherine Heard's (2015) *Redwork* (2015-Present), which is an embroidery project wherein imagery depicting traumatic events are made into patterns that are stitched into fabric and sewn together as a quilt. In addition, Lawton (2010) developed projects that brought the pedagogical skills and training for her students to the community adjacent to her home institution in Richmond, Virginia, where they worked with residents to create a community quilt.

Building on Ulbricht's categories, I have been working on an expansive literature review of CBAE, where I have observed four emergent categories in since this initial publication in 2005. The first is therapeutic and wellness, which describes the emerging therapeutic uptake in community engaged art, such as art hives (Timm-Bottos, 2011) and projects that focus explicitly on mental health (Bone, 2018). Digital and online describes the pre and post-COVID build-up of pedagogical and museum resources in digital environments, but also the engagement of community through on-line platforms, and with explicitly online communities, such as videogame players or digital fandoms. Ecological and non-human community engagement refers to emerging post-humanism work in response to the frameworks of Donna Haraway (2013) and Karen Barad (2007), the new materialisms of Jane Bennett (2010), while Indigenous frameworks draw on a growing and diverse body of work such as that by Leanne Betamosake Simpson (2014) and Dylan Robinson (2020). Considering these categories of CBAE, this thesis takes up ethnography, organized community teaching, and public art if we take the expanded view while having slight overlaps with others. In addition, the two projects in this thesis engage the non-human infrastructure of the city and are interested in how the social and the built environment intersect.

Social Practice

CBAE finds some of its roots and contemporary expression in social practice, which is a category of art that eludes specific definition but broadly encompasses art and pedagogy practices which engage, agitate, collaborate with, or otherwise encounter a public audience. For museum director Tom Finkelpearl (2013), social practice emerged from the alternative pedagogical projects of the 1960s counterculture and has roots in Freire's (2018) critical pedagogy. This insight was taken up by art professor Gregory Sholette (2018), who outlined socially engaged art education (SEAE) as a Socratic method where students are "encouraged to *learn how to learn*" (p. 280, emphasis in original) rather than focus on specific mediums. SEAE takes place outside the classroom and is inherently collaborative with those who would otherwise be seen as the subjects and audiences for such a work, sharing pedagogical resources such as curricula and money. For Sholette, this approach blurs the boundaries between institutions and the real world, collapsing for social practitioners any distinction between university and world, and art and life. In my classroom study, the institutional connections are certainly acknowledged throughout, but as an educator I made a concerted effort to bring art and life together, and to share as much as possible the impetus behind my teaching and research.

Social practice has found importance in the art world and university institutions since the early 2000s, but some have recognized that its uptake has not always been purely ethical. In *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, art historian Claire Bishop (2012) described how the conditions of the late 90s led to what was called the social turn in contemporary art. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour party reformed cultural sector subsidies to instrumentalize arts funding against 'anti-social behaviour.' In essence, New Labour continued Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal program, which was characterized by hyper-individualism, state divestment from industry and welfare, and the erosion of unions and worker protections. The UK moved away from a Fordist economy toward a knowledge economy, and New Labour saw the artist as the ideal model for neoliberal workers—The artist is passionate about their work, happy to work from contract to contract, and act as trend setters adopting new technologies while assuming the role of the colonizing arm of gentrification by moving to 'underdeveloped' communities and making them 'cool.' The Arts Council of England began to incentivize artworks that engaged the public under the guise of fighting the anti-social behaviour and foster new social bonds. The artist was no longer seen as an individual creator, but as a

coordinator of events and situations, a pedagogue, and an antagonist to the public through producing a scene or an installation rather than a physical object. As such, the social turn was also a sociological one, as works of both social practice and non-social practice art de-emphasized aesthetics in favour of concerns such as exclusion and oppression, aiming to have artwork do social work rather than ask aesthetic questions. Artworks became about making up for, educating about, or otherwise rectifying a shortcoming within society rather than about aesthetic and artistic content.[24]

Reflecting on the state of social practice art in the 1990s, art critic Nicolas Bourriaud (1998) coined the term relational aesthetics, which he situated in a materialist tradition wherein the material was *proximity* to a "world of forms, a set of problems and a trajectory which are all his own" (p. 43). In this view, it is the artist's world that becomes the material for artistic praxis that the viewer not only beholds but becomes an active collaborator. The artist's aesthetic capacities then rely on their ability to draw on interpersonal relationships with and within their audiences to formulate aesthetic experiences. Relational aesthetics has theoretical roots in both the Situationist International and Guy Debord's (1967 / 2021) *Society of the Spectacle*, which in broad strokes argued that many in society are brainwashed by media and technology (Debord compared religion to marketing) and are unable to see the hegemonic powers that oppresses them in their present lives. Debord takes up the Marxist concept of alienation, which argues that under capitalism we are made to believe we are individuals with singular needs, even as processes of production are indeed collectivized.[25] The argument here is that we are indeed intricately

[24] Bishop outlined three key movements in the formation of contemporary social practices: The Italian Futurists, who were active from 1909-1944 turned modern art from passive objects in the gallery into an "assault on public consciousness" (p. 43) through events, manifestoes, fliers, and performances, taunting their viewers with wretched noises and heckling. The second was post-1917 Bolshevik productivist theatre, which was designed as a collectivist, proletarian alternative to individual practices such as painting. Community theatres opened across the Soviet Union, where working people collaborated on plays about post-revolutionary life, initially interjecting common peoples' perspectives into the works of art, though this was erased during the advent of Stalinism in favour of works that towed the party line. The third movement was Dadaism, which was active in many parts of Europe and North America from 1915-1926. The movement emerged after World War One in response to the terrible violence that engulfed Europe. Dada was parodic 'anti-art' that drew on strategies of futurism to provoke the public, taking aims at the norms of society. Though the movement had utopian ideals, the works seldom reached the working classes it was aimed at, and instead became a niche movement for the rich.

[25] Alienation builds from the idea that work is collectivized, but that the processes of production remove both the financial reward from labour by paying one in units of time rather than the full production of a commodity, and from the rewarding nature of producing a full commodity. Under the factory system, one did not build a full clock,

connected and collectivized through production, but we lack the language and perception to understand this. The spectacle then, is the media, marketing, and societal apparatus that mediates reality for the individual, keeping us placated and unable to see the true flow of social relations. Debord suggested the use of *détournement*[26] to break the stranglehold of the spectacle on everyday people. This was taken up by the Situationist International movement, of which Debord was a member, who created 'situations' in the forms of films and images to reveal dominant ideologies which they hoped could break the stranglehold of the spectacle on everyday people and foster a resistance to it (Barnard, 2002).[27] This in turn influenced the group Fluxus, who were equal parts predecessor to and pioneer of relational aesthetics.[28] Spanning Europe, the US, and Japan, Fluxus' happenings were a form of anti-art intentionally designed to agitate audiences using avant-garde mediums such as performance and experimental theatre to make commentary on everyday life and the intensification of consumerism after WWII (Sell, 1998). These projects aimed to break the stranglehold of capitalist ideology and bureaucracy– and the oppressions that extend from within–that were masked by the monotony of daily life, making strange the familiar to mass audiences who likely had little familiarity with the postmodern mediums used in the works.

In recent years, social practices have been taken up by institutions and artists making efforts to engage with the neighborhoods they occupy. Internationally, museums and universities have had an integral role in urban renewal plans and have been criticized by some as being a

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rather one would produce 1/100th of 1000 clocks on a production line by, say, placing one component on the clock. In previous eras, guilds existed where workers would learn about the process of clockmaking from beginning to end, but the production line necessarily made it impossible for a worker to see this process end to end. For Marx, the alienation brought about on the production line was indeed efficient, referring to the concept of labour power: the work of 100 workers producing 1000 clocks was often far more efficient than one worker producing one clock.

[26] Translated as diversions.

[27] Interestingly, the SI also had strong critiques about the built environment, expressing frustration with the cities capture by capital and industry, calling for an inventive, imaginative city designed around leisure and human needs (Sadler, 1999). One method, called *dérive* (trans. wandering), advocated for wandering aimlessly around the city to uncover the affective ambiences as part of this re-imagination (Barnard, 2002). I will return to this concept in the next chapter.

[28] Fluxus Likewise influenced some practitioners of arts-based research, including Miles and Springgay (2020), who outline their influence on contemporary pedagogy through analyses on curriculum and the Fluxus archive. They argue that Fluxus' approach is alive and well in post-secondary classroom design.

colonizing arm of gentrification (Anania, 2021). Responding to such criticisms, many museums have developed extensive outreach programs to foster engagement with collections and offer education, while universities have turned to civic engagement as a fundamental principle. At my home institution, Concordia University, community engagement has become a university-wide strategy that has in-turn been adopted by many research clusters and departments, specifically in the fine arts.[29] Beyond institutions, artists themselves have been called the 'shock troops' of gentrification, and, according to common narratives of gentrification, move to neighborhoods with low rents and abundant space, in turn making those neighborhoods appealing to wealthier residents and real-estate companies causing an onslaught of upper-class residents to move in (Makagon, 2010).[30] Communication professor Daniel Makagon (2010) regarded artist-led gentrification as a rhetorical, symbolic process that thinks itself different from developer-led gentrification, which has a reputation for being sterile, by offering forms of urban development that pay homage to the history of a neighborhood and reject the middle-and-upper class aesthetics. In this view, the authenticity of a neighborhood and its people become important, even as the artists themselves tend to come from middle and upper-class families. This leads to what economists Pier Sacco et al., (2019) referred to as the domestication of space, wherein artists can contribute to profound re-imaginings that not only change the function of spaces, but also their social meanings. For him, domesticating space is a top-down affair, imposing a 'script' on the character of a neighborhood to change the values and identities of a space, likening the ideal domestication to the scripted logic of a theme park. Those with social and economic capital, such as politicians, real estate agents, business owners, and sometimes artists begin to script the narrative of a place for the ends of increasing real estate value and tourism which exploits the have-nots to the will of the haves. Their antithesis of a theme park is the European public square, which is a site of commerce and socialization, but critically has no script. In this

[29] https://www.concordia.ca/about/community.html

[30] While important to outline this line of thinking here, I refute the narrative of artist-as-gentrifier despite its prevalence. While there are egregious examples of artists caucusing with institutions that profit from gentrification, such as artists who build murals for new condominium developments or accept endorsements from finance, placing the blame at the feet of artists writ large ignores the massive amounts of capital that move through cities and building projects, and over-states the ability of relatively obscure individuals in structural movements. This is not to negate the power art has to cultivate understandings of places, which are taken up directly in chapter 3.

view, the only way to maintain a truly undomesticated space "implies empowering the local community to feel entitled to the economic, social and cultural curation of that space, as an integral part of their right to place" (p. 536). While the artists' role in domestication is well documented, they argue that artists can work for unscripted spaces by empowering communities through creating accessible and inclusive platforms for social use, negating scripted interactions with space (as cited in Mazer & Rankin, 2011).

The complications of social practice, and the role of artist engagement in urban space have found their ways into my project via CBAE. On the first point, I retain substantial reservations about many of the fundamentals of social practice. The uptake for political purposes outlined by Bishop (2012) posits the artist as a cultural worker whose essential aim is to reify the atomistic, individualistic neoliberal program *through* collective action, which indeed mimics yet betrays the left-wing political history of social practice and the aims of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics. Additionally, I do not view this project as one intended to inspire any form of political action or script, but instead one that invites engagement and observations of the happenings of daily life. In-line with the dialectical and dialogic pedagogical and theoretical approaches in Chapter 3, the curriculum and approaches of this project indeed aim to invite participants to develop their own script of the neighborhood.

In concluding this foray into social practice, a work that I argue encapsulates some of the social tensions at the center of this kind of work is Belgian social practice artist Thomas Hirschhorn's (2013) *Gramsci Monument*, which was a temporary outdoor structure built and dismantled over a few summer months on the grounds of a housing development in the Bronx. The project was commissioned by the DIA Art Foundation, and at its peak spanned over 8,000 square feet, sporting a library, a computer lab, and restaurants including a smoothie bar, and lounging sections that hosted reading groups. In a PBS Art 21 documentary about the work, the narrative switches between the residents of the nearby housing authority, a multi-ethnic, multi-generational group of seemingly working-class people enjoying the monument, to Hirschhorn, who is seen speaking sternly with the residents, at times throwing temper tantrums and scolding individuals who are failing to fulfill his artistic vision (Foster, 2015). Despite this, the residents speak fondly of Hirschhorn, laughing about his antics while showing a respect for the work and vision. Responding to the question of what happens when one interferes with the monument, one man started laughing, "He gets crazy. He starts screaming, using his fingers and everything." It

appears from the documentary that he has found buy-in from the public, who appear genuinely interested and invested in Hirschhorn's vision. However, there is no question in Hirschhorn's mind that the aesthetic aims of what he is doing is decoupled from a social aim, meaning, he does not appear to care about doing good through his practice. A man at the beginning of the video begins to say, "What you are doing for this community…" before Hirschhorn cuts him off to say "I don't do something for the community, I do something, I hope, for art. And the understanding of art. My goal is this." I return to this vignette often while teaching about community to undergrads because Hirschhorn's honesty betrays the political justifications many social practice artists use to 'do good' in the world and reveals the fundamental contradictions of doing art in and with community. For some of my students, it offends their sensibilities (just as it does mine) because of his actions and the temporary nature of the monument, yet the participants themselves seem to have genuine affection for Hirschhorn and the project, and to negate their feelings about the work risks veering into the kind of paternalism that social practice risks engaging in. In my view however, this project cuts to some of the core differences between social practice and CBAE. Namely, social practice has a primary focus to do something for art, while CBAE in all its forms has a primary focus to do something for education. While there is ample cross-pollination and overlaps as mentioned, I believe this can be seen as the primary delineation.

Community Context

Finally, I would like to address the context of working in community in Québec, which has been fraught throughout this dissertation due to the politics of language. Montréal historically has had a steady Anglophone population, and in many Québec nationalist politics are largely remembered as being the bosses that colluded with the church to keep the French majority subordinated (Bourhis & Sioufi, 2017). While in the present day, the figure of the English boss has largely waned, the Anglophone culture in the city led to the creation of two English universities, McGill and Concordia. During the final year of this thesis, Quebec's governing party released a plan to overhaul university funding which included doubling the tuition for out of province students attending English institutions (Righa, 2023b).[31] In addition to

[31] This was since adapted after pushback from the University's to both exclude Bishops University in the city of Sherbrooke, and to lower the increase in exchange for a certain level French competency among most graduates (Lapierre, 2023).

the existential threats these overhauls posed to the institutions, this plan came down a couple years after the passing of Bill 96, which was designed to cut enrollment at English colleges in the pre-university college system – called colleges d'enseignement general et professional (CEGEP)s – by forcing Francophones and Allophones[32] attending English institutions to take additional French courses, and to write their final language exam in French (Authier, 2024). Additionally, this bill sought to limit the amount a person can access government institutions in English, including in medical settings. On a personal level these have posed existential threats to my ongoing existence in Québec, as my partner is employed as an English teacher at a CEGEP where it looked for some time that she might lose her position. For me, my entire working life is centered at Concordia, and as I was planning on conducting a post-doctoral project at McGill. I mention this not to air grievances with Québec politics, but to situate my life as an Anglophone throughout the dissertation. Working in a primarily Francophone institution in a majority Francophone city during this project impacted the dynamics of my research. As I will discuss in other parts of this dissertation, I was genuinely welcomed, and was able to speak French acceptably in many situations. However, there were moments at Bâtiment 7 where there were discussions about Concordia University, which around the time I started had ended a partnership with Bâtiment 7 after cultural tensions emerged. In one of my very first meetings, someone said that Concordia had colonized Bâtiment 7 with its Anglo-Saxon ethic. Meanwhile, during my time as an administrator, there were moments where individuals raised questions about the use of English within the institution. While Pointe-Saint-Charles is home to many Anglophones, the activists who fought for and won Bâtiment 7 are primarily Francophone, and there is a general expectation that official communications and meetings will be conducted in French. The art school, however, is a majority Anglophone enclave of Bâtiment 7, with most of staff and instructors, and students, speaking primarily English. As I will discuss in Chapter 6, the bulk of the students who took *Landscaping the City III* were Anglophone, though there were several Allophone and Francophone students. Only one student–a Francophone– spoke almost no English.

Working in the Québec context provided a richer context than just language. There is a deep-seated appreciation for the arts in Québec and Montréal, with ample funding, attendance,

[32] A Québec specific term for those whose first language is neither English nor French.

and appreciation for festivals, galleries, and the arts in general. As such, the framework of médiations culturelles (MC), saw uptake in Québec in the late 90s concurrent to social practice to describe practices that create situations bringing together artists with the public ("Qu'est-ce que la médiation culturelle ?," n.d.) Rooted in relational practices, the framework of MC accepts that there are broad interplays of communications and relationships in society, and that interrelationships between artists, communities, and creation has the potential to break down barriers and open new dialogues through the cultural creations (Caune, 1999). MC found other uses, such as in museums to foster inclusion and co-reflection on specific exhibitions and the uses of the institution (Paquin & Lemay-Perrault, 2020). Pragmatically, l'Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) (Montréal office of public consultation)[33], which assumes a central role in public consultations around urban development, has supported projects using MC citing it as a method capable of opening dialogues about larger social issues (Cazal, 2016). While my work does not specifically engage with MC as a framework, its widespread uptake in Québec institutions and French institutions merits acknowledgement, and its public familiarity is likely part of the interest in projects such as mine.

Concluding Thoughts

This literature review has outlined the numerous complexities and specificities of conducting a community-engaged arts-project focused on the urban landscape of Montréal. Through the work of this dissertation, these complexities revealed numerous contradictions and social tensions which necessitated adopting a framework that takes contradiction seriously. As such, the next chapter lays out a framework rooted in the dialectical method, which provides a lens to see community, urbanism, and space as things that are constantly in motion and formation. My hope is that this framework can help to see the numerous components of this literature review as inter-dependent, while offering a way to conceptualize of the inevitable movement and change within the urban landscape.

[33] https://ocpm.qc.ca/fr

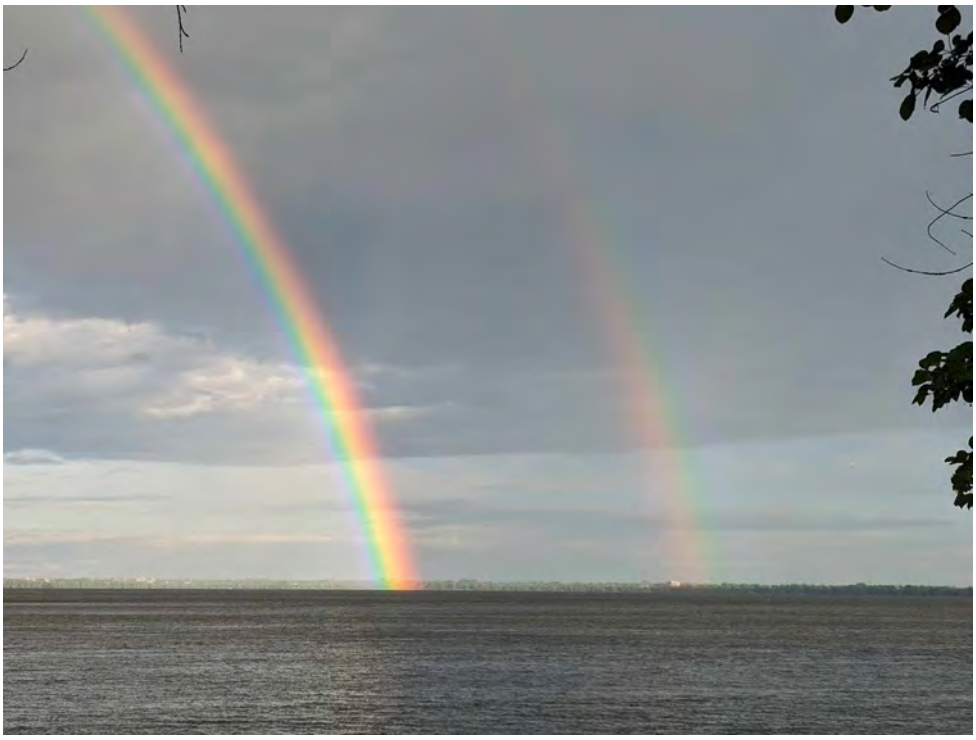

Figure 5: Double rainbow over the St. Lawrence River. Taken on a walk to Pointe-Saint-Charles from Verdun in 2024.

Chapter 3 | Theoretical Framework

Community is a term that is at once overused and undertheorized (Plett, 2023) while finding rapid uptake among academics and institutions who wish to engage the communities of the cities they live (Lawton, 2010; 2019). Presently, there exist many discourses around community that paint a rosy picture of what it means to move from the ivory tower of the university to meet everyday people where they live, assuming those in community are somehow more authentic (as discussed in Chapter 2 with Zukin's (2011)). I have witnessed this idealism in action in my last three winters teaching ARTE 330: Introduction to Community Art Education at Concordia University, a core undergraduate course that has an attached internship component with a community partner. A common pattern I see for many students moves as follows—One enters the site with idealizations about what it means to work with a specific group at a site with an excellent mission, but by week three, the difficulties of being on site become prominent. Perhaps site staff are stretched short and there is a lack of support in administration or classroom components, or perhaps they find themselves competing for other activities such as sports or videogames. Or perhaps the targeted demographic poses difficulties for the intern, especially in environments where participation is optional such as after school programs. It is from here, once the idealizations are troubled, that I feel confident in working through what it means to work in

community. There are always schisms between a sites stated values, what the site does, who the site reaches, and how the site is perceived by the community that it resides in. Nevertheless, the community projects this thesis and my students engage are always labours of love for those who work there, representing countless hours of unremunerated physical and emotional labour to ensure their sustainability. They are made up of individuals who might hold various political and personal reasons for engagement, but who have a deep love and care for their communities.

A central argument of this thesis is that to engage with community is to engage with the contradictions that run throughout specific communities and society in general. In this chapter, I will develop a framework for engaging meaningfully with the schisms of community, framing communities not as cohesive or necessarily wholesome, but through frameworks of contradiction as outlined by the dialectical method. By the very nature of bringing members of the public together around common projects, we are inherently dealing with divergent and contradictory interests. Thus, the frameworks for this project focus on inductive approaches to community that center contradiction and theorize what contradictory interests and views on community offer to understandings of space and place. In this frame, developing cohesion and synthesis is a futile aim, instead necessitating the capacity to both anticipate and account for contradiction. In considering community education, it is important to consider how the theoretical and the practical come together to form a *praxis* of engagement. In this chapter, I will articulate how I have situated myself in community as an artist-teacher-researcher, and the frameworks and strategies I have developed for conducting the research program at hand.

Before beginning, however, I must first acknowledge that what lies below may appear dense, and my qualifications do not support my ability to understand and apply such theory. While I am self-taught, my perspective is that theory ought to generate deeper insights into the problems it is being applied to. Furthermore, I am an adherent to the perspectives of my professor David Pariser (2019) that art education is ultimately an applied field. Therefore, theory is only useful here so much as it can inform the concrete components of this research be they teaching or insights. I will almost certainly make mistakes and misunderstandings of what lies below, but my hope is that even if I misunderstand, the misunderstanding is fruitful to furthering my thought to this project.

The Foundations of Dialectical Frameworks

Dialectics has existed as a method of analysis since Plato and means to engage with the world through dialogue. This thesis adopts the dialectical method as developed by Georg Wilhelm Fredric Hegel (1807 / 2013) as the departure point of inductive thinking. For Hegel, dialectics is a process of immanent critique, wherein the whole is revealed through thoughtful analysis of the contradictions within a particular (Lukács, 1923 / 2013). Hegel's conception of dialectics is built in opposition to Aristotle's (350 BCE / 2009) assertion of the law of identity, which argues that A = A, meaning that the subject is equal to itself. In this view, a house is a house, a banana is a banana, and a chair is a chair, each of which stand alone as physical objects in the world. The same could be said of humans, who both contain an autonomous body, and physical and emotional traits which formulate an identity. However, for Hegel, a subject's existence presupposes interconnections with its opposites. For example, if one does not consume water, one ceases to live, and if one does not have any social connections, one ceases to have an identity in the social sense. Thus, the identity of the self (A) presupposes nourishment from nature, and interconnections with others, without which the self would be negated. This means that A≠A, as the continued existence of A requires external sustenance. Furthermore, over time, we know that no amount of water or social interaction can stop an individual from meeting their eventual fate of death, therefore implying the existence of A is temporal. For Hegel, the internal identity of all things is met with similar contradictions, meaning that existence itself is contradictory. Contradiction here does not necessarily call for resolution; rather contradictions reveal the internal instability of identity.[34]

[34] In Marxist-Hegelian parlance, the term contradiction is notoriously ill-defined. Nevertheless, a contradiction simply means the opposition of social forces. These can be internal contradictions, such as when it may be beneficial for a worker to work longer hours to increase their wages, but when extended across the entire economy, this creates more supply of labour thus lowering wages across the board. Another example might be how workers are socialized under capitalistic workplaces, creating more proportional value collectively than they do individually. Yet despite this socialization, the achievements of that labour rest in the hands of the hands of the bosses.

To bring this discussion back to the city, a contradiction in this work might be that the civic activism that has kept Pointe-Saint-Charles a wonderful place to live has in turn been the thing that has made the Pointe appealing to developers and property owners alike, who in turn are regarded as destroying that which made the neighborhood valuable in the first place. There are two points made by David Harvey that I would like to return to here. First, Harvey (2010) noted that we can indeed be on both sides of a contradiction, using the metaphor as how sometimes we might drive a car, and other times we are a pedestrian. In urban spaces, one might purchase an

A dialectical study moves from the particular into the universal by abstracting outward using immanent critique. The most famous example of a dialectical study is Karl Marx's (1867 / 1981) *Capital, Vol. 1,* which begins by asking how twenty yards of linen become one coat. Chapter by chapter, it tracks how one commodity is produced and exchanged to reveal the entire functioning of the capitalist system, which Marx outlines and critiques using the logics of capitalism's primary theorists, Adam Smith (1776 / 1999) and David Ricardo (1817 / 2004). As such, dialectics requires abstracting from the particular into the general, meaning there is a certain level of 'playing things out' (McGowan, 2019). Fredrick Engels (1925 / 1986) deduced dialectics to three laws: "The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and *vice versa*; The law of the interpenetration of opposites; [and] The law of the negation of the negation" (p. 62). The transformation of quantity into quality deals with qualitative turning points, such as how water raised from 10 degrees to 90 degrees has changed quantitatively but experiences a qualitative change at 100 degrees when the water boils. The interpolation of opposites refers to how the opposite of identity is assumed within the initial identity ($A \neq A$). Negation of negation refers to how contradictions lead to the movement of history, wherein the internal contradictions of a given movement lead to the creation of a new epoch, either on the small scale (a pair of headphones eventually become so tattered that they are deemed unusable), or on the large scale (a government causes such unrest that the populace demands an election or revolution). In each case, the internal contradictions become so great that the initial state of the object must be overcome (the common term for this is sublated), wherein elements within the initial process are rearranged and partially discarded to imagine something anew. Our present moment is likely beaming with contradictions that will one day become untenable and lead to systemic upheaval, but untenable social relations may remain in place for generations.

Dialectical thinking calls for immanent critique–critique from within– meaning that to critique an object requires working within its logics to see its inherent flaws. On the inverse,

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expensive home in a formerly working-class neighborhood, thus contributing to rising prices all around. But one can also have substantial social investment into the same neighborhood and detest the changes excess capital brings along with it. Further, Harvey (2019) noted that the value created in neighborhoods is often extracted. It is those who care for their communities after all that often make a neighborhood an exciting place to be (such as Bâtiment 7 and the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School), but the individuals who form these institutions often must turn around and pay a landlord more to live in the same area for the very value their labour created. In essence, the cultural gains become privatized.

dialectics asserts that through the analysis of particulars and their contradictions, we can learn universal truths about the world (McGowan, 2019; James, 1980). The common conception of universality comes from the Enlightenment, wherein it is accepted that *man* [sic] is endowed with universal traits, and ought to adhere to universal moral principles. There have been numerous critiques of this conception of universalism which point to its Eurocentric conception which excluded women, non-white people, and children. Dialectical universalism, however, views universal truths as emerging through inductive study and aims to observe rather than enforce ways of thinking and being. For example, we can universally claim that all humans need water to live, and can make similar claims for shelter, food, healthcare, and human connection. Likewise, all humans have the capacity to produce culture, language, and engage with spirituality. This question of universality becomes more complicated, however, when we think of how universalism emerges from conditions. For Hegel, the negation of negation is how universal truths emerge through the movement of history. Hegel used the example of the French Revolution (1789-1799), wherein the French Jacobins, using the slogan *liberté, égalité, fraternité,* overturned the monarchy and won a constitution that enshrined universal emancipation into law. However, this constitution only applied to France, and slavery continued within the French colonies. In the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), the Black Jacobins took up the same slogan of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and declared independence from the same nation which had adopted these supposedly universal principles. For Hegel, the Haitian Revolution better realized French universality—The French negated contradictions of oppressive monarchy, and the Haitians further realized the *universal truth* of the French revolution by negating the contradictions of the post-revolution French empire. In this view, rather than the French revolution failing for its inability to realize its own contradictions, the French revolution was simply incomplete according to its own internal logics.

In this project, I will make little delineation between dialectical methods in the Hegelian tradition and the Marxist tradition, but there are concerns in the literature that require addressing. Dialectics in the Marxist tradition has developed a reputation for having rigid, deterministic views of how society moves and functions, which have been adopted by those who I will call the 'hard-headed' materialists. This view draws on Marx's (1993) base and superstructure dialectic, which holds that the material base–forces of production–substantially impact the superstructure, such as art, family, religion, community, and so on. In the 'hard-headed' view, the relationship

between the base and the superstructure is a causal one, meaning that what happens in the superstructure is determined by the economic base. It follows that changing society requires changing the base, which will in turn inform the superstructure. However, like geographer and Marxist scholar David Harvey (2010), I find this model far too rigid. As Harvey noted, Marx seldomly used causal language, preferring associative terms like reveals, appears, and uncovers. While Marx never wrote a comprehensive text of his dialectical method, he did leave clues. In a chapter to Harvey's guide to capital called "What Technology Reveals," he examined the following footnote from *Capital Vol. 1* (1981):

> Technology reveals the active relation of man to nature, the direct process of the production of his life, and thereby also lays bare the process of the social relations of his life, and of the mental conceptions that flow from those relations. (p. 493)

This footnote appeared in the chapter "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry," where Marx described the dialectical relationship between human labour and material conditions. For example, for years weavers made fabrics by hand, but the invention of the electric loom rendered hand weaving obsolete and lowered the amount of labour required to produce fabrics. The labourers who worked the electric looms suddenly had their productivity amplified due to the efficiency of the technology while most hand weavers were out of work. This led to fewer workers chasing more jobs leading to downward pressure on wages. This also made handcrafted works uncompetitive on the market, leading to market pressures for all firms to switch to machine weaving.

Analyzing the contents of this footnote and chapter, Harvey (2010) concluded that these are key to understanding Marx's dialectical method. Harvey identified six conceptual elements that recur in dialectical studies—Technology, relation to nature, social relations, mental conceptions, processes of production, and the production and reproduction of daily life. Examining one of these elements in a study reveals numerous indivisible interpenetrations. For example, a study of the daily life of workers in the gig economy would reveal social relations between corporation / employee, and employee and customer, the changing relationship of workers to labour, and the mental conceptions of work that are produced. More generally, a study on the impact of production on the environment would likewise implicate the production of commodities, mental conceptions of nature, and the effects of lifestyle in daily life through changes to nature (e.g., climate change). Far from being deterministic, this presents a fluid

dialectic that emphasizes profound interconnections between elements of a problem. As Harvey (2010) noted, innovations in technology that upend production require someone to act on a mental conception, but also for the proper social relations to exist for the innovation to take hold. He continues, "the danger for social theory is to see one of the elements as determinant of all the others" (Harvey, 2010; p. 196).

Dialectical Conceptions of Space

The socio-spatial dialectic applies dialectics to space and place, seeking to understand how spaces become implicated in social and economic processes. Lefebvre (1991) attempted to model how spaces come to be created and sustained. While places are geographically specific, spaces are produced initially to serve those with power, organized along systems of production and in turn organizing the lives of those whose labour builds the space. However, in time, inhabitants come to develop their own spatial desires based on their lived needs in a place, which formulates into both individual and collective demands. These dynamics led Lefebvre to theorize the dialectical spatial triad of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space:

- Perceived space considers how the social forces of production networks organize space, which are directed by those in power. Historically this may have been kings and emperors, and more recently, capitalists.
- Conceived space considers the role of designers, architects, and planners, and how they develop mechanisms to shape space and placate (Lefebvre said manipulate) the public. Critically, this is the realm of the artist, who idealizes space through representation and engages with essentializations of space, as discussed in Chapter 2.
- Finally, there is lived space, which considers the daily interactions ordinary people have with the spaces they inhabit.

For Lefebvre, these points on the triad are interpenetrated, meaning that to begin to describe one part of the triad necessarily implicates the other. For example, a Canadian grocer might plan to open a new supermarket at the edge of a planned housing development. An architect must design the store, coordinators within the corporation need to include the store in its supply chains, and planners must evaluate whether the area is suitable both ecologically and with flows of traffic through permitting processes. The public may also choose to fight against the store development, instead hoping for land for public use, or herald in increased competition to the grocery market.

While this description is rather simple, it demonstrates the triad's general workings and gives a broad overview on how Lefebvre saw the movement of urban development.

The spatial dialectic is founded in Lefebvre's political beliefs around urban space and worker self-determination. Lefebvre wrote *La droit à la ville*[35] in 1968 at the height of the student protests in his home city of Paris. This text argued that the city, organized primarily to mediate factory work, contributed to the alienation of modern life. His central thesis was that space is created through social bonds and collective labour, but at this time the social bonds that created social space were masked behind the wage relation, and the produced space was not in general produced for the good of the workers who created it. Lefebvre's ideals for space can be deduced from a point he raised when asked about his relationship with anarchism, wherein he claimed he was a Marxist so that one day we could all be anarchists (as cited in Soja, 1996 / 2014). Meaning, Lefebvre did not think it was realistic to wish away the structures that organize space by reverting to the communal living promised within anarchist frameworks. Instead, the contradictions of capitalism were required to be overcome so that grassroots life could thrive.[36] [37] Lefebvre (1968) called for methods of *autogestion*[38] as a bottom-up antithesis to top-down impositions in the capitalist city. On smaller scales, autogestion has been used in urban projects of various scales such as the Capital Hill Autonomous Zone (2020) in Seattle in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and in spaces such as Bâtiment 7, which has a permanent,

[35] Translated as Right to the City.

[36] Lefebvre was famously kicked out of the French Communist party for his anti-Soviet Marxism. His fundamental disagreement boiled down to *how* the Soviets sought to overcome the contradictions of capitalism, which relied on state control of the means of production. Because the USSR began as an agrarian revolution, Lenin thought it was first necessary for the state to industrialize so that the proletariat could be created, and *then* Communism could come into being (CLR James, YEAR). As the totalitarian conditions of communism came to be understood in the west, this created a strong division within Marxists who became defensive of real existing communism, and those who thought totalitarian centralization was a misguided method to herald in socialism. Lefebvre's politics sided with the latter.

[37] To build on footnote 6, both the view of Lefebvre and the mainstream communist view of his time are interested in the movement of time. Each view equally places weight on the need for movement over time and sees the conditions of social change as relying on complex social mechanisms.

[38] Translated to self-management.

ongoing self-management structure. The question of what democratic management of space looks like has undergone consistent evolution and will likely do so in the future.

The Dialectical Components of the Identity of Place

In the socio-spatial dialectic, space is experienced differently across time. For feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1995), places are best conceived as envelopes of space-time whose essential identities in the past and the present are up for debate now and in the future. Massey troubles the notion that there can ever be an essential nature of place, using Paris as an illustrative example. Coffee and croissants are thought of as the authentic Paris, while Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) is considered an American import. However, coffee is not an indigenous plant to France, and first came to Paris through colonial networks that were the basis for present-day trade. For Massey, localities have always had their uniqueness developed through their interconnections with the outside, be it through trade, alliances, or colonialism. This frame has alike reasoning to cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall's (1993) observation of nationalism's discursive formation. Nations tend to root their identities with an original folk who practiced a nation's customs. However, the components of a nation's particularity are almost always relatively new and mythologize or selectively include convenient components that contribute to a desired national narrative (Anderson, 2016). Urban spaces develop similar mythologies that lead to contestations on the essential identities of spaces like cities and neighborhoods, including who these spaces are for. Massey (1995) said "places, in fact, are always constructed out of articulations of social relations (trading connections, the unequal links of colonialism, thoughts of home) which are not only internal to that locale, but which link them to elsewhere" (p. 183). While things like coffee and KFC are relatively minor considerations, this can become problematic when we consider the movement of people, and who belongs in a specific place. The history of any space is rife with co-existing contradictory and conflicting narratives that are usually intertwined both from within and outside.

In a place like Pointe-Saint-Charles, essentialisms and deeper histories emerge in numerous ways, from the reckonings with Canada's own colonial history, the present and historical provincial language tensions between French and English as a historically bilingual neighborhood, and the tension between the industrial history and what has come after. A large component of The Pointe's post-industrial history is that the cheap rents made Pointe-Saint-Charles an affordable landing spot for immigrants from all over the world, with various waves

welcoming immigrants from eastern Europe such as Poland and Ukraine, South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, The Caribbean, and so on (Vickers, 2018). We can see prominent legacies of this immigration today in churches and establishments, even as many of these populations have moved to other parts of the city. The work of an early *Landscaping the City* student, Nouella (Figure 6), captured many such instances in a grand imagined storefront: Boom J's Jamaican Cuisine, the sign for Centre Khadijah, an Islamic Cultural Center, and Marché Bengal, to name a few.[39] Projecting an essential identity onto places stymies the inevitable and numerous complexities that exist within a place, even as there are some who stake an such claims to place. I have found dialectical conceptions of space to be fruitful in fostering and centering anti-essentialist conceptions of space.

Figure 6: (Untitled). Colour pencil and collage on board. 10" x 14" (approx.). Made by Nouella during the Landscaping the City II class. This project was also part of the final exhibition of Landscaping the City III in 2023

[39] Our discussions of this work led to deeper considerations about the many cultures that co-exist (or co-existed) in the Pointe, and how many of these establishments are in danger with rising rents causing many to leave. As such, the erasure of these businesses represents the erasure of the rich cultural history in Pointe-Saint-Charles. The work is mentioned in my article about *Landscaping the City I* and *II* (LeRue 2023a).

The passage of time and the impacts of various economic and social epochs are intertwined with the histories of spaces. Brazilian Geographer Milton Santos (2021b) saw the intertwining of space and time to be critical to the study of geography. He viewed objects, landscapes, and places as sitting at the intersection of networks that under global capitalism were becoming so small and interconnected that one could reasonably develop an understanding of the world through analyzing what they encounter in their own villages, using immanent critique beginning with their own senses. Geographic space is "an indissociable set of systems of objects and systems of actions" (2021a, p. 230) which are interpreted differently across historical epochs of technological evolution. These systems exist in parallel local and global networks, which are "superimposed on each other in a dialectical process in which they simultaneously associate with and contradict one another. In this sense, *the place faces the world*, but also confronts it because of its own order" (Italics in original, p. 230). Like Massey, Santos argues that the global and the local are permanently intertwined, which he said provides critical insights for both inductive philosophy and decolonial thought. From the perspectives of one's own place, a person could understand the contradictions and movements of the world and understand their place within it: "Each place is, in its way, the world" (p. 216). As we will discuss below, this insight is critical for dialectical pedagogy.

Approaches to Embedding and Place-Based Pedagogy

Situating in Community

My process of embedding in community did not happen in the way that ethnographers usually suggest. The process of embedding according to sociologist David Creswell (2013) consists of getting to know a community over time through gatekeepers and making oneself known, conducting the research, and slowly disengaging over time. As I outlined in Chapter 1, circumstances related to the pandemic meant that instead of a gradual embedding, I found myself enmeshed in a community in a relatively short period of time as a teacher, and later, in a leadership position within an organization. Far from being positioned to conduct research "normally" on the neighborhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles, instead, I found myself an active member of the communities I aimed to study. Furthermore, when my involvement began I had moved to neighboring Verdun, which is the borough directly adjacent to the Sud Ouest. Thus, embedding for the purposes of research had to be thought differently than as a process of entering and exiting.

How can we think of community engagement in a more direct way? Cultural studies professor Lisa M. Tillman-Healy (2003) conducted research on her straight husband's engagement with a baseball team for gay men and came to realize that the process of fieldwork is like the process of making friends. Friendship and fieldwork "involve being in the world with others. To friendship and fieldwork communities, we must gain entrée. We negotiate roles (e.g., student, confidant, and advocate), shifting from one to another as the relational context warrants" (p. 732). Like friendships, embedding in community involves engaging with people, which grants us privileges we are not privy to as strangers. However, remaining in community requires upkeep, lest we fall out of favour or be seen as taking advantage of people for the purposes of research. In the case of my project, I have developed deep connections with the art school, Bâtiment 7, and in the lives of the friends, colleagues, and students who I have met along the way and have become integral parts of my present and future life. This has necessitated reframing my research program from one of being an outsider to one of being an insider, lest I abandon the research project all together.

For ethnographers and psychologists Helen Owton and Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson (2014), researchers and participants exist in a context that is interpolated within the other, and they argue that these interconnections cannot be negated by methodologies that demand maintaining distance. They realized however that being both friend and researcher can be emotionally demanding for both parties and requires researchers to engage in consistent self-reflexivity and self-scrutiny. However, considering research participants to be friends, especially in the context of social science research conducted in community, keeps with the spirit of democratic, egalitarian research, and welcomes access one would otherwise not have as researchers, especially in contexts when objectivity is not a possible nor desirable objective. It also offers an ethic of reciprocity. Tillman-Healy observed that for friends, one

> sacrifice[s] a day to help someone move. We set aside our reading pile when someone drops by or calls "just to talk." When asked, we keep secrets, even if they would add compelling twists to our research report or narrative. (2003, p. 738)

But how can one be truly reciprocal in undertaking research, which is an inherently extractive process? For ethnographer Elaine Lawless (1992; 2019), reciprocity runs deeper than simply markers of friendship. Lawless (2019) contended that to be reciprocal, we must engage in ongoing dialogue with our participants, and share our findings with them as we continue through

the process of research. But given the perceived power imbalances, it often becomes important to remind our participants that they do provide meaningful insights into a work (Lawless, 1992). Lawless (2019) articulated how in some of her studies, analyzing the data presented gaps in her own knowledge and comprehension which left her merely to speculate about given subjects. In being reciprocal, she returned to her participants to ask for feedback on numerous components and found that greater insights were revealed by welcoming others into the process of meaning-making. In-line with the assertions of oral history, this engaged interaction enhances the narrative of the research, while not limiting the agency of the participant to a simple interview or point of contact. How this process has enriched this thesis will be taken up in the methodology in Chapter 4 and considered further throughout the text.

Community as Contradiction

In line with the dialectical perspectives shared in the previous sections, I have come to understand community through the framework of contradiction. Defining a specific community and evaluating who is a member of a community and who is not, is a difficult task, whether a community is geographic or associative in nature. Surely the center of a community–its model citizen, so to speak–might be approachable. A long-time resident of a neighborhood for example might be seen as a community pillar, while a family on vacation renting a cottage in the same neighborhood would almost certainly be considered guests. This can also become more complicated depending on geography. In Nova Scotia, I recall many friends from rural communities telling me that they were not considered to be from there even though they had lived in the community since they were small children. Who ones' parents–and sometimes their parents' parents–were had significant impacts on some people's evaluation of community membership. In the associated components relating to the Pointe, and by extension the art school at Bâtiment 7, there are numerous communities working together concurrently. On a citizenry level, there is the long-time activist community that has succeeded by maintaining strong networks of community organizing, older residents who worked in or are descended from those who worked in factories, there are newer white collar condominium owners, first and second-generation immigrants, and students to name a few possible categories. Furthermore, organizations and institutions often develop communities and followings who make up residents and non-residents, usually joined around shared ideas. For example, the art school has built a

community of individuals who live in different neighborhoods, come from different economic and linguistic backgrounds who are aligned by a passion for artmaking.

In the contexts where I am work, the question of community gets more complicated when considering the role activism and autogestion play in moving initiatives forward. In activist discourse, discussing social issues can lead to what philosopher Robin Celikates (2018) called an activist paternalism, wherein outspoken individuals are accepted as bearing the universal position of the group. Organizations such as Bâtiment 7 and Action-Gardien have within their missions' positions of community activists or stewards in some way, claiming on some level to represent the neighborhood. The same is true of many politicians, who often invoke a 'we' when speaking. But who is we in this framing? And who is explicitly being spoken for here? On one level, the nature of politics is to invoke framing that invites others to identify with the messaging and to feel part of the future being advertised. However, for activist, academic, and writer C.L.R. James (1980), this impulse ought to be resisted, as it has within it the seeds of totalitarianism. One need only watch depictions of the USSR to understand what is meant here. In the docu-drama on the Chernobyl nuclear disaster aptly titled *Chernobyl* (Renck, 2019), we follow the path of scientist and nuclear physicist Valery Legasov as he navigates the Soviet bureaucracy to alert communist party members to the dangers of the explosion and the possible effects this could have on the health of potentially millions of people. The response from party members was a confused mess of socialist platitudes wherein the spirit of the revolution was used to ignore everything from the initial explosion itself, to encourage workers to take needless unsafe risks, and to encourage people to deny what they really saw out of fear of retribution. "Trust [the people], but verify," was a famous quote from KGB officers, who often went to great lengths to surveil the public. In the later portions of the series, Legasov reflects on his now insider view of totalitarianism and the ravages it had on Chernobyl but also Soviet life. He said, "when the truth offends, we lie and we lie until we can no longer remember it is even there, but it is still there. Every lie incurs a debt to the truth; Sooner or later that debt is paid" (Renck, 2019). Obviously, the occurrences of a semi-fictionalized Soviet Union are an extreme example of what James is talking about but nevertheless highlights the possible dangers of when a few are emboldened to speak for the 'we'—That the rigid structure of totalitarianism was founded on paranoid exercises in litmus tests, was fundamentally unable to protect the people in whom they claim to speak for, and was incompatible with the evidence-based response needed to the dynamic situation of a nuclear

meltdown. While an extreme example to illustrate my point, totalitarianism instills an artificial cohesion that creates an easy way to discern insiders and outsiders, and right answers from wrong answers. I argue that the antidote to this are mechanisms that allow for difference and plurality–and the contradictions that arise from this–to co-exist.

Dialectical (or Critical) Pedagogy

In my thinking around my teaching for this project, and my approaches to community engagement, I aim to center rather than deter contradiction. One such way I have done this is through dialectical pedagogy. For James (1980) dialectics were a powerful pedagogical framework that could at once resist the impulses of totalitarianism and top-down rule, while unlocking the latent knowledge and comprehension in everyday people. In *Democratizing Dialectics with C.L.R. James*, political science professor Andrew J. Douglas (2008) elaborated on James's position, which was that in the hands of everyday people, dialectics could unlock a collaborative spirit and collective creativity. For James (1980), the dialectical method can make intelligible the barriers which presently appear invisible, creating empowered masses that could work through their own problems, desires, and needs. This, according to James and Celikates (2018), should be the left's political aim for emancipation, not to see the divergent ways people perceive the world as incompatible problems to navigate but as starting points to understand its functioning, and how their own lives connect to the totality.[40] This is likewise the founding principle of dialectical pedagogy.

Dialectical pedagogy means to take a dialogue-focused approach to education. This has its strongest roots in the critical pedagogy of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (2018), whose seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* gave words to this method of teaching. In this text, Freire documents his own experiences working for the Brazilian education ministry teaching literacy to adults in rural areas. Official state materials had participants learning to read using basic texts, with examples such as, 'the goat eats green grass.' The response from farmers were rather ambivalent, given that they had extensive knowledge about how livestock and grazing work. To counter this, Freire and his group of teachers began to use the lives of participants as

[40] If there is a political aim of my pedagogy, it is the power of dialectics *as such*. The aim of this dissertation is not to affect political change, but to provide instances to engage with and describe ones' world through dialogue. While political action or awareness is not an explicit aim, I do hold with the humanizing potential of dialectics and critical pedagogy.

the content for their courses, engaging in discussions around the lived problems participants encountered in their daily and professional lives. He found that by engaging with the lives of participants directly, their desire to engage with literacy increased, and the results rapidly improved. This led to Freire's principles of critical pedagogy, wherein instructors should engage in dialogue with their students as equals, accepting that students enter their classrooms with a wealth of knowledge about the world. Rather than making education about the direct transmission of facts–a method Freire pejoratively called the banking model– he suggested problem posing education, where the teacher poses problems that are worked through collaboratively. Critical to this process is building trust between student and instructor, and the students and each other. This includes trusting students to come to their own conclusions with acceptance and humility while not projecting ignorance onto those who think differently. For Freire, to engage in dialogue without a faith in the people doing it is "a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation" (p. 91). As such, Freire was careful not to impose political paradigms onto his students, as he developed dialectical education not to indoctrinate students but to help them achieve their full humanity and critical capacities. This means that the critical educator must at once have extensive knowledge about the world students come from so that they may be challenged appropriately but must also take care not to form their students in their own image.

Freire's pedagogical ideas influenced professor and feminist activist bell hooks (1994), who argued that teachers at all levels ought to teach as the practice of freedom, meaning to teach so that anyone can learn. hooks emphasized prioritizing our student's well-being as people and seeing education as a process of personal growth and actualization. To do this, teachers would also have to be unafraid to self-actualize and be unafraid to reveal their own complicated humanity to their students. hooks found that teachers and professors often compartmentalized their careers and classroom personas, even when their passions for their subject is integral to their personhood. If teachers could find ways to demonstrate the benefits of learning and the expression of humanity apparent within a quest for knowledge, they could perhaps make the classroom a more equitable place where all feel compelled to share and grow together. At the

root of this is a will to break down the authoritative position of the teacher and to welcome humanity into the process of teaching.[41]

In art education, dialectical education has largely lay at the periphery, with some authors (Morris, 2008) suggesting it be taken up but offering little in terms of method or examples of practice. However, there have been many propositions to make our field relevant to the daily lives of our students. McFee (1991) argued that great artworks are rooted in the social contexts they are made, and that art educators should aim to make curriculum geared toward the lived realities of our students. In *Art, Culture, and Environment: A Catalyst for Teaching*, McFee and fellow art educator Rogena Degge (1977) proposed that educators expand what they accept as art, and welcome broader forms of cultural communication their students may already know. The book proposed several exercises and strategies for environmentally specific art education, and to implore students to search for the potentially deep meanings within the places they live. Paul Duncum (2002) later developed visual culture art education, which argued that art educators should take heed of the emerging world of images that was superseding words. Duncum believed that art education could take the lead in the realm of visual literacy and suggested art educators could take up frameworks for analyzing images on a flat plane that did not privilege art objects over other media, such as Hollywood blockbusters or advertisements. Social justice art education (Quinn, 2006) aimed to make social justice the primary aim of art educators, given that the content and ends of art education are up to the discretion of the teacher. This was to be inclusive, but also as a means of making art that can generate social change.

Pedagogical Approaches for this Project

In-line with the principles of critical pedagogy, the pedagogical approach to this project is rooted in Lynch's (1960) *The Image of the City*. I have found Lynch's model to be a lively

[41] I have decidedly not engaged here with more recent iterations of critical pedagogy, which is largely spearheaded by Henry Giroux (2001 / 2024). While the work was taken up by others in the frame of critical pedagogy (Freire himself endorsed the work, writing forewords for Giroux's books), I find the approach heralded here to call for more direct political action within the classroom. In the book *Theory and Resistance in Education*, Giroux (2001 / 2024) refers consistently to conservative victories over the classroom and alludes to how the left can counteract these victories by in turn changing approaches within the classroom. In ways I would like to expand upon outside of this dissertation, I find this method risks turning education beyond a practice of freedom into a practice of the culture war. No doubt, the political debates around what is taught in school is a critical and important discussion. However, I am attracted to the underlying methods of critical pedagogy, whereas an approach like Giroux's reads as 'add social justice and stir.'

framework for understanding preconceptions of the city, one that was inductive, fluid, dynamic, and inclusive of both aesthetic and social understandings of the city. One that fits seamlessly into dialectics and critical pedagogy. To re-iterate the discussion in Chapter 2, Lynch developed his frameworks from inductive participant data that included interviews and mapmaking in three American cities with different built environments—Jersey City, known for having little legibility and unique characteristics; Boston, an older American city that has been re-developed several times over; and Los Angeles, known for its car dependency and lack of walkability. For Lynch, a city's image is formed from the many small images of inhabitants. In this framework, everyone who engages with a built or natural environment develops an understanding of the space and learns visual cues which help give cohesion to large swaths of the city. A city that is easily read and enjoyed by inhabitants is thought to be imageable, and each city thus has various levels of imageability.

The primary pedagogical aim of *Landscaping the City* courses is to bring forth each individual participant's image of the city, using and expanding on Lynch's methods. Toward the end of Lynch's (1984) career, he recounted that far too many academics took the *product* of his study, namely his frameworks (eg: his five elements (see Chapter 3 and 6), and his frameworks of imageability) rather than his inductive approaches to urbanism. Thus, I have taken some liberty to adapt his frameworks for this inductive inquiry. Primarily, I view *The Image of the City* not only as an aesthetic image but also a social image formed by places of personal and cultural significance, and by the stories told about spaces and places. By conjoining the study of participants' image of the city in this case with more expansive artistic data and further qualitative data, I believe this project can better realize Lynch's ideal of centering his approach rather than his frameworks alone. Further, I believe capturing components of these individual images can better help to connect to larger themes and ideas within the city. To bring it back to the dialectical framing, the participants' image of the city in this case, becomes a particular through which we can examine in relation to other works, and larger trends in the city.

Figure 7: A typical Montréal construction blockade on Rue Centre in The Pointe. This image alludes to the ongoing changes within the built environment, and how capturing what a neighborhood is literally a moving target.

Chapter 4 | Methodology and Procedures

The methods and procedures for this project were guided by the dialectical framework in Chapter 3, and thus aimed to center the uncertainty and subjectivity that comes with studying me and my participants' views of landscape. The dialectical framework indeed provided ways to think of divergent perspectives together about the same place in time, and in turn the methods sought to be inductive, using bottom-up approaches to examine how particular perspectives connect to more general themes and trends in the urban environment. To meet the aims of this project, this research applied arts-based methods through the two interrelated research approaches— A personal research-creation project focused on applying landscape painting methods and principles to the built environment, and a community-based research-creation project that was realized through an eight-week art class in Pointe-Saint-Charles. This class invited 17 adults of various ages, linguistic, social, and economic backgrounds to engage in an 8-

week place-based curriculum that invited students to make their own works of research-creation. In the first section of this chapter, I will introduce my landscape painting practice how it existed before undertaking this dissertation, before considering the place for painting in existing methods of arts-based research and research-creation. The second section will contend with the qualitative aspects of this dissertation, including oral history (High, 2015; Yow, 2014), grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967 / 2010), and case-study methodology (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). Following this, I will describe each project individually, and how they came together to create a more dynamic overall methodology. This chapter will conclude by stating the procedures and data collection methods.

Personal Painting Practice

My studio practice has been the driver of the questions that formulated this dissertation, even as there are critical differences between the past and present work. As such, I will begin with an overview of my studio practice before the dissertation. I initially studied to be a landscape painter, first focusing on the Nova Scotian landscape I grew up in and later the built environment of the city of Halifax, where I attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University (NSCAD) to study for a BFA in fine art. There, I was faced with two concurrent concerns–I was suddenly removed from what one might call 'the landscape' into 'the built environment.' Further, I found that there was an implicit pressure to engage with contemporary forms of painting, meaning, paintings that were not only focused on pictorial representation, but paintings that provided pictorial innovations and deeper conceptual meanings. These two occurrences led me to examine how landscape painting could be applied to the city, exploring possibilities of aestheticizing space through structures. My first body of work in this vein (Figure 8) examined construction sites, and how they heralded aesthetic changes in the urban landscape. During the production of this work in 2012-2014, Halifax was undergoing a construction boom that saw rapid redevelopment of hundred-year-old buildings into glass skyscrapers. I had little understanding of the economic conditions that were causing this development, but I observed this development focused on attracting perceived future citizens rather than meeting the needs of present citizens. Artist studios, houses, and historic buildings were being gutted to make way for luxury condominiums, AAA office spaces, tourist infrastructure, and convention centres. I later began to think about the interiors these buildings tended to favour, which drawing on colour theorist David Batchelor's (2000) book *Chromophobia*, seemed to purge colour in favour of gray monochrome

palettes (such as Figure 9). At the time, my style tended toward a heavier hand with painting, preferring solid strokes of thick paint and pure colour rather than more technical methods such as blending and washes.

Figure 8: Temporary Landscape. Oil on Canvas. 4' x 5'. 2013. Private Collection

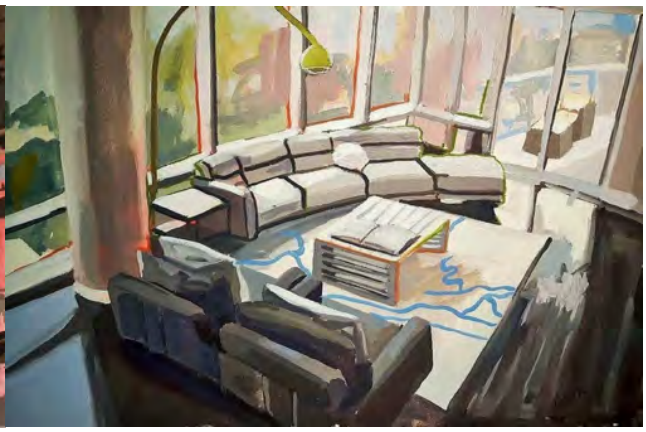

Figure 9: Sectional Sofa. Oil on Canvas. 20" x 30". 2016-17. Personal Collection

A concurrent project to construction sites and home interiors focused on sports, and the landscape and activities within stadiums. Stadiums are built as simulacra of landscapes with ideal viewing planes for spectators and television broadcasts. This project initially considered the role of sport in society, leading to research on the connections between sport, sporting events, and nationalism. This thinking later expanded to consider the complexities of stadium development, and the role that sporting super-events such as the Olympics and World Cup play in both urban development and perceptions of space. On the local level, stadiums are often financed through public-private investment schemes that use optimistic projections to justify their construction that are seldom realized (Coates & Humphreys, 2008). Internationally, sporting super-events leave legacies of displacement for many locals and debt for city coffers, all while turning cities into 'a photo op for global capital' (Fisher, 2014a) that leaves locals to pick up the pieces. Indeed, the Olympics often reveal many of the internal tensions of the places they visit, such as the corruption and economic disparity in Rio during the 2016 Olympics (Gaffney, 2016), the tensions around COVID-19 at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics (Ichi, 2023), and the massive grassroots resistance around stadium construction and increasing police budgets ahead of the 2028 LA Olympics (Andranovich & Burbank, 2021). Closer to home, many Montréaler's refer to Olympic Stadium built for the 1976

olympics as the "big Owe," referring to the nearly 4-billion-dollar price tag that was not paid off until 2006, three decades after the games it was built for, with additional billions put into repairs over the years ("Big Owe Debt," 2006). There are also imminent repairs needed on the roof that has rendered the stadium unusable, which are estimated to cost close to one billion dollars (Morris, 2024).

The initial run of paintings used the frame of a stadium to make abstract marks, putting colour into imagined competitions that captured the energy of sporting events (Figure 10). Later works, such as my MFA exhibition, focused on the narratives of nationalism in the 2012 London Olympic opening ceremonies, which built an imagined pastoral landscape in the stadium that underwent a series of events that led to a contemporary Britain–Industrialization, globalization, and de-industrialization, with the less savoury bits such as colonization glaringly unaddressed. Despite assurances from its director Danny Boyle–of *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Trainspotting* fame–that the ceremony presented a version of post-nationalist Britain, I argued that the depictions of place and landscape were rife with nationalist landscape tropes that mirrored those taken up in the Brexit campaign four years later. These included advertisements with pictorial landscapes of the British countryside with a Union Jack styled hot air balloon with slogans of independence. One of the most circulated advertisements showed hundreds of mostly non-white individuals walking through the landscape (likely referring to the Syrian refugee crisis and subsequent intra-EU immigration of the mid 2010s) with big red text that said BREAKING POINT, with a subtitle referring to the need for the UK to control its borders.[42] This project included about a dozen paintings of Boyle's 'post nationalist' landscapes within the opening ceremonies, with a written analysis of the narratives of nationalism that the event conveyed. One such instance was the rapid industrialization that occurred as ceremony moved from a pastoral British landscape into a Birmingham inspired industrial environment. Figure 11 depicts the chaos of the scene, where workers enacted forging the five Olympic rings that rose above the scene into the sky of the stadium.

[42] While my capacities for cultural analysis were lacking when I undertook this project, newer research sheds a more elaborate light on the British landscape post-Brexit. For instance, Roger Luckhurst's (2022) *Brexitland's Dark Ecologies: New British Landscape Writing* addresses depictions of landscape through writing, and how the genre of landscape writing has changed post-Brexit. Further, professors Jonsoo Lee and Hyunsun Yoon (2017) examined the narratives of the nation within the London Olympic opening ceremonies through a comparison with China's 2008 opening ceremony.

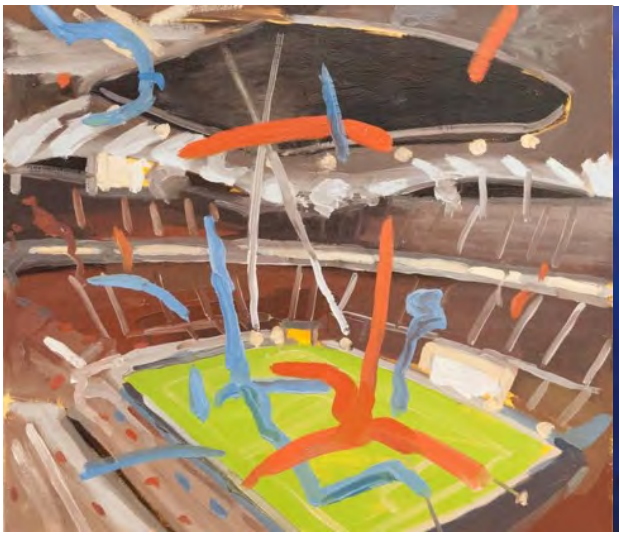

Figure 10: EneRVB. 24" x 36". Oil on Canvas. 2015. Private Collection

Figure 11 (right): Rings Rising. 4' x 5'. Oil on Canvas. 2018. Personal Collection.

In preparation for my doctoral work, I pivoted to thinking about the city more specifically. Influenced by my time in *Right to the City* at the beginning of my MFA, a class led by Dr. Cynthia Hammond that brought together urban studies, artmaking, and oral history, I began thinking about what gives urban landscapes their character. The last major exhibition before conducting my graduate work was called *Et pourtant, ça bouge*, which examined the interiors of architectures whose initial uses were no longer retained yet were preserved for their deeper symbolic meanings (LeRue, 2020). *Notre Dame de Paris* (Figure 12) depicted the burned out remains of the 2019 fire at Notre Dame Basilica in Paris. I was dismayed to see fire rip through such an iconic landmark and felt sick watching the fire live on television. The genesis of this project came a few days later while at a party, a colleague mentioned that they would rather see the church demolished in favour of a school or a hospital, rooting their feelings in the violence of the Catholic Church globally and the symbolic violence of allowing such a critical landmark to stand. While I certainly agree that the church is facing a much-deserved reckoning and is likely in the limelight of its cultural relevance in the global north, I could not help but find this to be a helpless position for interpreting the cultural significance of architectures like churches, no less the most iconic Catholic church in the world. Certainly, the meaning of any grand Catholic church for many is not one of its religious significances, but of the profound historical significance and aesthetic beauty contained within these architectures. Another work, *Darling Foundry Diner* (Figure 13) depicted the *Fondrie*

Darling[43] in Montréal's Griffintown, which was once an abandoned former industrial architecture that has since been preserved and retained as a gallery space, hosting swanky events that appear out of joint with their original intended uses. While in these cases the new imagined uses and social relationships are explicit, this was a reminder that our cities are constantly being re-imagined and re-made (as we will discuss in Chapter 5). Despite this, to paraphrase a participant Bob's comments in Chapter 6, the infrastructures of the city will long outlive us, and the meaning and appreciation of a church, much like the meaning and appreciation of an industrial building, could not have been anticipated at their construction. Nevertheless, the logic of preserving these buildings is unlikely to be an endorsement or desire to return to their intended meanings, but for what Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek (2013) referred to as the deeper symbolism that continues to move us.

Figure 12: Notre Dame de Paris. 24" x 36". Oil on Canvas. 2020. Private Collection.

Figure 13: Darling Foundry Diner. 30" x 40". Oil on Canvas. 2020. Private Collection.

Bringing painting into conversation with research represents years of my practice coming full circle. As a younger painter, I considered my practice as integrating research even as I did not understand what this could mean in a studio arts context. In my MFA degree, I consistently ran up against conceptual and institutional barriers, and personal limitations, to fully integrate research and concepts to painting. Part of the motivation to pursue a PhD in Art Education was to spend time thinking through emergent methods of arts-based research and research-creation. In what

[43] Translated as Darling Foundry

follows, I will outline contemporary arts-based research methods and how I conceive of painting fitting into these discussions.

Arts-Based Methods

Arts-based research is an emerging approach that conjoins artmaking and research in the production of knowledge (McNiff, 2013; Leavy, 2019), and has many forms and approaches internationally such as such as arts-based research, practice-based research, and practice-led research (Leavy 2019; Loveless 2019). While there are slight differences between these methods, they can all be thought of under the same umbrella, and I will occasionally use sources from each interchangeably. The form of arts-based research I will engage in this thesis is called research-creation, which is a Canada-specific term that emerged in the last 20 years to recognize creative practice as research in academic institutions. I take methodological cues from Communications Studies professors Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk (2012; 2015) and artist and art historian Natalie Loveless (2019). In Canada, research-creation gained recognition beginning in the early 2000s from Canadian academic granting bureaucracies, namely SSHRC, FRQSC, Canada Council and the universities themselves. According to Chapman and Sawchuk (2015), research-creation intentionally eludes definition, given that its intention is to push institutional boundaries. Nevertheless, SSHRC has updated its definition over the years and arrived at the following:

> An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). Research-creation cannot be limited to the interpretation or analysis of a creator's work, conventional works of technological development, or work that focuses on the creation of curricula. (*Definitions*, 2021)

In addition to research-creation being a distinct category of arts-based research, there are also distinct approaches to research-creation. For example, philosophers Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (2015; Manning, 2016) view research-creation as a defence of artmaking as such, encouraging artists to embrace the tactility of art through sense. Art theorists Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman (2019) engage with the non-human, and how walking and de-commodified pedagogical practices can glean artistic insights.

The research-creation discourse I will be engaging with takes research-creation as an interjection into the university research apparatus, aiming to expand the scope of possible inquiry (Chapman & Sawchuk 2012; 2015; Loveless, 2019). Chapman and Sawchuk (2012) argued that

this research challenges the university's insistence on neoliberal outcomes, which aim to instrumentalize research, and the supposed hierarchy of knowledge which places the verifiable sciences at the top and artistic creation at the bottom. Conjoining the sciences and social sciences, which are generally orderly and verifiable, with the arts, which are chaotic and unpredictable, brings chaos and ambiguity into knowledge generally (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2015). Loveless (2019) offered a research-creation framework based on ones' dual loves for art and research. In general, universities have taken up interdisciplinarity to describe those who work across disciplines, which for Loveless is not satisfying given the methodological confusion and tension putting different disciplines conversation often creates. Instead, she offered the framework of *polydisciplinarity*, wherein the researcher remains committed to the tenants of research and creation while centering the object of study. Loveless invoked artist Rosalind Krauss's (1979) theorizing of the 'expanded field', which described the logical rupture and upending of assumptions within disciplinary boundaries in the post-modern epoch, to argue that research-creation likewise makes a similar move for artistic practice and research in our contemporary moment. Rather than becoming bogged down in multiple methods as implied by interdisciplinarity, Loveless argued that polydisciplinarity "tumbles outside of these intellectual frameworks, challenging practice/theory divides as they police what gets to count as a valid object and method, within which disciplinary framework, where, when, and how" (p. 70). In this view, there is no singular research-creation method to apply, rather, research-creation opens academia to ever expanding horizons of extra-linguistic inquiry.

The push to dematerialize is arguably at the core of arts-based research, pushing away from mediums into more conceptual forms of inquiry. Loveless (2019) argued that the expanded field of research creation allows for conjoining ones' dual loves of art and research, allowing the project one is undertaking to guide the directions of both. Put another way, aesthetic theorist Clive Cazeaux (2017) argued that since modernity, art has followed the logic of dematerialization first laid out by Hegel (1975). For Hegel, the physical artwork in modernity was no longer the primary concern for artists, but rather the underlying concepts that led to its creation. For Cazeaux, this has a natural relationship to arts-based research, which represents the ultimate turning over to the concept in artistic endeavours.

Despite its continued uptake in institutions, research-creation has also received its share of criticism. Chapman and Sawchuk (2012) recognized that the standard metrics of academic

success marginalize the creation side of research-creation. Cultural studies professor Glen Lowry (2015) said that emergent paradigms of research creation left many to wonder if the system is rigged against 'good' artists, given that tri-council funding comes with its own strategic directions and demands from disciplinary research, creating an atmosphere where artists must appease bureaucrats rather than create work of a certain quality. For Lowry, this leads to art caught up in the novelty of new technologies and faddish academic trends rather than artists doing their best work. This critique aligns with Loveless (2019), who took 'easel painting' and traditional mediums as the disciplinary boundary research-creation breaks from. Of consideration for my project is that in opening new forms of inquiry, is it necessary to leave old mediums behind? How can 'traditional' landscape painting and drawing practices fit within these paradigms of research-creation?

Painting as Arts-Based Research

This thesis relies heavily on painting and drawing in my own making and in community teaching. The visual culture of landscape tends to engage in the realm of painting, and painting and drawing have an inherent familiarity as art with research participants. Nevertheless, painting as a traditional medium is not without merited critiques, especially given its dominance in art history and connection to commodification. Marxist art theorist John Berger (1997) argued that oil paintings are easily collectible, glamorize commodities, and have a history of fuelling capitalist consumption. Further, borrowing arguments from art historian Connor Spencer (2021), terms such as 'MFA crapstraction' (Greenberger, 2020) and 'zombie formalism' (Robinson, 2014) have been applied to recent art market painting trends, which I would agree are boring regurgitations and call-backs to former eras of abstract painting. Art historian and aesthetic theorist Sianne Ngai (2020) conceived of the gimmick in relation to art like this. She defined the gimmick as an aesthetic category tied to capitalism which are shortcuts to our attention that do not offer anything innovative or creative. Gimmicks for Ngai are contradictory, both redundant and predatory that work at once too hard and too little, channeling something old and newfangled. In short, gimmicks offer nothing of value while giving an illusion of artistic innovation. Like the spectacle in Debord's (1967 / 2021) work, paintings of this nature tend to reify rather than challenge capitalist ideologies, with a complete failure to agitate or stoke deeper insights into societal relations. Much of the mainstream in the medium of painting has collapsed into a self-referential, marketable, and commodified pastiche of painting's history. Ngai's

critique echoes cultural theorist Mark Fisher's (2014b) contention that neoliberal conditions of increased competition and marketability, along with audiences' lack of attention in a digital world, have led to contemporary artists to rely on artistic forms they know already work. If painting is indeed salvageable for the aims of research-creation, we must first articulate *when* painting is research-creation. I would argue gimmicky works for market consumption can be excluded here. However, what of painting studio practices in general? When inventive, can they offer worthwhile insights?

To consider what insights are offered by painting, we must examine what it is that painters do when they make artworks. Art historian Julian Bell (2017) analyzed painting over thousands of years and argued that the two-dimensional canvas has constantly re-invented itself and found new cultural meanings across epochs. James Elkins (2000) likened painting to alchemy, wherein the painter experiments with materials, colour, processes, and control that form a basis of material knowledge. Art therapist Barbara Fish (2018) used painting to study her own emotions working with youth in state care, unpacking often difficult experiences of trauma the youth were contending with. For Fish, paintings became data that could be criticized and synthesized, and find use in visualising written data: "Drawing and painting research contributes another way of understanding experience that supports interpersonal understanding and informs treatment and critical consciousness" (Fish, 2018, p. 353). Two dimensional practices which encompass painting and drawing have also found a place in qualitative research in fields such as ethnography (Taussig, 2011), anthropology (Bray, 2015), and organizational studies (Hatch and Yanow, 2008). In each of these cases, the authors argued that producing visual imagery by looking intently at the subject contributed to a more thorough understanding than qualitative methods of research alone. These insights speak to another benefit of two-dimensional practices in qualitative research; painting and drawing are generally more familiar to the public and therefore may make the research findings accessible to wider audiences. Other forms of artistic creation, such as avant-garde practices that push the boundaries of artistic inquiry, often require substantial interpretation for general audiences.

In thinking through what painting offers to the dematerialized logics, I draw on Graeme Sullivan's (2008) model of painting in arts-based research as a "postdiscipline structure as self-similar form" (p. 244), meaning that painting can contribute to the postdiscipline assumptions of arts-based research so long as it adopts the conceptual forms of arts-based research. Painting in

this view has a place depending on the underlying conceptual reasons for the project to use painting as a form. While I find this position generally agreeable and an opening point for painting in arts-based research, I believe that so long as the act of painting contributes to the extra-linguistic insights to research questions, there is no reason painting or other fine-arts mediums should be excluded from discourses of arts-based research. Under the prism of research questions, there is no reason why ones' two loves of art and research (Loveless, 2019) cannot be conjoined in a research paradigm so long as the practice of painting and the practice of research are mutually important in engaging with a research concept. In-line with Loveless (2019) and Cazeaux's (2017) view that the object of inquiry lay somewhere between artmaking and research, I recall using the metaphor of a dual planet where the center of orbit between painting and research lie somewhere in-between, outside but between the two bodies.[44] Upon coming across Loveless' and Cazeaux's description of arts-based research, I have come to see that this metaphor as an apt description of painting in this dissertation.

Painting and Drawing Places

In this dissertation, I use Lefebvre's (1991) spatial dialectic outlined in Chapter 2 to examine what landscape painting adds to research-creation. To re-iterate, Lefebvre's (1991) dialectical triad–as articulated in the theoretical framework above[45]–consists of perceived space, conceived space, and lived space and offers dialectical entry points into thinking through how space is produced. For Lefebvre, the artist idealizes place through representation, sharing the category of conceived space with designers and architects, who interpret space for the public. These idealizations relate dialectically to perceived space–how those with power, such as kings and capitalists, organize space–and lived space–how everyday people interact with space–by giving visual form to the needs of the other aspects of the dialectical triad. Lefebvre (1968; 1991) argued that while most examples of space are produced for the needs of kings and capitalists (perceived), the everyday people whose lives are organized by these frameworks in turn develop their own hopes and desires for space (lived). This triad creates an opening for landscape painting to enter dialectically into the formation of place. He offered the example of painter Paul

[44] This is the case with the former 9th planet in our solar system, Pluto, and its large moon, Charon.

[45] See the theoretical framework where this is explained more thoroughly. Subsection: *Dialectical Conceptions of Space*.

Klee (1919), and how he visualized previously imperceptible political and social formations of space in modernity which in turn inspired architects such as Le Corbusier (1929 / 1975), whose design principles and projects inspired architectural modernism that shaped post-war cities. When thinking of landscape painting as research-creation, I argue that dialectics is a key component to thinking about the types of knowledge that can be generated. By thinking through landscape painting using Lefebvre's dialectical triad, there is a space opened on one hand for the interjection of research considering how space is formed by those with power and those who idealize it, and on the other, how space is experienced by those who inhabit place every day. In this dissertation, I took up Lefebvre's dialectical triad to conceptualize the two projects together.

Inductive Qualitative Methods

The other component of this research takes up the inductive qualitative methods of oral history, case study, and grounded theory. In addition, this project takes up community-based research-creation, a method I developed which conjoins qualitative methods and arts-based research (to be described in-depth in Chapter 6). Inductive research has found prominence in the past 20 years because of its potential to formulate new concepts in research. According to human resources scholars Sang Eun Woo et al. (2017), a deductive approach begins with a hypothesis or a strong research framework that guides the research in relation to very specific guiding questions, whereas an inductive study uses more open-ended approaches to invite themes to emerge in data. Referring to deductive research as a 'methodological straitjacket,' business professors Kevin Corley et al. (2021) heralded the move of inductive research to the mainstream of qualitative inquiry due to its ability to provide novel and creative insights, but lamented the formulaic approaches that inductive inquiry has begun to adopt. They argued that because of the innovative nature of inductive inquiry, it is difficult to judge quality outside of what has already been done, leading to inductive studies that resembled previous studies. They encouraged both journal gatekeepers and researchers to focus on the quality of the inquiry and intellectual rigour instead. I would also like to highlight that the critiques levied by Lowry (2015) in the previous section likewise lamented the predictable, research-like tone of some artistic inquiry. In this section, I hope to build an argument that conjoining arts-based methods with inductive inquiry can help to rectify the shortcomings prevalent in both.

Case Study

The framing of the two projects in this thesis are considered case studies. Case study methodology requires a bounded system that becomes both an object of study and a product of inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Case studies generally consider multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, and journals, which are coded to find themes and contribute to a comprehensive case description. In the classroom study, I will examine the classroom as a bounded event that begins in week one and ends after the exhibition, gathering data beginning in the first class until a few months after the exhibition ends, asking questions pertaining to what participants made, what they remembered about the class, and how it relates to other memories and ideas these activities conjure.

Oral History as Collaborative Research

Oral history is the study of historical moments through oral testimony gathered in long-form interviews (Yow, 2014; High, 2015). Oral historians sometimes interview specific individuals as one-off recordings, or members of specific groups to study a historical event. Oral history has roots in ethnography, recording interviews with one or more individuals to capture their life stories in their own words. According to historian Valerie Yow (2014), oral history developed as a re-examination of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee to democratize the process of meaning making. Generally, this relationship is characterized by the authority and expertise of the researcher, who extracts interviews and observations from participants that are then filtered through the researcher's frameworks for the researcher's ends. Oral history however aims to make this relationship more collaborative, seeing the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as the co-creation of meaning. Oral historian Michael Frisch (1990) called this process sharing authority, wherein how interviews are interpreted welcome input from both researcher and participant in an ongoing process of dialogue. Frisch acknowledged that we can never fully flatten this relationship given the position of power the researcher inhabits, but it is nevertheless worthwhile for the researcher to continuously examine their motives and takeaways from this relationship. High (2009), reflecting on the work of Frisch and questions asked of his life histories project, posed the following:

> Sharing authority—with whom? Who speaks on behalf of community and why? Can we assume that the people with whom we are negotiating are of one mind? If community is multiple, contingent and contested, how might we usefully think of "community" in the context of the collaborative process? (p. 14)

The ‘whom’ High refers to is critical in the process of developing collaborative research. High reminds us that participants have their own motivations, and that neither the researcher nor the participant is free from societal power structures. This highlights the importance of having a general historical awareness of the neighborhood where one is researching—it is entirely possible a participant may be aiming to singularize a contentious local history and may have their own political aims and agendas for participating. This dynamic is apparent in the Sud Ouest, where research projects and historical memory are safeguarded by the usual suspects who defend their views with veracity. In a study, their participation offers valuable insights into local history, but their participation needs to be contextualized and counterbalanced by other views to avoid the essentialism about place Massey (1995, 2005) warned of.

This study poses some additional challenges directly related to the contexts I am working in. To expand on the subsection *situating in community* from Chapter 3, I am situated in a neighborhood in the Pointe, and in a centre which I hold multiple positions. In conducting reciprocal ethnography (Lawless, 2000; 2019), I provided a class for free, but I additionally had many students who were repeat business—Those I had a personal relationship with, who had taken my class before, and who I considered my friends. In a traditional ethnography study for instance, the researcher enters a situation, embeds, gathers data, and eventually steps away. However, my closeless means that it is not possible to retain a critical distance in the work. High (2009) likewise encountered this while working with those with trauma, suggesting critical distance posed an ethical dilemma—to have somebody share deep and intimate experiences requires the cultivation of trust. In this sense, it is not always desirable for the researcher and participant to maintain critical distance, given the complexity of human experience and emotion.

Classroom Case Study

For the classroom component of the research, I developed an eight-week iteration of *Landscaping the City* conducted in person in Bâtiment 7’s grand atelier, which is a common area available to rent for events and meeting adjacent to the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School. The course took place in the Spring of 2023 on Tuesday afternoons from 13h: 00 to 16h: 00, consisting of a curriculum that balanced skill building and reflective exercises. Registration was opened to anyone on the school’s mailing list on a first-come, first-served basis. The syllabus focused on drawing and site visits, using five weeks to learning about and trying out concepts as

we drew outside, two weeks to individual artistic exploration, and one week to a final critique and potluck [Appendix A].[46] In addition, there were optional weekly meetups at different sites around the city. Initially, much of our discussion focused on the Peel Basin, but as I will discuss later, inclement weather meant that we missed one of our key site visits, meaning that other focuses and themes ended up emerging. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I adopted critical pedagogy to center student expertise (hooks, 1994; Freire, 2018), which was implemented in tandem with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Ralabate, 2011; Roski et al., 2021). UDL is a method of teaching designed to reaching the most possible students by scaffolding activities and providing multiple modes of engagement. In *Landscaping the City III*, participants came from a variety of backgrounds and skill levels, and the design of activities was intended to make all feel welcomed and equipped to make works and projects relating to their image of the city (Lynch, 1960). Weekly handouts provided an overview of the daily activities in both French and English.[47] As part of participation in the class, all students were invited to exhibit their work in an exhibition months later, which gave ample time to complete any projects.

For recruitment, I received 35 expressions of interest, 22 registrations, and after some expected attrition, ended up with about 17 regular participants.[48] The methods for this study adopted qualitative aspects of professor and schoolteacher Bertling's (2015) *The Art of Empathy: A Mixed Methods Case Study of a Critical Place-Based Art Education Program.* Bertling studied how an ecology-based curriculum affected student empathy toward the environment in a rural Tennessee town. The class was situated in a K-12 school in a rural setting in the American south, and visited landfill sites, met with local artists, and completed art projects. Bertling gathered data on the students before, during, and after delivery of course material to measure how the curriculum affected students' environmental empathy. A component of his not taken up in my study were quantitative surveys, which used a pre-existing survey on environmental empathy to give quantitative insight how students responded to the curriculum. My study of the class had two motivations—to understand the student motivation and background in developing their own

[46] The components of the class will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

[47] See English version of handouts [Appendix B]

[48] See bilingual recruitment poster [Appendix C]

work of CBRC, and to understand how the class itself, including the content and teaching methods, was received by the students.

Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, my supervisor, visited the first class and circulated a research consent form where participants elected whether they wanted to participate in the study and whose signatories were blinded to me until after the course [Appendix E]. Participation in the study was optional, and participants could elect to have all their data destroyed after the conclusion of the class, and did not have to participate in any component of the data collection. Participants could also choose a pseudonym. The kinds of data collection are itemized below.

Classroom case study—Data collection methods	
Participant interviews / focus groups	Interviews took place throughout the class, and I interviewed students periodically during and after class time. I gathered 24 interviews that ranged anywhere from 30 minutes to four hours, which included one-on-one interviews and group interviews of up to five people. Most interviews were taken during the class, but I did conduct some follow-up interviews in the months after the class ended.
Participant sketchbooks / journals	Students were encouraged to complete their works in the provided sketchbook. At the end of the course, I asked all willing participants to turn theirs in so I could scan them and return. I received nine sketchbooks out of 17.
Participant sketches, in-class exercises, and preparatory work	I asked students to provide preparatory work and in-class exercises taking place outside of the sketchbooks as needed. This would usually photographed on the spot, but occasionally participants documented and shared works with me.
Participant artworks	This pertains to completed final artworks students made. Works were documented during the exhibition and returned to participants shortly after.

Teacher observations	Notes taken throughout either in reflection or during the teaching process, including student conversations and activities. Notes were sometimes only a few sentences written into my sketchbook, or more intent observations of the classroom, such as days with student critiques.
Teacher journals	I wrote personal journals before and during most of many of my sessions. This was intended to log how I was feeling about the class, and to provide a feedback loop with grounded theory so I could adapt my class according to the themes that emerged.
Unit planning and syllabus	All the materials I use in developing the course were used and considered as data.

Personal Research-Creation

Data collection for this personal research-creation project took the form plein air oil paintings and subsequent observations in the form of field notes and journals. I made most of the plein air paintings and visual materials in the Spring and Summer of 2023 alongside my classroom case study, with some follow-up painting through Fall 2023-Winter 2024. I also kept a notebook documenting my observations and experiences within place. Further, through the creation of the paintings, I also began to draw connections with the class, and thus these works were starting points for themes explored in the classroom study. The paintings likewise stoked curiosities which led to ongoing research about the neighborhood, which in turn guided both future making and the four final painting projects. These four painting projects (discussed in Chapter 8) were informed by my plein air works and the themes emerging from my classroom case study. The initial plan was to focus solely on the Peel Basin, but as mentioned the planned visits were derailed by inclement weather and the Peel Basin ended up only as a point of discussion and thus a smaller part of my and our thinking.

Through the plein air painting component, I created 80-100 paintings[49] that ranged from small, 2" x 2.5" tin box painting created in the style of Remington Robinson[50], to larger 5" x 7" easel paintings from a travel easel. Each painting from life took between 30 minutes and three hours to complete focused mostly in sites around the Sud Ouest.

Research-creation project—Data collection methods	
On-site photographs	I took numerous photographs and field notes on site, capturing the Sud Ouest in a few seasons. I was particularly interested in changing weather, vantage points, the usages of space, and seasons.
Plein-Aire paintings	I painted from site using oil on paper. Some paintings were smaller, in the metal tins. Others were created on the easel.
Creation journal and observations / field notes	Before and after making, both in the field and in the studio, I captured notes of my perception. Due to the volume of making, entries were kept short, and often only captured one or two sentence remarks.
Input from students, participants, and friends	Throughout this component of the project (which overlapped with my classroom study), I welcomed feedback into the process of making from anyone willing to discuss my work with me. I kept some informal feedback in my field notes. Additionally, interest in some components of my work (such as the box paintings) led many *Landscaping the City* participants to ask about the box paintings, which I introduced in an optional workshop midway through the class.

[49] The reason this number is in a range is because I have sold, lost, and given away some of these paintings over the time I created them.

[50] https://www.remingtonrobinson.com/

Data Analysis

Once the class was complete, I coded data for two separate concerns using case study methodology (Creswell 2013; Stake 1995). First, I coded final projects students made, viewing each as a small case that will generate an individual micro-report. This started by grouping the data into sets based on each artwork and the given the available data how the students developed their chosen artworks. Second, I considered the classroom dynamic itself, and looked for themes that emerged from the teaching and learning in general on the city. I considered and contrasted the intentions of my teaching with how it was received by the students. Above all, I considered primarily the viability of CBRC, and focused on the inductive themes that emerged from student participation. I additionally conjoined the data set from personal creation with the works from the classroom and analyzed the overlap and differences between the two.

I used grounded theory to analyze interviews, artworks, classroom observations, and field notes. Grounded theory is a qualitative method coming out of sociology dedicated to discovering hypothesis for larger theories from qualitative data sets (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to the founders of the method, sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), theory provides "modes of conceptualization for describing and explaining" and "should provide clear enough categories and hypotheses so that crucial ones can be verified in present and future research; they must be clear enough to be readily operationalized in quantitative studies when these are appropriate" (p. 3). A study that uses grounded theory methodology seeks a general explanation for a social phenomenon rooted in research data from several participants going through a similar experience (Creswell, 2013). For sociologist Kathy Charmaz (2014), grounded theory provides a way for the researcher to pursue their hunches in a study of empirical events. The type of theories produced are described as middle-range theories—Theories with more narrow applicability than grand theories of human behaviour but that are generalizable for researchers with similar research problems who could readily apply them to their own project (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014). Developing a grounded theory study requires taking up open-ended, inductive questions in the design of the research. It is critical to not have a predetermined outcome on the outset, but to be open to what comes of the research process (Charmaz, 2014), with the researcher documenting thoughts and insights through research and data analysis through capturing memos and notes on their thoughts to return to as prompts (Ylona Chun Tie et al., 2019). For Charmaz (2014) and Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded

theory should be applied and adapted flexibly depending on the project being undertaken. "Researchers generate strong grounded theories from rich data" (Charmaz, 2014; p. 14) and begin coding data for themes during the process and follow up on the themes that begin to emerge. In this way, grounded theory informs the process of data collection.

Grounded theory relies on an intricate coding process that is responsive to what is found in the data. Charmaz (2014) offered four stages to coding: Initial coding, where the researcher examines the initial data closely with an open mind for theoretical possibilities. These codes are thought of as provisional and can lead the researcher to seek further data and / or reconsider initial themes while considering researcher bias. The second stage is focused coding, where the researcher evaluates how useful the initial codes are across the data set, refining and potentially redefining them to find broader applicability. The final stage of the process is axial coding, where the researcher re-arranges data according to codes to find their edges and properties, while also finding subcategories between the interrelations of categories. Data during this time should be re-assembled according to the emergent codes and placed in a logical order. Finally, there is theoretical coding, which is the stage at which the researcher forms a theoretical hypothesis to find coherence in the project. For Charmaz (2014), this process should avoid enforcing a framework onto the study but should instead remain focused on their explanatory power in relation to the data. With artworks, I used grounded theory more in relation to the discourse they generated, thinking specifically about what the artist and their peers said about the meaning of the work. As a precaution against imposing my own views onto participant work and in-line with my principles for interpreting student work for study (as discussed in Chapter 7), I avoided making interpretations about the art. However, artworks and sketches were paired with certain themes and interview data and observations that mentioned them.

Thinking These Projects Together

In this chapter, I have outlined each of these projects individually, nodding to their ultimate intertwined nature. Indeed, these works were carried out by a substantial personal investment and embeddedness in place, and the ample friendships and relationships developed in place (Tillman-Healy, 2003; Owton & Allen-Collinson, 2014). As such, I view these projects as looking through opposite ends of the telescope at similar phenomenon. In Chapter 5, I will lay out how the fieldwork for the personal research-creation project helped to reveal the inner workings of place and in turn informed the community arts class. Chapters 6 presents a case

study of *Landscaping the City III*, examining emerging themes that came from collective making in the community classroom, while Chapter 7 discusses the method for community-based research-creation (CBRC), and some of the works of research-creation that participants made. The contents of the previous three chapters in turn influence my own works of research-creation in Chapter 8, where I work to coalesce the meaning developed of place into my own landscape pictures. If it is not yet clear, I hope that the interconnectedness of these projects is revealed through the coming chapters.

Figure 14: Introducing Landscaping the City III students to oil painting using my outdoor setup. Photo Credit: Lucie L.

Chapter 5 | Fieldwork with an Easel and Palette

What can landscape painting offer to interdisciplinary studies of place? This chapter considers the merits of plein air landscape painting as a form of fieldwork, drawing on ethnography, geography, and methodological frameworks of arts-based research. I will focus specifically on small-scale, plein-air landscape paintings conducted on site to consider what both the experiences of painting in place and the paintings themselves contribute to the artistic and qualitative aspects of this study.[51] Here, I will consider what insights are generated specifically by painting rather than simply visiting or walking around a place and compare this to current understandings of fieldwork. As such, I will first outline frameworks of fieldwork borrowing

[51] This chapter draws from and builds on an article co-written with artist and community educator Rabeya Jalil (LeRue & Jalil, 2024), where we considered each of our connections to space and place, and experiments conducted as a pilot study published in a conference proceeding (LeRue, in-press).

concepts from anthropology and ethnography,[52] before discussing relevant arts-based methods and engagements with space, followed by examples from the history of art education. Following this, I will articulate a framework for landscape painting as fieldwork, using examples of artists and ethnographers who have engaged 2D practice before discussing how this work fits into my larger research practice. I will close by considering the potential for taking up fieldwork in education, highlighting both the pedagogical value of artist-teachers conducting their own fieldwork, and how doing so might inform lessons about place, drawing connections to the social sciences.

Outlining Fieldwork in the Social Sciences

Fieldwork refers to any research conducted outside of the university, and is usually used in studies of peoples and places with roots in geography, ethnography, sociology, and anthropology. Fieldwork is a modality of research that could be taken up as a component of any qualitative research study ("What is fieldwork?," n.d.). In the social sciences, fieldwork means to work in a place or with people whom the researcher would not usually engage to conduct open-ended inductive inquiry without preconceptions about what they will discover. In ethnography, fieldwork observes daily life, with research taking place where people work and live (Cresswell, 2013). In the social sciences, fieldwork has two distinct roots. Initially, anthropological fieldwork was conducted by westerners to study non-westerners, finding later uptake in sociological frameworks, where the people studied were often local to the researcher (Okely, 2002). However, according to social worker Deborah Gioia (2014), the age of globalization makes it more difficult to find homogenous groups to study, and leads ethnographers to contend with members of different cultural groups concurrently. This necessitates researchers exploring

[52] A discourse that is aligned to the themes of this dissertation is what has been called the ethnographic turn in the arts and subsequently, arts-based research (Rutten et al., 2013). First articulated in Hal Foster's (1995) essay 'artist as ethnographer', Foster was critical of the bridging together of anthropology and art due to many artists' fundamental misunderstandings of anthropology. Namely, artists assume that representation of culture through artistic objects using ethnographic and place-based practices that their representation reduces culture to text, which while trying to subvert anthropological authority instead leave the anthropologist expert over cultural texts. Furthermore, Foster warns of the danger of the artist ethnographer of projecting too much of their own assumptions onto the supposed other. Foster argued that among interconnected global capitalism, it is no longer possible to assume that one is indeed an outsider, and that these kinds of projects might lead one into self-absorption through self-othering.

more granular components of participants' lives while making the research overall less generalizable.

In *The Art of Fieldwork*, anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott (2005) argued the existing methods for conducting fieldwork rest somewhere between art and science: The researcher and their methods must remain rigorous like a science, but there is an art to navigating the tremendous flexibility posed by studying people and place. The variation in the contexts in which the researcher studies, and the ways in which the researcher engages with fieldwork, means that the researcher must not only be creative undertaking fieldwork, but also how they frame their research outcomes. According to anthropologist Judith Okely (2002), the subjectivity of the researcher creates a symbiotic relationship between observations and outcomes. As such, ethnographic fieldwork is made up of both "objective and subjective observations (some would say only the latter) and is, by its very nature, interpretivist" (Causey, 2021, p. 212).

In this study, fieldwork is taken up in such a way that puts me in a definitionally precarious position, living within ten kilometers of Bâtiment 7 and the Peel Basin. Simple definitions of fieldwork are sparse, but Wolcott (2005) has offered some useful distinctions. For Wolcott, there is a key difference between what is fieldwork as opposed to simply being in the field, which largely relies on the intention of the researcher. He said,

> fieldwork is a form of inquiry in which one is immersed personally in the ongoing social activities of some individual or group for the purposes of research. Fieldwork is characterized by personal involvement to achieve a level of understanding that will be shared with others. (P. 58)

In Wolcott's view, fieldwork relies on investigation for the purposes of recounting it, meaning that the methods of observing are what transform being in 'the field' to 'fieldwork,' the latter of which requires reporting to move from personal experience to academic research. Thus, conducting fieldwork is more an act of making onself strange rather than necessarily being a stranger to place, so that the researcher may understand others. Thus, fieldwork can take place around the corner from the researchers' home, or on the other side of the world.

Place-Based Approaches to Arts-based Research and Art Education

To consider how plein air landscape painting might contribute to fieldwork, we must first consider the literature of arts-based research and engagements with place. In-line with arts-based research's rootedness in post-modern, dematerialized practices (Lippard, 1997; Loveless, 2019),

arts-based inquiries of place tend to engage walking (Springgay & Truman, 2019), new materialism (Springgay & Truman, 2015), and engagements with the non-human (Legallais, 2022). In a/r/tographic methodology, artists conjoin walking, writing, and artmaking to examine the unexpected connections that come from the three (Rallis et al., 2024). Underpinned by the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guittari (1997), a/r/tographers Andrea Lasczik Cutcher et al. (2022) noted that walking is recognized as part of what makes the method distinct, placing "everyday acts of walking [at the center of] an aesthetic education of the senses, refusing the separation of art and life" (p. 9). A/r/tography theorists Lasczik Cutcher and Rita Irwin (2018) used the figure of the flâneur–one who was known in 19th century French culture for strolling about to observe happenings of Paris–as a metaphor for what the a/r/tographer does. They argue that the a/r/tographer paints with their feet, becoming attuned to the to the physical nature of spaces. In the frame of a/r/tography, walking and *being* in place with intention have the potential to generate aesthetic insights. Art theorists Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman (2018) operate a project called the *Walking Lab* and contend that the insights generated by walking constitute a form of research-creation through considering "*place, sensory, inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm*." (p. 2, italics in original). Like a/r/tography, this view sees engagement with place through the embodied experience of walking as offering affective experiences one can draw from for research. This research draws from these methods insofar as highlighting the importance of embeddedness in place as a method for engagement.

In art education, the literature has long considered what it means to use what is familiar to students as a catalyst for artmaking. Art educator June King McFee (1981) called for increased cultural sensitivity into art education curricula and made a case for the built environment where educators reside as being an entry point into creating relevant curricula for students (McFee and Degge, 1977). As such, place-based arts-based pedagogy has been adopted at both the K-12 and post-secondary level to foster awareness of the social histories of the built environment (Vaughan, Dufour, & Hammond, 2017), the human impact on the environment (Bertling, 2015), and to challenge negative perceptions of neighborhoods (Hutzel, 2007). Building on these perspectives, educators Tonia Gray and Cameron Thompson (2015) developed an arts-based pedagogical program called *Touched by Earth* that encouraged long-term, experiential engagements with the environment. They argued that programs that immerse children outdoors helps to create strong ecological consciousness by taking the adjacent environment for

inspiration and contemplation. Likewise, in my *Landscaping the City* course, content asks students to attune to the built environment through discussions and projects. I will elaborate on the connections this has to my fieldwork further down.

2D Practices as Fieldwork

In considering how painting and artmaking in general might fit into conceptions of fieldwork, we must first contend with a rich debate that has echoed through anthropolological study since the advent of photography. Anthropologist Lucien Taylor (1996) argued that anthropologists suffered from iconophobia, meaning the fear of using images in their work. The reason being that the images often present aestheticized visions that are at odds with the researchers' observations and experiences. Anthropology professors Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (2010) used the example of documentary filmmaker Jorens Ivens (1934) who worked in the 1930s. Ivens feared that images he took of miners in northern France meant to demonstrate terrible working conditions would instead be valued for their aesthetic beauty, thereby creating mixed-messages. While anthropological study has become more accepting of the use of images, Schneider and Wright noted an undercurrent of iconophobia remains today. They blamed film theory coming out of French philosophy, which saw film as being an inherently manipulative medium that suspended the normal reasoning of the viewer (Ranciere, 2011). In the realm of visual arts, movements like visual culture have likewise instilled a skepticism and over-analysis of images, raising questions not only on the supposed truth of photographs, but the power of how all images, including those created by artists, advertisers, and journalistic photography, reverberate in the larger culture (Mitchell, 2002; Duncum, 2002). The visual culture literature professes a deep skepticism and criticality of images, with theorists like Kevin Tavin (2001) attributing the images circulated in mass media and in consumer goods as forming the ideological foundation and conciousness starting from childhood, and advocating for visual culture art education as a way to learn to decode the meanings behind images. And while a heightened sensitivity to the power of images is important, is the exclusion of images in favour of only the written word preferable? Is there not a common ground where images and observations can be thought together? Let us explore the possibilities for artmaking within the literature of fieldwork.

The most common artwork in fieldwork is images, which are usually used as documentary evidence but are also sometimes used to capture a moment or a sentiment. As such,

photography that aestheticizes fieldwork as Ivens feared is sometimes embraced. For social practice artist Tatsuo Inagaki (2010), fieldwork became a critical component of developing artistic projects due to what she observed as a problem of community-engaged artists ignoring the social contexts they worked in. As such, she adopted methods of fieldwork that used interviewing and photography to make work depciting the relationships between people and the places they lived. This informs projects that recount participant stories through plaques installed in the sites they happened, and through displays what the artist calls "museums," which stage gathered data like an archive for participants to peruse. Fieldwork in this frame becomes a form of artmaking like the research practices outlined in art historian Claire Bishop's (2023) analysis of 'archive art' in paradigms of arts-based research, with Inagaki displaying both testimony and visuals concurrently.

Painting and drawing have been used in fieldwork by many to slow down and observe, with the oeuvres helping with recalling experiences later. For anthropologist Andrew Causey (2021), perception is at the root of what both ethnographers and artists do, and that by adopting focused line drawing as method, ethnographers might be able to see their subjects and processes anew. Causey saw ethnography as a way to understand other ontologies and epistomologies, which the ethnographer later tries to approximate with language. However, during the course of fieldwork, Causey "suspect[s] we have all had experiences when we've come upon something so extraordinary that we have trouble categorizing it, even as we percieve it" (p. 224). He continued that like words, line drawing makes interpretations about the world that offers an alternative way to codify those interpretations, even as they have the drawback of requiring subjective interpretations. Ethnographer Michael Taussig (2011) is known for his poetic engagements with places as they become persuaded by Western imperalism and capitalism, specifically in Colombia. Influenced by Walter Benjamin's (1999) writing on the Paris arcades in the 1920's, Taussig kept a sketchbook with him to accent his observations of people and places. In his book *I Swear I Saw This*, he describes drawing as a "seeing that doubts itself," which has the ability to "surpass the experience that gave rise to it" (2011, p. 2). Taussig takes up aesthetic theorist and founder of semiotics Roland Barthes's (1982, as cited in Taussig, 2011) concept of the third meaning, which alludes to the indescribable power an image might have over the thoughts and rationale of the viewer. Taussig said, "Third "meaning" is not really a meaning at all, but a gap or hole or hermeneutic trap that interpretation itself causes while refusing to give up the

struggle" (p. 6), which is expressed through Taussig's field drawings in two ways. First, the subject of a drawing might have been chosen either randomly or to capture a sentiment in the moment (that he admits may never be accessed again) but only come to have full significance later. For example, a drawing of homeless people that Taussig found aesthetically striking due to their proximity to the hustle and bustle of everyday life was meant to capture and represent the 1 in 10 homeless people in Colombia, and how they integrate into the chaos of the everyday. But it took on deeper meaning when years later paramilitaries in Colombia began to round up and kill homeless men as part of a bounty placed on terrorists, given that those who placed the bounty could likely not tell the difference between the bodies of either. The second way the third meaning was expressed was the act of making the image, which helps to translate the surreal in the real in daily happenings. To quote Causey again, "the point is not to draw, but is rather to see" (p. 228). This surrealness is made more concrete through the act of drawing and reflecting.

The reflective tone in the literature of drawing in fieldwork is echoed in what has been written on painting. Anthropologist and artist Zoe Bray (2015) used portrait painting as a form of 'thick description' in anthropoligical fieldwork through depictions of research participants through portraiture. For Bray, the methods painters and ethnographers take up share epistomological and methodological concerns: The ethnographer gathers rich description in their notes on their observation, which she argues painting can also mimick. The uptake of what she called visual anthropology tends to prefer photography and film in ethographic study, which puts distance between the viewer and the object. Painting on the other hand, while creating an image that is ultimately more abstracted, puts the creator in a more direct and possibly deeper relationship with the subject. Both the process of note taking and the process of painting require an open and perceptive mind, and involve processes of gathering information in a methodological but intiutive way. In the process of painting portraits, building relationships is important to negotiate and collaborate with participants, as subject-participants decided what to wear, how to pose, and what if any objects should be in the background. Closer to this dissertation, antropologist and painter Susan Ossman (2011) considered the value of visual anthropology through an abstracted tryptich painted during fieldwork in Chaouen, Morroco in 1990. The tryptich conjoined elements of the landscape with both colours and a painted representation of red stiching common to the handwoven wardrobes of women in the area. She had this painting on her wall during a period of increased geopolitical tensions due to the leadup

of the first American war in Iraq. This led to a tense conversation with a local about their interpretation of the red stitching as blood, leading the local to interogate her position in the Arab world as an American. Like with Taussig, the painting took on a form not unlike a fieldnote, which captured something about the tensions that emerged at the time, and again at the advent of the second Iraq war in 2003. For Ossman,

> Art becomes a method of working out and working with others in ways that can include those who cannot read, or cannot understand her academic language. This gives these others power. But producing a coherent piece of work also means owning up to creating a strong position for oneself. We are accustomed to ethnographers taking the positions of the respectful listener… [but painting] strives to find ways to explore how we all move through the world differently together. (p. 134)

We can see that when painting and drawing are used in fieldwork, they introduce the subjectivity of the one creating it, while also opening reflective avenues for the ethnographer to wrestle with meanings in place.

Painting as Fieldwork in this Dissertation

In the context of this project, painting has become a method to slow down and *look* to see what the embodied process of painting reveals about place. This has added significance given the post-industrial nature of the neighborhood. There are certainly majestic instances of the industrial past that have been captured in obvious ways, such as in Figures 15 and 16, where I painted the Lachine Canal from an island connected to the walking path. But equally important are the small traces of the past that become evident to us when we look. Under the dialectical framework of Lefebvre (1991), cities are at once made of material but also always under change, adapting to meet the needs of divergent interest groups. Santos (2021a) observed that geographical development seldom happens all at once, meaning that infrastructures associated with certain epochs co-exist with state-of-the-art technologies. Many of the roads that were built in Montréal 350 years ago (some on top of First Nations' footpaths and portage routes) are present today in some capacity, be it the material caked under layers of asphalt and concrete, or from their placement in a locale. From its numerous re-imaginings, Montréal's built environment is riddled with traces of bygone eras—Old Montréal, the supremacy of Catholicism, Industrialism, Expo 67, and the Olympics, traces of which converge together on the present. This happens in obvious ways, such as the existence of a church like Notre Dame in Old Montréal, the iconic Olympic Stadium, and the factory facades which have been repurposed as offices and

condominiums, but what about the less obvious ways? What about the lampposts, the alleyways, the garbage, and the informal spaces? What about the storefronts of non-chains, and the façades of houses? Or the inside of a bus stop, or a repurposed rotating bridge that has not rotated since the 70s? What does a neighborhood look like on garbage day, and where does the garbage go the other six days? Layers from each of these eras are built into the environment of the Sud Ouest.

Figure 15: Box painting of the Lachine Canal

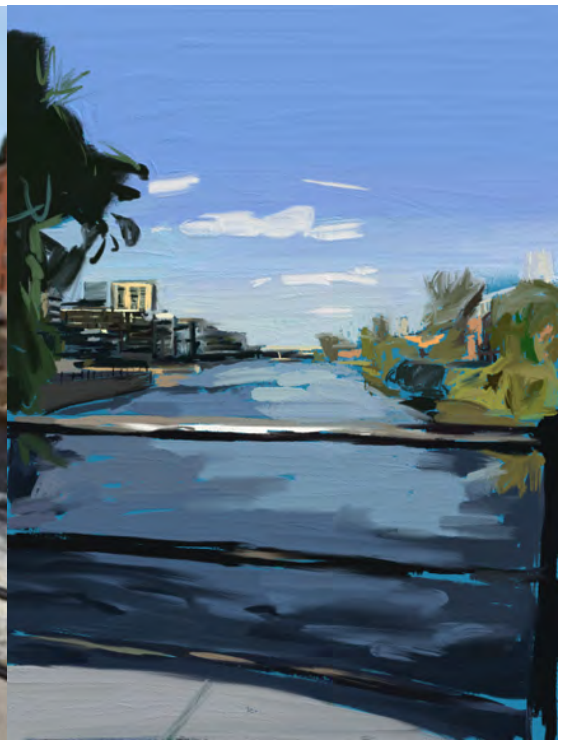

Figure 16: Digital study of the Lachine Canal

Defining how and when I am doing with fieldwork has been difficult to discern given the Sud Ouest has become enmenshed in my daily life. Fieldwork often implies leaving one's home and going somewhere new, waking up in a strange place where one does not know anybody for a predetermined period of time (Gioia, 2014). I have been visiting Pointe-Saint-Charles since 2016, where I took a class in the neighbourhood, and lived in the adjacent neighborhood of Verdun since 2020, around the time I was planning this study. In everyday life, spaces and places become familiar, and it becomes harder to see what about them is remarkable. Like many of the authors cited here, I have been helped by painting to slow down, and welcome embodied perceptions and experiences in making. I often work small, fast, and on-site, relying entirely at first to my own perceptions to make works in settings of 30 minutes to 3 hours. I have adopted two primary ways that I paint on side: One method uses small tin can paintings, inspired by the

Instagram of Remington Robinson,[53] using tiny brushes and small, 2 x 2.5 inch surfaces (Figure 15, Figure 18). This has allowed me to remain portable and discrete when painting. When I have more time, I use my travel easel to make paintings that are slightly larger, 8 x 10 inches (Figure 17). Additionally, I have dabbled with digital tools for painting on an iPad (Figure 16).

I am a representational painter, which means that I try to paint what I see generally as accurately as possible, with some leeway for expression and intuition as things progress. However, working outside from life poses numerous challenges. External factors such as inclement weather, hot and cold, bugs, wind, changing light and darkness, and any number of variables cause me to work faster, make mistakes, or otherwise impact the work. Further, working smaller and with tools that I do not often use in the studio (eg: paper rather than canvas, smaller brushes, etc.) leads to paintings that capture more of an impression than an accurate depiction. I work exclusively with oils, even as acrylic and watercolour are certainly more user friendly given they dry quickly and are less toxic. It follows that I have to carry all of my oil paintings around wet, usually folding them right into the container or in a hidden carrying compartment in my travel easel. I do this partially out of stubbornness, but also because I am used to the way the material mixes and handles, and the look of oil paint after it dries.

Figure 17: Painting outside with a travel easel at Bâtiment 7 front common area.

Figure 18: Painting outside with a small tin can near Quai 5160 cultural centre next to the river in Verdun.

Despite the challenges it poses, painting from life is important to me because it relies on my own perceptions of the objects in front of me. Photography is arguably the most

[53] https://www.remingtonrobinson.com/

revolutionary tool to ever cross painting, offering painters reference that negates the need to even leave the studio. But photographs create abstractions that have become naturalized to our eyes over time. This is most prevalent in a wide-angle lens, which distorts and rounds objects to make the frame of the room appear bigger. But all lenses necessarily distort 3D objects to translate them onto a 2D surface.[54] The same is true for the range of colours we see with our eyes compared to both what a camera can capture and with what screens and printing can accurately replicate. Furthermore, a screen is backlit, meaning that the light on the image is different than the light in the room you are painting in making the process of comparing a colour for accuracy is nearly impossible. A printed image, though not perfect, is preferable in this regard because it is under the same light as the painting.

To highlight the differences between painting from photography and from life, let us take an object such as snow. A painter could *potentially* learn to capture snow through an abstracted photograph that will make an approximation about the way the light falls onto the surface and penetrates its layers. But standing in a snowy forest, one is presented with more sophisticated information—The sunlight that is shining through the snow is shining on the trees, just as it is shining on the paint. The snow appears to us in context, and the eye can peel back perceptible layers that may have built over snowfalls, and notice the atmosphere (fog, mist, etc.) between the painter and the snow. All of this gives the painter more information to create the landscape, which impresses on the painter's memory of being in place as the work is being created. Then come the subtle things—The weather in the moment is going to leave an impact of the mind of the painter. If it is cold, perhaps one paints faster to get out of the elements sooner. Maybe bugs are flying in one's eyes, or it is unbearably hot out. It is also possible that the light will change substantially, and this could have a profound effect on what a painter remembers and tries to capture. To demonstrate the difficulty of photography capturing light, let us look at this example from a painting inside a coffee shop in my neighborhood of Verdun (Figures 19 and 20)[55]. Photography often has a hard time capturing indoor and outdoor light simultaneously given that

[54] As Causey (2021) observed, this is also what we do when we draw or paint from observation. However, by working directly from life, we are removing one layer of abstraction that photographs interject.

[55] Ironically, this is one of the clearest examples of one of my photographs capturing an interior and exterior at the same time.

sunlight is much brighter than most indoor lights. However, our eyes are generally able to adjust space. In Figures 19 and 20, I likely would not have been able to capture the objects in the interior to the degree I did without having the ability to adjust, whereas a photograph would risk over-exposing the exterior or under-exposing the interior.

Figure 19: Tin painting inside at a coffee shop.

Figure 20: Tin painting inside at a coffee shop.

Painting from life in place almost always says something about the relationship between the painter and where their canvas was painted. Did the painter hike up a mountain to paint undisturbed snow in a forest? Are they in solitude, or are they on a popular public path? Did one have to get in the car, drive across town and find a new area? Or is one travelling, visiting a place they have never been? Perhaps the painter is seeing snow for the first time… My point here is to illustrate the embodied nature of painting in plein-air, and what painting from life offers to this project. When I began painting as fieldwork, it was difficult to see what had become my neighborhood. I had been to all the points of interest– Bâtiment 7, the Canal, and the Peel Basin– several times. When I am driving by points of interest that I might find aesthetically interesting during a painting session, I am usually focused on what I will purchase at Costco, or about the meeting I am ten minutes late for as I sit in traffic due to construction. Painting forces me to carve out the time and to ruminate on things.

Painting and drawing from life 'in the field' is ultimately a public exercise. As someone who prefers privacy when making artistic decisions, I would rather paint in the studio where I can easily fix my mistakes and ensure they never see the light of day. Sometimes I can stay subtle enough in a busy place, but I often end up having conversations with passers-by.

Sometimes folks are interested in what I am painting and ask about my classes or purchasing works. If someone is curious, I discuss my research and how I am trying to capture what I see in the area. Other times, someone will stand behind me for a few minutes before moving along. While I do not seek this kind of attention, it has led to some wholesome moments that force me to be public as I conduct research in place.

Figure 21: Collection of small paintings arranged in a spread.

I am a picky painter who works on many canvases at the same time. Many of these works never see the light of day and are eventually painted over. Many of the works I make in the field are not up to my own expectations, but I nevertheless make a point to hang on to everything. For example, Figure 21 contains a mix of small paintings that I would have been tempted to discard due to feeling the work was too inaccurate. Keeping the works together means that connections become visible, and a conversation forms between the paintings that gives them a larger vitality and creates a portrait of the neigborhood. Volume becomes important for reasons I do not expect. In "Painters and their Places: Toward a Dialectical Understanding of Personal and Community Painting Practices," (LeRue and Jalil, 2024), I wrote that

> The particularities of a place become expressed through the small, seemingly insignificant details. Window frames, the colors of houses, the colors of the bricks, the foliage, and the water all become amplified when placed side by side in the studio. By looking intently at architectural facets in the city that are captured over many canvases, the patterns that emerge become instructive to thought. In a city like Montréal, this becomes illuminating because many of the architectures have become things other than

> their intended use—an industrial shipping canal is now a park, and many former factories are offices and condos. Spikes and signs from decommissioned railway tracks line what are now pedestrian walkways. Thus, temporality becomes a factor, with a significance that objects from across historical epochs are being captured today in 2023, and an understanding that their co-existence will continue to evolve in the future. (p. 81)

Landscape Painting as Informing Research Practice

The landscape paintings I make as fieldwork are the product of theoretical reading and historical research, going on to inform both studio and written outputs. Furthermore, they are made in conjunction with other ways of being in the field, both through community embedding and engagement, and community art teaching. Building on arguments I have made in past articles (LeRue & Jalil, 2024; Jalil & LeRue, 2024), I view the paintings made here as a critical part of my research process, having both a life of their own as artistic objects and informing insights into further research and teaching. I have created Figure 22 as a mind map that details the flow of my research process, situating how fieldwork informs the larger dissertation. In this section, I will discuss this mind map and the interrelations between each component.

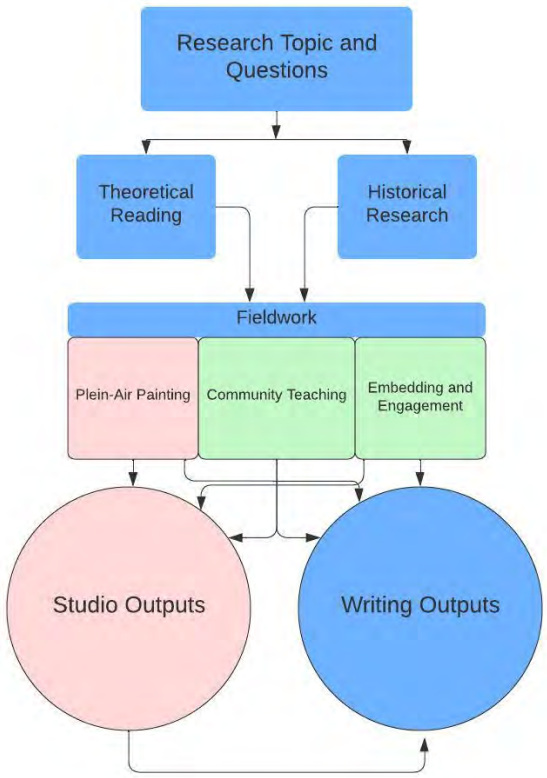

Figure 22: Mind map of the flow of the research project. Blue refers to traditional academic components, red refers to studio components, while green refers to interpersonal components, including pedagogy.

To explain Figure 22, my research began with my research topic and questions, which were informed by my engagements with place and space, and interests in the changing landscapes of the built environment of Montréal's Sud Ouest. This led to theorizing and historical research to help contextualize the research questions before going into the field (work outlined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4). I was interested in the contradictions between the perceived unity when one mentions a community, and the actual competing interests that often occurred on the ground. My theoretical framework had to leave space for contradiction and find ways to hold these contradictions together. To summarize, the urban planning frameworks of Kevin Lynch (1960), which saw each person having a unique image of the city that in turn informed the collective understanding of space offered a scaffolding to develop methods that take divergent perspectives as the norm. Following this, the critical pedagogy of hooks (1994) and Freire (2018), in addition to the dialectical framework of Santos (2021a; 2021b), informed how I would engage the knowledge of participants—Each spatially situated at the center of large global networks, with profound capacities to contemplate and engage the world. The frameworks of Massey (1995; 2005) argued that the dominant narratives of places that are taken as deep truths are often provisional and new, and subject to ongoing reimaginations now and in the future. Finally, the work of Lefebvre (1991) reminds us that spaces are always in motion, and that visualizations of space through mediums such as painting on the one hand can affirm and mediate the relationship between those with power and those without, but also provide re-imaginings of space to represent collective needs. It is with these thinkers that this research situates the past, present, and future of the Pointe.

Frameworks of disunity informed my fieldwork, which was made up of three sub-components. Community teaching, which I will discuss in Chapter 6 and briefly address at the end of this chapter, embedding and engaging with community organizations, which I discussed in Chapter 1, and plein-air landscape painting. The reason these boxes are merged is because insights from each informed the other, and this study would have taken a different form if any of these components were not conducted concurrently. For example, my plein-air practice was conducted with students and friends at the art school, which also provided methods and insights to share with my students in the classroom. Likewise, being embedded at Bâtiment 7 alerted me to the realities, tensions, and ongoing changes within the neighborhood, which informed the content of my paintings and the class.

Sometimes components connected serendipitously and without clear purpose. For example, Figure 23 was a painting I made of bicycles by a bulletin board situated outside Bâtiment 7. I drank beer and worked on the small box paintings. My notes detailed a conversation I was having with a colleague about the frustrations in governance of Bâtiment 7, while the bikes themselves were being taken and parked numerous times throughout the discussion.

> I spoke with [a colleague] about governance at Bâtiment 7 and the politics of being on the legal board… [their friend] was there, as were a pack of about seven kids. The last painting I was fighting daylight. Not to mention about halfway through the bikes owners came back and took them. This is the bulletin board outside of the Détour [community grocery store]. I want to move toward more complex forms and shapes with these. [Field note, April 14, 2023].

Figure 23: A painting I titled in my notes on April 14 as "Mon autre velo n'est pas ma bicyclette" [My other bike is not my bicycle]. I believe I was referring to a site I had painted in previously that week, Ma Bicyclette bike rental and repair shop, situated along the Lachine Canal.

Figure 24: Painting outside in action. Photo credit: Charlotte Boatner-Doane.

A photograph taken on the day of this fieldnote shows the context in which I was working. The evening sunshine starting to cast long shadows, and even though it is April, I am wearing a t-shirt in what felt like a jovial 'first day of summer.' Behind me in Figure 24 you can see the construction of the ruelle bleue-verte which was aesthetically unappealing and cordoned off space that was used for socializing in years prior. Bâtiment 7 is perpetually under construction, which has caused disruptions to both the art school and the wider ecosystem. Nevertheless, the constant construction and reorganizing became a normal part of everyday life. Without conducting the painting in tandem with the embeddedness in place, I would not have had the

same insights than just painting alone, nor would I have tried to mold these insights into pedagogy as I do at the end of this chapter.

Figure 25: Painting of the construction facing the same direction as Figure 24.

Continuing with the flow of my research, the insights from theory filter through the fieldwork into both studio and written components. I include all data in the data analysis, including notes, student work, plein-air paintings, and observations. Therefore, all components of fieldwork filter into studio and writing. My studio paintings reflect and ruminate on being in place and the insights gleaned from student work. For example, when I shared the tin can painting with students, I could not help but be influenced by the ways in which students took these ideas forward and the things individuals said during and after. As I will discuss in Chapter 8, I exclusively use the plein-air paintings as reference, instead piecing together the memories conjured by the small paintings which are themselves already abstracted representations. The written components on one hand summarize insights from artmaking, teaching, and embedding, and on the other draw deeper connections between artmaking–both mine and my students– in ways that answer the research questions.

Bridging Insights for Education

Through the process of thinking fieldwork and teaching together, I have come to understand the fieldwork undertaken here as directly influencing my teaching. This was not expected at the outset of this research, but as I have recounted in my work with my teaching collective, STAC (Shanahan et al., 2024), I am at my best teaching when I am examining the foundations of questions that I do not fully comprehend. When I developed the first *Landscaping*

the City class in the pandemic, the course has subtly been a pedagogical stomping ground for the deep questions I hold about the ways people perceive and understand cities (LeRue, 2023a). After all, that instance was redirection of my research into pedagogy. The *Landscaping the City* course I developed for this study was the first time I was teaching this course in person, and I was bringing insights and hunches from my own fieldwork into the artistic prompts I was giving. I have come to see my personal research-creation project as a direct line to my students' artistic practices, opening a dialogue not based on the teacher as a puppet master or expert, but from a teacher as a fellow traveller. The uses for education here are promising. On the one hand, I have come to understand fieldwork's potential for developing pedagogy that is relevant to the work students make. Furthermore, I have come to see fieldwork as a potential mode of understanding the contexts in which we are teaching in general. I will first address the latter.

Reflections on Fieldwork for Educators

In education, fieldwork remains undertheorized as a method for educators for what it can offer to teachers as a way to relate to students. To be a good pedagogue, it is critical that we know our students, where they come from, and their motivation for being there in cases where the courses are elective. When I teach pre-service teachers about community education, I urge them to take an hour after their orientation and observe the flow of life. If one sits in a coffee shop for an hour, we are going to see the hustle and bustle of life. Is the neighborhood rural, suburban, or urban? If we are there when school lets out, are there a lot of families walking together? Are they large families or small families? Where are they going? Are they getting on the bus or into cars? How about who spends their day in the café? Are they on laptops, are they older people chatting? If public space is nearby, how is it being used? Appearances are not everything, but we can learn a lot from orienting ourselves in place.

When teachers are in the classroom, the dynamics of the neighborhood are going to be present in the discussions and interpersonal relationships that develop between students. For example, *Landscaping the City* interview data revealed that some of the students owned houses in the Sud Ouest, while others expressed housing insecurity, with one noting that she would be moving to the country following an eviction.[56] For some of the homeowners, questions of what

[56] Many students, including this one did not live in the neighborhood at all, but had ties to the neighborhood through volunteering or regularly attending classes at the art school.

makes a good neighbor and good civic citizenship came up, and homeowners were generally sympathetic to the plights of renters. During all of our discussions, students seemed to genuinely care for and listen to each other, and approached problems with ample critical thinking beyond what one would expect if one were acting in self interest. This mirrored some of what I observed in fieldwork, where I saw one of the chic cafés had a partnership with a community organization to donate leftover food. On the flip side, there are some in the neighborhood who view Bâtiment 7 as an extension of ongoing gentrification, with locally-placed historian Steven High going so far as to imply that the site might be better served as condo units, and that neighborhood activists often live in "accomodation with gentrification" (2022 p. 281). These points merit deeper investigation elsewhere. Of importance here is that the lived experience of the students and the context of the site we were visiting were critical parts of developing the class and the conversations we had.

Fieldwork into Curricula

Conducting this fieldwork has helped me to develop concepts to send my own students out "into the field" of the adjacent neighborhood. Many more examples will feature in chapter 6, but here I will highlight two examples of how fieldwork led to insights in teaching, both coming shortly before the class began.

In April 2024, Montréal suffered from a terrible ice storm that came out of nowhere and knocked out power in some neighborhoods for up to five days. During out outage, we lost our entire fridge contents and slept in temperatures close to zero, as did many others. As I reflected in a painting session shortly after,

> the works I painted today are mostly provisional spaces which are in progress, such as the park beside B7 and the fences, the grounds out front with different planters. There is something about the spaces between, that we aren't necessarily supposed to appreciate or spend time with, that makes them all the more appealing. They are also the moments where cities start to change, or unravel–The spaces of hidden infrastructure that make our lives possible. For instance, "BOXES" [a painting] contains an AC unit, a shed, a food storage fridge, green bin, a shed, a community fridge. Having just lost power for three days, I am made aware of how important these amenities are. [Field note, April 11, 2024]

That appreciation for hidden infrastructure and the in-between spaces in the city led me to formulate a discussion around formal and informal spaces. In my handout a month later, I wrote,

> <u>Formal Spaces / Informal Spaces:</u> Formal spaces are spaces that have clear uses and do not tolerate informality, such as downtown malls, subway stations and building fronts, especially in upscale neighborhoods. Informal spaces are spaces that do not have clear

> uses or clear organization, such as *ruelles*, community gardens, the fermette, and some parks, such as *Parc des voisins*. Think of the difference between formal and informal spaces as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy. [English handout, May 4, 2023; Appendix B]

In the session I circulated this handout, I demonstrated a technique, and invited students to work from informal spaces outside the building. I asked, students to try to draw a scene from the neighborhood that would likely be different in a few days' time. It was unclear in the moment whether this framework was helpful, but this was a concept that recurred in later interview data.

The second has to do with how we perceive light. Even though *Landscaping the City* was a drawing class, my habits as a painter cause me to emphasize light when I am teaching drawing, and it often becomes one of the foremost things I think about when observing objects. In that same early April painting session, I was working on Figure 26 when a passer-by commented on the colour of the sky.

> [Another person] mentioned how it must be difficult to paint outside given the light. He was right about this- -the overcast made everything shine brown and grey. I didn't mind it, because the paint let me make decisions and push the painting in one direction or another. I also found the light more consistent than other times. [Field note, April 11]

While not initially intended to be a consideration for the course, the light was particularly eerie in the days following the ice storm. In the later part of the class, unprecedented wildfires in northern Québec caused smog to coat the city of Montréal, with health officials recommending we avoid going outside, and only do so if we have a mask. Some days, the smog was so thick it reminded me of a foggy day on the beach in Nova Scotia, with trails of vapour rolling over the ground. On sunny days, it created an intense orange haze that coated the city and made for a beautiful–if not ominous– atmosphere. I did not paint the smog aside from one rather unremarkable work where I painted the vibrant orange shadows that cast upon the floor.

Figure 26: Panting that was noted in the anecdote about the luminescence of the sky.

Figure 27: Ella's balcony painting during the smog warning.

One student took a personal interest for her final project just as the fires were starting. Ella painted a series on her balcony that observed the orange haze coming through the trees (Figure 27). I recall discussing with her and others the relationship between the fires and light, and how the thicker atmosphere began to dim everything we see. I also referred to a lesson I had conducted in Week 3 regarding light, where students were introduced to the concept of a grayscale (Figure 28). One side of a grayscale has the lightest value that can be made with your materials, while the other has the darkest. All the squares in-between provide a pleasant and subtle delineation of values that ideally blur without interruption. I also assign each square a number, with white being the highest and black being the lowest. When light is dramatic, there tends to be a #10 white and #0 black somewhere in a drawing, with a range of each value in-between. However, smog and strong atmosphere made the values closer together, meaning values are more likely to be delineated between only a few adjacent squares (Eg: #6-#9).

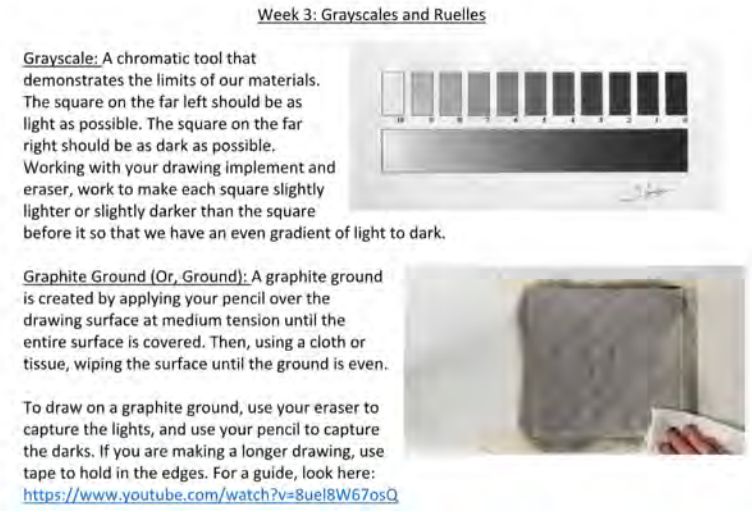

Figure 28: Sample of English handout from week 3 of Landscaping the City. [Appendix B]

Conclusion

Fieldwork has impacted this thesis in three key ways. First, fieldwork has helped to give me insights into the research questions by slowing me down and asking me to look at what I see in a place where I could just as easily become desensitized through daily life. Seeing how things like neighborhood character are built from a sum of various infrastructures from different epochs and observing how these infrastructures are part of social life and ongoing development has provided more interesting insights in trying to understand the image of the city (Lynch, 1960). This effect of fieldwork likewise connects to emerging literature on using 2D art practices in social science fieldwork. Second, being in place and understanding the flows of everyday life has been critical in considering how the organizations I partner with fit in to the social fabric of the neighborhood. Finally, by making art in place, I have developed a direct connection with content shared in my classes. The aesthetic and social questions I am examining become prompts and concepts I share with my students and contribute to eroding the authority of the teacher. This speaks to larger considerations for art teachers who wish to understand the contexts their students are living in, and the merits of observing the neighborhoods they are working in. Further, fieldwork may provide a way for teachers to share what they are working on with their students in ways that are not intimidating or domineering and provide an opening for ways to conduct

dialectical forms of pedagogy such as critical pedagogy, which is a question I would like to examine in future research.

Figure 29: Image of the final exhibition at the old bank building in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Photo credit: Nadia

Chapter 6 | Urban Research in the Community Classroom: A Mixed Methods Classroom Study

"Each place is, in its way, the world." Milton Santos, 2021a, p. 216

This chapter presents a classroom case study of *Landscaping the City III,* which was a community art education class that took place in the spring of 2023 at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School in Montréal, Québec. This class built on previous classes I developed that considered how art education could reveal students' relationships to the cities they inhabit (LeRue, 2023a), adapting a place-based curriculum I taught online during COVID-19 lockdowns to the purposes of this research. This iteration of the course was designed primarily to carry out a community-based research-creation study that invited student participants to create works reflecting on their relationships to space and place through drawing, whose outcomes will be explained and expanded on later in Chapter 7. This chapter examines the kinds of reflections and observations that emerged through reflections and the creation of artworks in a community art classroom about the city, keeping my research-questions in mind. These questions are, "how can personal and community classroom-based artworks developed from rooted experiences in place reveal

interconnections with the wider world?" And, "how can research-creation be adapted to landscape painting in my personal studio practice and in the community classroom?"

To recap, the curriculum for the course was informed by the dialectical urbanisms of Lefebvre (1991), Massey (1995; 2005), and Santos (2021a; 2021b), taking the built environment as something which is constantly in a state of flux with contended understandings and meanings. How individuals experience these spaces and their ongoing changes was examined using urban planner Kevin Lynch's (1960) framework of the image of the city, which understood that cities develop collectively understood images from the many small images of the participants who live there. A primary goal of this course was to have each participant realize their individual image of the city before bringing them into conversation with images of fellow participants. Summarizing chapter 3, I came to this project understanding cities as negotiated sites which magnify social, economic, and environmental concerns, holding high stakes for human and non-human actors. Furthermore, cities are subjected to numerous reimagining's and are consistently redeveloped. At the individual level, inhabitant's likewise have numerous desires for the places they live but are also the ones who must navigate development that comes from those with political, economic, and social power (Lefebvre, 1968; 1991). As such, this class was developed to welcome adults living in Montréal to explore their relationship to their neighborhoods through artmaking and reflection, conjoining landscape principles and group reflections. Coursework balanced developing art skills through demonstrations and lectures, reflecting on specific components of the city and going outside to engage the neighborhood. To conclude the course, students were asked to develop a final project that demonstrated some aspect of their experience and relationship to the city, culminating in individual projects seen in Chapter 7 and an exhibition at an old bank building near Bâtiment 7.

This chapter considers the class as a bounded case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) that will be discussed wholistically and sequentially. I will begin by discussing the background and recruitment for the class, describing where the course was situated and who the registrants were. I will then discuss the pedagogy and the framework for the class, which was designed to reach participants of many backgrounds and artistic skillsets. To activate this, I used Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to develop course material that scaffolded engagement, and principles of critical pedagogy to invite dialogue and meet students where they are at (Ralabate, 2011; Roski et al., 2021). I will then discuss data collection, situating it within the larger community-based

research-creation study and oral history methodologies. In considering the classroom study, I drew from the qualitative elements of Joy G. Bertling's (2015) classroom study on environment and ecology. Following this, I will discuss the curriculum through a timeline of activities, sharing testimony and artwork from students while deducing emergent themes from data. I will conclude with some discussion about what the case study offered, reflecting on limitations and significance.

Background and Recruitment

Landscaping the City III took place over eight weeks on Tuesday afternoons from April to early June 2023. The course centred drawing outside during class time, with activities and methods scaffolded to balance varied skill levels with reflection and artistic creation. Each student was welcome to work with whatever materials they liked, but were given sketchbooks, pencils, and the necessary materials for completing in-class activities and projects. Students who wanted to work with a specific material were offered 1-1 instruction and materials as needed. The first five weeks of classes were dedicated to skill building, where techniques were shared alongside participant reflection, and with every week having time to work either indoors or outdoors to apply these techniques to the built environment. Additionally, I shared a schedule of times and locations I would be working on my personal research-creation project discussed in Chapter 5 and 8, usually on Thursday afternoons somewhere in or near the Sud Ouest. After week 5, the class focused on final projects, offering two in-class working sessions, a week break, and extra time on Thursdays to work in the studio before culminating in a final critique and a potluck in the last week. Follow-up was made with students as they were preparing for an exhibition, which took place two and a half months after the culmination of the class.

Recruitment was first come, first served, with no specific populations targeted other than those willing to travel to and from the school for classes. I had initially planned an extensive recruitment by reaching out to organizations in the neighborhood, but to be reciprocal with the art school, enrolment was first opened to their internal networks. The first e-mail they sent out filled the class, receiving approximately 35 responses. We initially accepted 25, with some students dropping out before the class began, some who decided immediately the sessions were not for them, some never showing up, and others stopping or pausing for periods due to vacations or other obligations. We took participants from the waitlist at various points and welcomed others from the art school's regular student body periodically as spots opened. We

ended up with 17 regular participants who came from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, in addition to coming from many neighborhoods in Montréal.[57] While this attrition may seem extreme, as in all community classes participation was voluntary and students were free to discontinue at any time. We have observed as an art school that free offerings attract some who sign up and never respond nor show up, which I had accounted for in the initial number accepted.

My supervisor took on the role of ombudsperson, explaining, circulating, and gathering signed Information and Consent Forms and briefing participants on their possible choices and rights as participants of the study. Participants were free to take the course and opt out of the study or could opt out of the study up to two weeks after the conclusion of the course. Further, a participant could be assigned a pseudonym if they chose, and request any data be struck from the record if they chose. She then answered questions and gathered the forms, which were kept blind to me until after the withdrawal period ended. Late registrants signed their information and consent forms digitally. To our surprise, there was tremendous interest in the research process. A few students also discussed how they had conducted or been part of research projects in both the humanities and the sciences. Many of the participants claimed that the research component as mentioned on the recruiting materials was a reason rather than a hinderance for participation in the course. Ultimately, each participant who filled out a consent form elected to participate in the study.

Most members of the class were bilingual in French and English, with a few who preferred to speak English. Only one student could be described as a unilingual Francophone, but a few participants preferred to speak French over English. As such, I circulated bilingual handouts each week describing the order of events in the day and offering an overview over any technical demonstration. I gave instructions in both languages but tended to favour English given my own linguistic background. Nevertheless, participants were invited to discuss and engage in class time and the study in whichever language they chose.

[57] See Appendix D for a full list and description of the 17 participants and images of their artwork. In this chapter, I introduce them briefly when I discuss their work and contributions to the research.

Geography

Figure 30: An annotated Google Map of Pointe-Saint-Charles. See legend below for reference to the numbers.

Figure 30 provides an annotated Google map of Pointe-Saint-Charles and the surrounding area, with sites that are mentioned in this study marked by numbers that are described on the below legend. The red outline is the given boundaries to Pointe-Saint-Charles, while the pink line is the approximate walk taken through the neighborhood in week 5 from Bâtiment 7 through the Peel Basin, which ended at a McDonalds restaurant in Griffintown. I will refer to this figure

and the below legend at different parts in this chapter, and I invite readers to come back to this map to orient themselves geographically during different activities.

Legend

1. Location of Bâtiment 7
2. Lookoff toward downtown and the Peel Basin
3. Location of box painting day
4. Location of Marché Atwater outdoor drawing
5. Location of the Peel Basin lands
    a. Pointe-Saint-Charles side (often called the Wellington Basin instead)
    b. Griffintown side
6. Week 5 walk through the neighborhood (pink line)
    a. Starting point for most participants
    b. Meeting point for those who chose to walk less
    c. Ending point for the walk
7. Location of the former Goose Village
8. Parc Marguerite Bourgeoys

Pedagogical Frameworks and Methods

In Chapter 3, I argued that Lynch's (1960) frameworks for the image of the city was the guide for this class, with the stated aim of exercises to have each participant share their own individual image of the city. As such, the critical pedagogy of Freire (2018) and hooks (1994) underlined my primary approach of having participants engage in the critical questions underpinning the city, understanding each participant enters the classroom with a wealth of knowledge about the world. My content in this course integrated the history and present of Pointe-Saint-Charles, examining recent developments and ongoing changes in the neighborhood. Smaller discussion groups offered participants the chance to engage in dialogue with each other, and offered moments for each to consider a plurality of perspectives in the course content that was always paired with later artmaking. Furthermore, I discussed the goals and aims of my research openly, creating a dialogue between what I was researching and where the participants fit into this research, leading to moments of genuine co-creation that will be discussed below.

Participants in this class came from a variety of linguistic, economic, social, and artistic backgrounds, meaning that there could be no assumed universal student. Thus, in implementing the pedagogical component, I took up the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to create an empowering pedagogical environment for learners with varied interests, personal and

artistic backgrounds, and learning styles (Ralabate, 2011; Roski et al., 2021). UDL is a method designed to center core concepts in the learning process, representing concepts through multiple modes in in-course content, exploring concepts through materials and activities, and offering students multiple possibilities of demonstrating their knowledge through academic and creative outputs. UDL assumes learner variability, taking for granted that different activities will have different resonances for each student. As such, frameworks such as UDL have found resonance in disability and accessibility studies as a method that allows for multiple kinds of knowledge expression in the classroom. In the context of this work, multi-modal materials and multiple avenues for engagement helped to address some of the considerations that the students faced. For example, students who only spoke French or English benefitted from bilingual lessons handouts, which also offered an easy way to follow along that provided additional clarity for everybody. Offering choices of working inside or outside to fulfill weekly activities meant that participation did not exclude those with reduced mobility. Pairing drawing prompts with reflection offered multiple entry points to discussions and helped to create a more egalitarian space between those with advanced education and / or higher artistic capacities, and those who might be considering their place in the city for the first time. In addition, some participants had various absences, with one participant never attending the class in person. As such, having the materials readily available to share offered participants ways to either catch up or participate in various components from a distance. Beyond offering good pedagogy, having multiple means for participants from all walks of life helped to make the research more accessible to more participants.

Classroom Research Methods and Data Collection

The class was developed for the purposes of the Community-Based Research-Creation component, but I knew from the beginning that the class would also stand alone as its own specific research activity. As such, I have modeled my approach to the data analysis in relation to the qualitative elements of Bertling's (2015) *The Art of Empathy*. Her middle school classroom study studied how an art education curriculum focused on the local, natural environment could raise student's environmental empathy at a rural middle school in Tennessee. Bertling gathered seven kinds of qualitative data: student sketchbooks, individual interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, instructor reflections, course materials, and created student artworks. To re-iterate the data collection methods mentioned in Chapter 4, I took notes on my observations

before, during and after sessions, kept a journal of activities and planning, and kept all unit planning and syllabus materials. At the first class, each student was given a sketchbook in which to conduct their activities and that I requested back for data collection at the end. I received eight sketchbooks total which I photocopied and returned to participants. I invited each participant to give an interview and recorded 23 individual and group interviews that occurred during sessions, after sessions, at predetermined times outside the learning environments, and during follow-ups after the course concluded. These interviews included testimony from all 17 participants, with recordings lasting anywhere from seven minutes to three hours in length.

Curriculum

The curriculum was split into three distinct sections, some of which happened concurrently. The first was classroom content and instruction in the form of lessons and mediated discussions. The second was open working and discussion time to apply what was learned to the built environment. These were accomplished both in class and in optional extra-curricular activities. The third was studio time for the final project and in preparation for the final exhibition.[58]

Classroom Content and Instruction

The in-class content balanced artistic skill building, reflection, and artmaking. The skill building was meant to empower students to participate in other components of the class, offering tangible techniques students could use while drawing outside. Instruction addressed armatures and composition, grayscales, light and shadow, perspectives, and mark making techniques. Activities were scaffolded, offering a beginner, intermediate, and more technical option for engaging. Those who were interested could always take in-class components further through optional weekly homework, which asked students to apply what they had learned to their adjacent neighborhood. Only a handful of students completed optional homework every week, which were usually inviting students to apply the techniques learned to the built environment closer to their home.

Classroom discussions were usually on planned and past developments and history of the built environment of the neighborhood. I spoke about planned Peel Basin developments, and some of the civic discourses this tended to generate. We looked at the proposals put forth by

[58] For a full syllabus, see Appendix A

Bronfman and Action-Gardien, inviting students to consider the history of the lands and their best use in the present day. We also discussed how the neighborhood has changed over the years, including the numerous architectures in Pointe-Saint-Charles such as the Lachine Canal which has found new uses, and the pace at which the neighborhood is changing. Given the urgency of the Canadian housing crisis, discussion tended to balance immediate needs with vision about the neighborhood. For example, in the week we discussed the planned developments of the Peel Basin in week 2, the questions groups discussed (asked in both French and English) were:

- Who should have a say in what happens to federal lands?
- Which of your needs does your neighborhood meet well?
- What changes in the built environment would better meet your needs?
- What changes should the city prioritize moving forward?

The open-ended nature of these questions meant that groups often had contentious yet fruitful discussions that covered a lot of ground. It also brought the tensions and varied needs of different participants to the forefront in many discussions.

Some experimental exercises aimed to bridge the collective reflection and artmaking, such as the mapmaking exercise and discussions on neighborhood soundscapes. Open-ended mapmaking is one of the leading projects I do in *Landscaping the City* to introduce students to the work of Lynch (1960) and to consider their own relationship to the neighborhood. I shared work from Montréal sound collective *Reverberations d'une crise*, who created a sound portrait of Montréal's housing crisis (LeRue, 2023c). I shared a 13-minute bilingual documentary about this project and invited reflection about how sound in the neighborhood had changed. I discuss the findings of both in the discussion and themes section.

Unstructured Working Time and Site Visits

In addition to some open working time taking place in structured classes directly related to daily course content, many open working times took place in the Thursday working sessions, where students would work independently on their own projects or expand on content in class. I would also offer small lessons as questions came up, working in small groups to explain concepts such as perspective, shading, and contour that accented concerns in class. Occasionally, I would introduce students to mediums they were interested in. For instance, during a Thursday session, I introduced a few students to the fundamentals of oil painting and offered some working time outside to try out the materials. Furthermore, these sessions offered valuable time

to share my own practice more directly with the participants, and below I will discuss instances of working through composition, perspective, and other skills through impromptu working sessions.

Figure 31: Participants working near the Atwater Market along the Lachine Canal on an optional Tuesday working day.

Site visits were an important component of this course, and I made attempts to move us around different parts of the neighborhood. On various Thursdays, we visited the Atwater market, a historic market along the Lachine Canal, and a site called Silo #5, a large abandoned concrete structure that occupies significant former industrial space close to Old Port (3 on the map). In week 5, we scheduled a visit to the Peel Basin, walking from Bâtiment 7 through the neighborhood, examining physical components where I provided some animation about how the neighborhood has changed over the past sixty years. However, rain cut the walk short and only five braved the elements to complete the full tour (6A – 6B on the map). Additionally, in-course activities invited students to move around the grounds adjacent to Bâtiment 7, with many students doing their drawing in the fermette (home to chickens and rabbits) at the back of the building, at the lookoff, or in the adjacent *Jardin des voisins*[59] (2 on the map). Site visits became a critical component of various elements of the course.

[59] Translated as Neighbor's Park

Figure 32: Image from our walk through the neighborhood around the Peel Basin. Participants are observing the 80 meter Murale sur le viaduc (2014) by the Collectif pied du mur.

Independent Studio Making

The independent studio making invited students to formulate their ideas into cohesive projects that shared their background relationship to the neighborhood. Two open working days were scheduled into regular class time, with a week break between the first and second. In addition, four open working sessions were held on Thursdays, inviting more condensed discussions and feedback. During this time, I would meet with students to discuss their ideas, offering material and conceptual suggestions in the development of these works. As I will discuss in Chapter 7, not all participants completed a final project, electing either to discontinue the class after the first five weeks, or starting a project but having insufficient time to realize it.

Themes Emerging from Activities and Content

In the context of the study, the practical use of the activities was to equip students to make completed works of art that stood on their own, infused with ideas about the city. However, by considering the class itself a case study, I had the added opportunity to bring richness to the dissertation by inviting discussion of the open-ended process of making art, especially works that were part of the student's studio processes but were not necessarily intended for public presentation. As such, this section used grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 / 2010; Charmaz, 2014) to analyze the activities we conducted in relation to interview data to examine for emergent themes. Data analysis began during the class, and as themes emerged I followed up with participants about their significance. This provided opportunities to modify

course content, and to integrate insights from my own making as discussed in Chapter 5, blurring the delineation between my own creation and the content of this course.

Mapmaking

In the first class, I asked students to draw a map of their neighborhood that showed how they got from their home to the school that day.[60] The prompt was open ended, with instructions stating that the map did not have to be accurate and did not have to include anything specific. This activity was informed by the participant maps Lynch (1960) used to deduce larger understandings and frameworks of the city. Maps took on many forms that often related to the background of the student. Students who lived close to Bâtiment 7 drew small areas of the city in a grid-like fashion (Figure 33), while others came from further distances and dealt with more extensive elements of the city (Figure 34). After students drew the initial map, I introduced Lynch's five elements of the city–pathways, nodes, landmarks, barriers, and districts–inviting students to return to their maps to either list or label the maps to see where these elements recurred.[61] Based on conversations I had with students during this process, this brought to life some of the components of their neighborhood and encouraged individuals to think through how the built environment impacts daily life. Likewise, looking around the room revealed some profound differences in the ways students engaged the built environment. Some students came to class by car, by bus, walking, or by metro. Others came from relatively long distances across the river to the south or the suburbs in the West Island. During this phase, some participants took creative liberties to represent sentiments they felt about their neighborhoods. For example, Bob began drawing dollar signs to signify how much property values had increased in the neighborhood since he moved in. Speaking of Bob, Lucie L said, "like he I think he bought at the right moment but on his street there's a lot of people who bought and have renovated those places."

[60]Maps have become recognized as a politicized way of representing space due both to what is included and what tends to be omitted. According to cartography historian John Brian Harley (1989), maps are often presented as neutral, descended from scientific inquiry. However, he calls for a shift in perception to trouble the narratives around cartography, and understand that cartography is often an expression of power. This premise has led to political and artistic practices of counter-cartography that re-imagine mapmaking, often from marginalized perspectives (Vieten & Valentine, 2016; Oslender, 2021). This discourse is adjacent to, but slightly outside the uses of mapmaking in this dissertation, but merits acknowledgement.

[61] For a handout of Lynch's elements, see Appendix B.

Figure 34: Participant map demonstrating a grid-like formation of the neighborhood.

Figure 33: Participant map demonstrating a more comprehensive view of the neighborhood.

The final step of this exercise placed students in groups of 2-4 and asked them to draw a large map incorporating each student's individual map. Groups were mostly self-formed based on where students were sitting in the classroom, and each had to develop unique strategies to bring their maps together. The group who created Figure 35 realized that each map could fit within the other and drew the map that included the river before zooming in to Pointe-Saint-Charles. Jaclyn, who has training as an architect, took the lead on drawing, with the group prioritizing an accurate map over an imaginative one. However, she wanted to avoid using software like Google Maps, and retained a fidelity to participants' memory. The group who worked on Figure 36 came from vastly different distances—The West Island, Outremont, and within a block of Bâtiment 7. Ella, one of the participants, recounted that not having to draw the map to scale was liberating, and the group members used different colours and pathways to represent each participants neighborhood and how the city was traversed to arrive at the school. They were forced to find creative ways to represent each of their routes to the school, while capturing the main points of their distinct journeys.

Figure 35: Four maps being conjoined around the theme of the river. Each participant had included the river in their map in some way.

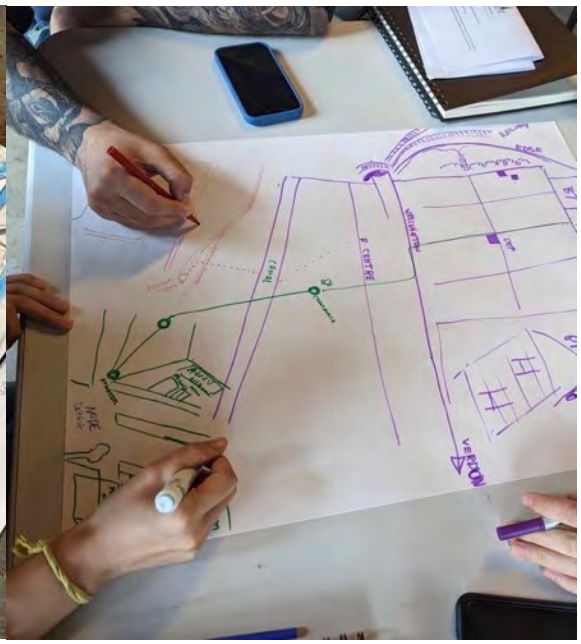

Figure 36: Three maps being conjoined that captured participant movement from Outremont, Downtown, and around the corner from Bâtiment 7.

Mapmaking Themes

The mapmaking exercise provided an exciting way to break the ice and brought participants into conversation with each other. Lucie B and Stephanie's group map was by Lucie B's own admission rather simple yet generated rich reflection. They said,

> [Stephanie was] extremely familiar with the area, and I really only learned about this part of Pointe-Saint-Charles in the last month. So she was sharing her lived experience and knowledge of the different schools. She's a parent, so like the politics of different schools and language barriers. And I was, and my impression as someone who is not from here, is you feel the barriers and edges of the neighborhood strongly. Not actually in a negative way. We were talking about how that effects the character of the neighborhood, and the different histories of immigration that happen around here and that there used to be a huge deterrent to live around anything industrial, and now it really kind of saves you in a way. It really makes a neighborhood more livable and more desirable because you are less likely to have the assault of like, condos and new buildings, etc. Obviously, that is happening here too. We were just talking about those sorts of things, the canals, the waterlines and those sorts of things, and slapping the highways on either side.

Discussion of Pointe-Saint-Charles' barriers recurred through the course and were attributed by architect Pieter Sijpkes (1989) as a reason why The Pointe has been preserved architecturally even as adjacent Goose Village and Griffintown had not been. However, this boxing in has also

kept the Pointe isolated from necessary amenities, which has become a central component of some neighborhood activism. A notable example we will return to was a proposal by Action-Gardien to build an elaborate ramp system from Parc Marguerite Bourgeoise (number 8 on Figure 30) over the train tracks to envisioned park space by the river (Lakehal et al., 2018). Reflecting on barriers, Bob noted that despite Bâtiment 7 feeling like the inner edge of Pointe-Saint-Charles, it is geographically close to the middle of the neighborhood due to the railroad tracks that both intersect the neighborhood and enclose it on the river side, and the highway that runs along the perimeter and the water.

Maps also connect to how we conceptualize space. Lucie B referenced a discussion they had with Stephanie about how maps have become a more integral part of our lives through smartphone software such as Apple Maps and Google Maps. Lucie recalled the experience of looking for greenspace in the city.

> Lucie S: [Stephanie and I] discussed the way that industrial super-corporate mapping works, and both having been led astray at different moments. Like when you live in a city and you just want to go somewhere green, just to have a moment, and you don't do the photographic view and you just look at how they've mapped it, and you arrive somewhere and it's just like,
>
> Jaclyn: A giant parking lot?
>
> Lucie S: Yeah! [Personal communication, April 18, 2023]

Additionally, by making maps, students reckoned with daily experience. After the introduction of Lynch's five elements, Bob discussed how there were an overwhelming number of elements in the Pointe, which were difficult to reduce onto paper. By this, he was referring to the numerous barriers such as the train tracks that cut the neighborhood at various levels, the existing industry such as the rail yard, and the numerous components that could be seen as landmarks, such as the large Nordelec building (once the Northern Electric manufacturing plant) that looms over the northeastern part of the neighborhood. Newer neighborhoods often do not have the architectural history to incur as many architectural components, and spaces that have been hyper-developed often purge elements from

A final consideration is how Lynch's elements became a touchstone in future course discussions, with many hanging on to the printout I made describing the five elements [Appendix B] and some students going on to read *The Image of the City* itself. In the following weeks,

students would use the five elements in discussions about course content, to analyze experiences of the city, and to discuss student work, such as the final projects discussed in Chapter 7. For example, Jaclyn's 35 small paintings representing a walk through Pointe-Saint-Charles led many to reference landmarks and pathways, while Bob's collage map considers the aestheticization of space generally, including pathways, landmarks, nodes, and edges. Meanwhile, Deborah G's work on gentrification and many other projects referenced landmarks. In interviews, critiques, and group making sessions participants were consistently referencing Lynch as a touchstone in discussing artworks and the city.

Social Histories and Activism

Pointe-Saint-Charles' civic activism was consistently mentioned in course content, and in the discussions among students. In slideshows, I shared numerous previous and existing neighborhood activist projects, discussing the history of Bâtiment 7, the historical push in the Pointe for public housing, the Action-Gardien plan for the Peel Basin, and their other plan for connecting the river to Parc Marguerite Bourgeois (#8 on the map) to respond to a lack of access to the river for residents of the neighborhood. For the plan to connect the river to the park, they proposed building a large accessible ramp to pass over the railyard, and to develop lands that are largely inaccessible today into usable waterfront park space. I attempted to present this history with impartiality, offering the students' and opportunity to share if this aligned with their desires for space. However, when I used the word 'inordinate' when discussing the price tag of the park space, many individuals pushed back with comments about how it was a relatively small amount of money for the social value a park would provide.

Figure 37: An excerpt from an Action-Gardien report on access to the river, represented by #8 on Figure 30 (Lakehal et al., 2018, p. 14).

Many participants revealed that they had direct or indirect experience with neighborhood activism, and most students expressed solidarity with these projects. Deborah G. and Deborah A. each discussed the social histories of civic activism in Milton Parc, a neighborhood adjacent to downtown that faced substantial redevelopment–and grassroots pushback–in the 1970's (Helman, 1987). Deborah A.'s family owned a Tabagie in the neighborhood (discussed in Chapter 7) that was demolished to make way for highrise development, and Deborah G lived there as a single mother in the public housing development that came out of neighborhood opposition to corporate redevelopment projects. Françoise, who joined the class early on but discontinued, was involved in various activist projects in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Likewise, Jaclyn is a self-described anti-car advocate, and has been part of many direct-action demonstrations. Lucie L, who trained as a sociologist and worked as a college instructor teaching sociology and French as a second language, developed lessons that sent her students out to learn about the city. As mentioned, there was a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds in the class, but there was not a single instance of a participant opposing the grassroots urban activist projects discussed, and when asked, most expressed concern with unchecked private development in Montréal.

Skill building

Skill building was included in each of the first five weekly courses, helping newer artists find a visual form to express ideas while grounding weekly course content in artmaking. My goal as an educator was to turn drawing into a practice and a process rather than a product through scaffolded approaches. I relied heavily on concepts and exercises such as thumbnail sketches and compositional tricks called armatures (Figures 38 and 39), which offer students a way to be inventive in developing compositions when working from photography and life. In my experience, returning to the fundamentals is usually productive for all when concepts are properly scaffolded, and allow for more experienced artists to push things further if they see fit. Many returning *Landscaping the City* students also mentioned that having concepts repeated from previous iterations helped to give thematic connections to the class. Furthermore, many new and returning students responded positively to the bilingual handouts, with some saying that they had even shared them with their artist friends.

Figure 38: Example of an armature called focal mass. (Ella)

Figure 39: Example of an armature called golden spiral. (Vivianne)

The in-class components were generally well received, but some of the most remarkable moments of skill building happened during the optional Thursday sessions, where I worked in smaller groups with beginner students who were encountering the challenges of artmaking for the first time. In these cases, challenges arose organically, and when they asked questions, responding usually involved a longer explanation of a concept animated by the problem they

were encountering. For instance, in the second outdoor session near the Atwater Market, a few students were drawing the market itself from across the Canal and were unsure how to make the space believable. The lines in their drawings were going off in many directions, which led to an impromptu lesson on perspective, a concept which is difficult enough to explain in a classroom with preparation! As such, I used students' pencil sharpeners to explain the concept of a vanishing point, placing some very close and others far away on a picnic table. Additionally, I explained the difference between one-point perspective and two-point perspective, encouraging students to work with one point perspective in a consistent manner to amend the drawings they were working on. These impromptu lessons led to many conversations about what it means to translate objects in the physical world into 2D representations. Lucie L. said,

> I see something in my head, but there seems to be a disconnect between my head and the hand. And I don't know, I'm looking, and I look at it, and I think maybe that it's not what I see in drawings, it's a bit difficult. Is it normal? I don't know. [Personal communication, April 20]

The impromptu skill building continued with other students who wanted lessons in artistic techniques that I had experience with. Ella had taken drawing classes before and expressed interest in learning oil painting. Given that I was working with oil painting in my own practice, we agreed on a day where we would do a demonstration outside and I would let her use my paints. I went over some basic concepts such as paint application and colour mixing before turning my easel over to her to paint for the session. Others also watched the action, asking questions about working outside and making painting portable.

Formal and Informal Spaces

Other discussions of skill building were discussed in tandem with concepts for thinking about the city. In week 3, I shared a concept that came out of my fieldwork on formal and informal spaces. In my handout, I defined what I meant by this.

> Formal spaces are spaces that have clear uses and do not tolerate informality, such as downtown malls, subway stations and building fronts, especially in upscale neighborhoods. Informal spaces are spaces that do not have clear uses or clear organization, such as ruelles [alleyways], community gardens, the fermette [a small farm behind Bâtiment 7], and some parks, such as Jardin des Voisins. Think of the difference between formal and informal spaces as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy. [Handout, Week 3]

Thinking through informal spaces helped to give meaning to the ways in which the city is ordered. For example, when a natural disaster creates disorder by strewing debris everywhere, many areas such as parks and storefronts clean up quickly, while ruelles are slow to recover. Things like garbage are likewise governed by specific rules as to which day the bins can be placed outside for pickup that are strictly enforced in many Montréal boroughs. There are additionally class dimensions to the grand ordering in the city, which were observed by some students at various points. Since the COVID lockdowns, things like tent cities have become more numerous in most major Canadian cities including Montréal, often in parks or under freeways. This often prompts responses from local governments to return these parks to their 'intended uses,' which are periodically cleared out, displacing those who inhabit them to other parts of the city. Furthermore, social issues like homelessness are often 'fought' with what is called 'anti-social' architectures, such as aggressive armrests on city benches to prevent one from sleeping on them, or 'homeless spikes' to prevent people from panhandling or sleeping outside of stores (Petty, 2016). During one of our walks through Griffintown, one student pointed out how many new condominium buildings enclose certain amenities and common space for socializing, such as gazebos, gyms, and common areas that in older neighborhoods would likely be housed in areas accessible for all.

Figure 40: A mountain of garbage that was likely to be cleared out quickly.

The concept of formal and informal space was paired with an introduction to grayscales and value drawing. I demonstrated how to use a graphite or charcoal ground, providing participants with the materials to first create a 7-value grayscale, and then to produce a drawing of an apple that I concurrently demonstrated. This provided an alternative way to make a drawing that was more akin to painting, but also allowed for both looseness and easy correction of mistakes. I also provided charcoal if students wished to use it, which we had not used in the course prior and was ultimately more forgiving than graphite. It turned drawing from an activity focused on line and composition, into a consideration of value, and encouraged students to think about the whole surface when working.

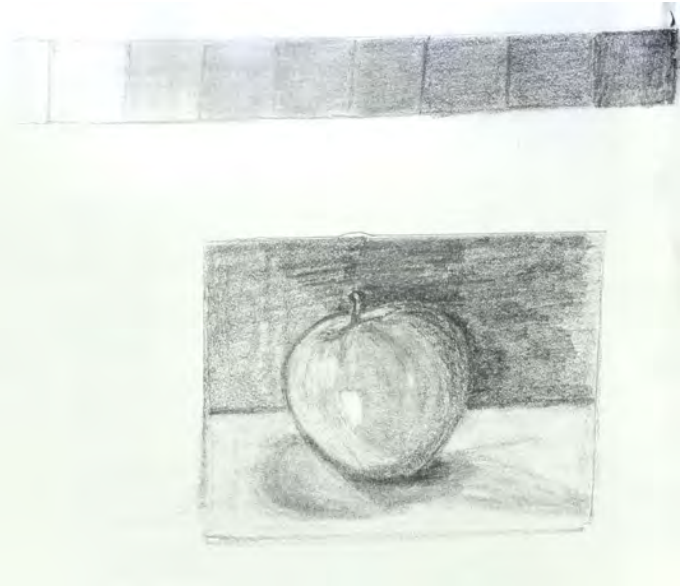

Figure 41: Example of apple and grayscale exercise. (Vivianne)

Following the introduction of this technique, I sent students to find a place in the city that would likely be different tomorrow. It was overcast that day, so students worked both inside and outside.

The spaces adjacent to Bâtiment 7 are rife with examples of informal spaces. The class took place in the Grand Atelier, which is a communal space within Bâtiment 7 that could be both borrowed and rented for periods of time, with an adjacent anarchist library that could double as working space for students. Each space has books, toys, and plants that are constantly moved by those using the space, depending on whatever project is being undertaken in the moment. Ella captured this space in Figure 43, which at various points of the day can have intense rays of light that outline the various plants on the ground. The space in front of the building was a dirt lot that

had planters, picnic tables, and toys that were placed in new arrangements depending on events and functions. In the summer, people often purchase alcohol from the brewery and use the space as a terrace. This space was captured in Figure 42, where Stephanie drew boxes that were presumably for sitting lounging. Others depicted the Jardin des voisins, which is an informal garden a few minutes away that was created through guerrilla gardening by those living nearby and whose amenities are largely organic—the furnishings appear to be leftover patio furniture, birdbaths, and handmade structures such as a playhouse. The space is maintained by the group Eco-Quartier and after some effort on the part of local activists, was preserved as an official city greenspace in 2014 (Luderowski, 2017).

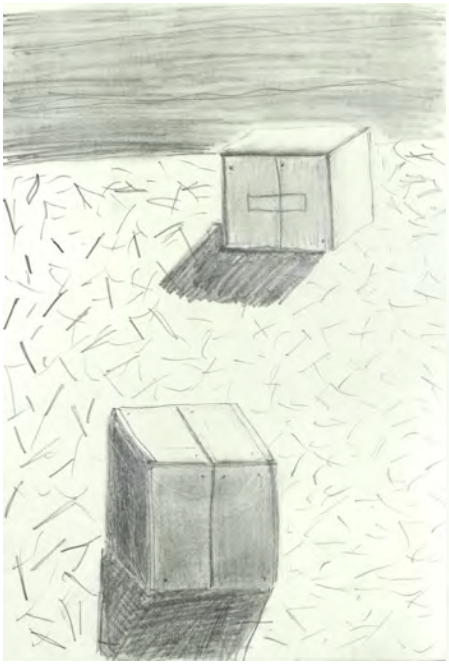

Figure 42: Boxes in the front of Bâtiment 7 (Stephanie)

Figure 43: Strong shadows cast in the Grand Atelier (Ella)

As the course continued, students became attuned to informal spaces in the neighborhood, and the framework became a mainstay of the language some participants developed for thinking about spaces in the city. For example, in my interview with Andrea, who was considering making drawings of her ruelle for the final project, she discussed how the disorganization of space was aesthetically pleasing. Though at the time of our interview in May 2023, she noticed that the use of laneways changed both during the COVID lockdowns, and as things began to recover. She said,

> I've been looking when I went for my walks. I've been looking down the laneways. There's nothing really obscure or something out of place. I suppose this means that I'm not going to be going to the same place like I suppose this means, you know, informal. Whereas during COVID there was, right? Everybody's getting hit with garbage. So, it was interesting to see different things. Now, now everybody's, you know, keeping their laneway clean. That's the difference with COVID, right? People have kind of picked up and cleaning up their neighborhood. [Interview, May 5]

This led to a discussion about clotheslines, and how in the spring and summer they create an ever-changing landscape. However, she noted that in many of the suburbs adjacent to Montréal, clotheslines are often banned under the rationale of being unsightly (Dewolf, 2008). Even in the city of Montréal where clotheslines are more common, every borough has rules for proper clotheslines usage.[62] However, for Andrea, there is a beauty in looking at what people place on their lines. She said, "When you go away, I was in Europe. You know, you see them in Italy. Clothes are like little clothes lines outside, you know. And it's so nice" (Interview, May 5) Even as she noted that it can be a double-edged sword: "It's not pleasing that people's underwear hanging on the line. You know what I mean?" In response to what this conjured, she planned a final project that would work from photographs of clotheslines in her laneway to make commentary on the restrictions and un-freedom experienced by those on the outskirts of the city. While Andrea did not return to the class after a planned vacation, this plan stands out as someone thinking through the formality and informality of spaces through a potential artmaking project.

Box Paintings

The box paintings I mentioned in Chapter 5 became of tremendous interest to individuals around the art school and in the class, which led me to add an optional day where participants were introduced to the basics of the method. We met at a site called Silo #5 near Montréal's old port, next to a well-known spa on a boat called Bota-Bota (#3 on Figure 30). Silo #5 is a large, imposing post-industrial grain silo discussed in Chapter 2 that while abandoned since the late 90s is of significant heritage value[63] and has since been the subject of numerous proposals for its renewal. Today, the site is slowly deteriorating, with a mix of rusty metal and crumbling

[62] These can be explored here: https://Montréal.ca/demarches/installer-une-corde-linge

[63] https://memento.heritageMontréal.org/en/site/silo-no-5/

concrete providing ample visual interest for painting and drawing. I provided all the necessary materials and offered a brief demo. Even though attendance was optional, almost every participant in the class was present. The paintings were 2 x 2.5 inches in size, which fit perfectly to the dimensions of the box, and we used a #1 and #0 sized brush. While I usually use oil in my own practice, for this exercise we used acrylic due to its washability and portability.

Figure 44: Participants working on their paintings.

Figure 45: Example of Lou's small outdoor paintings.

The students found a variety of approaches to carry out in the box paintings, creating works that were often surprising to each participant. The novelty of the creation kept newer artists excited about the process, whereas the small working space proved to be a challenge for some of the other participants. I noted that most of the experienced artists struggled immensely with brush control, while the newer artists had an easier time letting go. Jaclyn, who has a highly technical drawing background, expressed frustration with the small scale, even as she carried on with this method of painting as discussed in Chapter 7. Others were comfortable with the forced abstraction that the paintings provided, with participants such as Lucie L continuing to paint them on her own time, asking advice on how she could continue with the works in the future. For some, the box paintings became an extension of thumbnails, extending the idea of doing something small and quick in plein air. Many physically glued the paintings into their

sketchbooks, using the small paintings to further and connect to other artistic thinking and projects in the class (Figures 46 and 47).

Figure 46: Excerpt from Ella's sketchbook.

Figure 47: Excerpt from Deborah A's sketchbook.

Sound and Smell

During the third class, we watched a mini documentary by a Montréal activist group called *Reverberations d'une crise*, who investigated of Montréal's housing crisis through sound art (*Réverberations d'une Crise*, n.d.). This bilingual documentary used experimental sound and visuals to weave informative content about the state of Montréal's urban development. The documentary discussed things like construction, displacement, and gentrification, which led participants to reflect on how soundscapes impacted their relationship to the city. My notes indicated most of the initial feedback was a mix of perplexity and skepticism, as many students did not seem to see the point of the sound as a medium. Deborah G said in a later interview that the sound component was weird, though she had realizations about the work later.

> I thought, why did they put that noise [in the video]? And then I thought, that is probably the noise that a street person experiences. You don't ever get quiet, but there is always a buzz going on. Maybe that's what they were trying to show–from a noise perspective–from somebody on the street? Because I found the noise to be very stressful. But that

could have been the whole point. It would not make it to a premier movie because people would probably not like it aesthetically. It wouldn't be popular in a mainstream context. [Personal communication, November 14]

Figure 48: Lookoff facing Montréal's downtown from the top of the sound wall

Sound is a recurring political concern in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Jaclyn discussed the sound wall only one block from Bâtiment 7 on Sébastopol (#2 on Figure 30), which is a barrier made of soil, grass, and a sound-reflecting structure created to shield residents from the sound of the noise of the adjacent trainyard that was finished in 2017 (Figure 49 and 50). There is a lookoff at the top of the sound wall that provides a comprehensive view of Montréal's downtown skyline and the rail yards (Figure 48). During an interview taken on the sound wall while drawing outside, Lucie S remarked how the wall was built due to pressure from rich gentrifiers, yet that it does become a compelling amenity enjoyed by all. Lucie L discussed how on summer days, there is a perceptible difference in the soundscape of a rich neighborhood and a poor neighborhood, with poorer neighborhoods often having a more vibrant soundscape of children playing and cars honking, while rich neighborhoods tend to be quieter. Connecting this to Lucie S's insight, as Pointe-Saint-Charles has changed in its class make-up, so too has the soundscape, with the noises of factories and rail yards dampening extensively post-industrialization. Others made connections to how sound was becoming a political issue in some Montréal neighborhoods

due to the hours that venues play shows, leading the city to re-think residential zoning and the hours that spectacles can be played (Macdonald, 2023).

Figure 49: Sound wall built on Sebastopol

Figure 50: Sound wall continued. Demonstrating the relative length and height of the wall

Shortly after we watched the video, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) began testing the Réseau metropolitain express (REM) system, which is an automated train system that connects the off-island municipality of Brossard to downtown passing directly by Bâtiment 7, the north-western edges of Pointe-Saint-Charles, and Griffintown. The train made a loud grinding noise and was passing by at regular 5–15-minute intervals that many residents found disruptive, leading to discussion and debates about neighborhood soundscapes both in the class and in the community at large (Magder, 2023). As the course moved on, many students made comments about how disruptive the noise was to their day, with one participant mentioning that it was disrupting enjoyment to their yard. Community organizations and residents voiced concerns about the noise, which ultimately led to noise-softening measures along the tracks ("REM Reduce Train Noise," 2023).

General Course Themes

Seeing the City Differently

Many of the above examples highlight how the exercises and frameworks led to changed perspectives of the city. Sound, formal and informal spaces, and different drawing techniques in their own ways force one to consider spaces differently, which was echoed in many follow-up interviews. Bob, a retired ceramicist and university administrator, began the course claiming he did not pay much mind to the city despite thinking often about philosophical and social

problems. Bob conducted high level philosophy on his blog,[64] but began the course as a complete beginner with drawing. While his interest in drawing tapered off, he continued to ask questions to myself and others about our ideas and outlooks which I found gave me productive friction at many moments that helped to refine my own thinking. The city is fully of complex politics and citizen needs that are often not met. The stated aims of Action-Gardien's Peel Basin and river park proposal are attempts to meet the critical needs which have an undercurrent of urgency amid myriad social crises. While Bob appeared aligned with these needs, he once mentioned that whatever is built in these areas will be with us long after we are dead and will be streets that our children and grandchildren will inherit. With this insight, I began to see these developments not as something to meet present needs, but as things which generations in 100 years will be navigating—if not the physical infrastructure, certainly the layout of parks and streets. How might we organize cities for the future? This may seem simple, but this insight helped to give me a longer perspective about urban development and tied into the insights of Santos (2021a) about the legacies of past infrastructures, while also putting the urgency of our present time in context.

Some students came to *Landscaping the City III* after taking previous *Landscaping the City* classes, which seemed to have an impact on how they saw the content of this class, and the city in general. Deborah A had taken the course once before, and Louise H and Nadia participated in both previous sections. Deborah mentioned that the course had gotten her thinking about the city and set a path for creating artworks and thinking about her own relationship to space. Her work is featured in Chapter 7. Louise H mentioned how previous iterations of the class helped to train her eye to examine her neighborhood of the Plateau and led her to develop an outdoor sketching practice. Nadia additionally has made many works about the city and sketching outside, taking landscape and exterior paintings as a critical component of her practice that is also discussed in Chapter 7. The first two iterations of *Landscaping the City* coincided also with the art school's push outside during COVID, and this led to an outdoor drawing club forming at the art school that continues to this day. Nadia, Louise H, and Deborah have all participated in this club which includes other former participants, as have *Landscaping the City III* student Adam and Jaclyn. The outdoor club continues to meet at various points in the

[64] Visible here: https://bobkavanagh.ca/

neighborhood, and even recently published a book of sketches showcasing how the club has inspired each artists' practice.

Precarity and Change in the City

At numerous points, participants expressed unease at the precarity brought on by higher house prices and rents. Deborah G discussed her own past in Montréal, and how she was one of the first people to move into a condominium along the Lachine Canal in the early 2000s. At the time condominiums were cheap, and she purchased it as a single mother working in an administrative position. However, as more condominiums were approved and the canal was built up, the value and cost of these properties increased. Vivianne, whose work is featured in Chapter 7, discussed how she used to come to the neighborhood to pick up and drop off her father. She described the Pointe back in the 70s as being dark and industrial, with the area adjacent to Bâtiment 7 having many workers filing in and out. She described her amazement of how the character of the area had changed.

> In fact, it's so shocking to me that my husband, who lived in St. Henri, I told him and he didn't believe me. On Sunday, we took a drive. We came all the way around. I parked in front of this house on St. Madeleine Street, and I said, "I'm going to show you." I put it on my phone, and I showed him a million six. And he couldn't believe it. Because this was working class, this was the townhouses.
>
> So, where is The Pointe going to be? You know, what's it going to happen to it? So, if you have a million six houses, though, these people will not be knocking down this row of houses, won't they? I mean, for a million six, you're not going to let this real estate be eradicated anytime soon, so it's going to be The Pointe. But it won't have the character, the people of the Point. [Personal communication, May 23]

Reflecting on how Bâtiment 7 and the adjacent area used to look, Vivianne remarked,

> There were people that was busy-ness. There were chain link fences. There were the tracks. There was my, you know, all the men going in the factory, in the workshop, actually. Yeah. And it was busy. And now I look and it's empty. But at least we have this little gem here. [Personal communication, May 23]

Vivianne's observations put Bâtiment 7 into a larger context of the transformation of the neighborhood. While the project poses itself as one of neighborhood self-preservation, the changes such as the ruelle bleue-verte (discussed in Chapter 2), and the continued development of housing–even public housing–represents a departure from factory work and infrastructural uses. Furthermore, the quietness of Bâtiment 7 alludes to some of the challenges mentioned in

earlier chapters— despite Bâtiment 7 framing itself as a hub of community engagement, the building is often quiet throughout the day and struggles to welcome many locals.

Lou discussed her own experiences with renoviction. She told me at the start of the class that her landlord had been trying to evict her for some time by offering payouts and making vague threats. She moved to Montréal in the early 2000s from a small town about an hour away from Montréal, living in the same apartment for 23 years in the Plateau. She decided to move back to the Eastern Townships–the name given to the region and its many towns between Montréal and Sherbrooke–at the conclusion of her lease, which coincided to the time *Landscaping the City III* would end.

> I came to Montréal this time, I had been living in Sutton for some time and I loved it, and I always thought I would go back, but for some reason I ended up getting stuck in the city and wanting to go back. Now, I'm going back, and I feel I didn't want to put roots down, but I think I did. You know, I wouldn't miss at all–I certainly wouldn't miss leaving the Plateau, but I will miss Pointe-Saint-Charles and the school and things like *Partegeons l'espoir*[65] and these activities, so it's a challenge for other reasons too more personal like having to drive again.
>
> And, yeah, so I was thinking especially today especially coming on Wellington I was thinking, "Oh, if I would have looked more maybe I would have found something in this neighborhood," but at the same time it has become so expensive that I probably could afford it but it would limit me if I move some place because it's cheap–and it's not like it would be cheap like some place in the country like Sutton [a town in the Eastern Townships] would be–, you know, you can't move there. It's just an opportunity I have that means I might now have money to travel or to do something else as opposed to, you know, just pay my rent. So, right now it's a bit of a frightening thing the way things are going right now. [Personal communication, April 20, 2023]

Louise also placed these changes in a larger context. She noted that it was largely young people and retirees who were facing displacement, but she harkened back to her memories of when she first moved to the city in the 60s. The neighborhood at that time housed many ethnic communities that slowly moved to the neighborhoods of Parc Extension and Jean Talon, now facing gentrification largely because of the Université de Montréal's new MIL campus and adjacent condo residences. The Plateau was once a working-class neighborhood, and around the mentioned time of the Milton Parc development in the 1970s, it began to become much more desirable leading to increasing immigration from places like France. In my discussions with

[65] Translated as "Share the Warmth," which is a social service agency mentioned in Chapter 2.

Louise and others, there was concern around where people who were displaced by more recent waves of gentrification would ultimately end up given that there are not many low-rent neighborhoods left in the city.

Discussions around increasing rents and displacement filtered into discussions about neighborhood's physical and social characteristics. Stephanie volunteers with a local community organization dedicated to serving and empowering the poor. Thinking on these questions, she said

> It can't just be like high expensive stuff and everybody gets kicked out. There has to be a way that everybody can like cohesively live. You know? Like I just like that's the thing. I'm like how does that happen? You know? [Personal communication, May 19, 2023]

In this regard, many participants described a lingering helplessness about the changes in the city. Lucie S, themselves a renter, discussed how the increasing precarity makes it even harder for tenants to organize for better policy solutions because the material fears of homelessness unconsciously dictate everything they do. Organization and politics after all require substantial effort to initiate and retain, and this also puts one at risk for having their names blacklisted from renting. They believed this problem was only getting worse.

> I know two people being renovicted now. I mean in the 10 years before I didn't know one you know so. And my landlady put my thing for rent in the building. And I'm like, fuck, man. When you don't have a stable home your whole life, yeah, of course it's a great way to get people not to organize. Because if you're concerned about where you're going to live, you're not necessarily going to have time to talk to your neighbor. [Personal communication, April 25, 2023]

Public Works Projects and Long-Term Thinking

Many participants discussed Montréal's known challenges around construction. As a city known for having torso-height orange traffic cones that often block entire streets for seasons at a time, some participants expressed frustration at the overwhelming amount of seemingly endless concurrent construction projects. Even as I write this, my entire residential street is blocked off for a second year in a row for an indefinite amount of time, for reasons that were not properly communicated on the outset. Once we moved past some of the common annoyance of Montréal's reputed construction, some of these dialogues led to longer-term thinking. One participant was reflecting on how inefficient it seemed that planned work was not coordinated, leading to streets being excavated, re-paved, and re-excavated. In response, someone said,

> we all complain about all the pylons, I got it. Okay, well, we could wait and let our kids drive into sinkholes, right? Or one day when a fire truck is running down the street at 75 kilometers an hour and the intersection falls in, we could wait until that happens. And people will say, “why didn’t the city do something about it?” [Personal communication, June 8, 2023]

Another participant interjected that a city with as many infrastructural challenges as Montréal would have a difficult time coordinating across so many departments and pushed back against the feasibility of such a large-scale coordination. This tied in to the discussion with the sound problems with the train. Bob said,

> It's like we're all bitching now about all the noise from the train. Well, why didn't they think about it?... I mean, I'm pissed, but I'm not so bright that I would have thought of it. [But] we have to get that REM right because, long after even you're dead, it'll still be there. [Personal communication, June 8, 2023]

This perspective brought a much-needed long perspective on the urgency and permanence of urban development. Pointe-Saint-Charles is packed full of elements of bygone industrial eras whose intended uses are defunct yet will be with us for hundreds of more years. As the housing crisis continues to worsen, there is rightly urgency to build enough housing stock as fast as possible. But at the same time, decisions made in haste around new development in the built environment are likely to be with us for hundreds of years.

As the class was underway, there was an adjacent development extending nearby roads into former CN railyard land. Part of this process was paving a few kilometers of roads continuing the grid pattern of the Pointe. In relation to Bob’s point, this reminded me of the permanence of roads, and how small decisions made long in the past can dictate road placement long into the future. Growing up in a somewhat rural place, I recall asking my father why the roads were windy rather than straight. He explained that the first roads were cowpaths that farmers cleared to move cattle and carts from one place to another, and when forests were cleared for roads, they followed the paths that were already trampled. By the advent of the automobile, technology had developed to the point that one could develop a road easily in a straight line, but the cowpath was already there, so it was often preferable to pave the land that was already flattened. In my research on this point, I can only find urban legends rather than any concrete evidence about cowpaths. Instead, there is evidence that many roadways were indeed paved over Indigenous routes, which long predate colonization (Ethington et al., 2023; “Micro-

Walk #5," 2024). The point remains that the structure of cities and roads often remain for generations.

Community

Within a few classes, it was apparent that a strong community was forming among the participants, who began to take a keen interest at first in others' works and in the social aspect of the course. On a few occasions both in interviews and discussions, participants credited this community as the reason why they remained so engaged and committed to the course. Social events such as the optional Thursdays, in addition to a potluck in the final class and the final exhibition all contributed to fostering strong bonds. Participants' plurality of experiences meant that there were numerous expertises in the room, and on many occasions, we had sidebar discussions on things such as art and the art market, politics, education, and sociology.

Ella, who was one of the youngest participants in the class and a student at a nearby formal art university, discussed how refreshing the atmosphere was compared to a formal art school.

> Ella: I really liked the class dynamic because I feel like it was not necessarily people who I would usually be socializing with. It's not people that I would usually be socializing with so I was really like happy to like be meeting people who are older than me especially. Like there's this I think she might have stopped coming but one of the first classes it was a lady with like a really cool fabric as a shawl and I said oh that's really cool and she said oh it's a knitting… I feel like usually when you're a university student the people that you see are mostly like 18-year old's to like 45 or like 35 mostly concentrated in that area. So it was it was fun. I really enjoyed it. [Personal communication, June 14, 2023]

She loved that people came from all walks of life and did not necessarily flaunt their experience, claiming that she was completely unaware of some of the advanced experience and degrees that her classmates held. They instead just had conversations that were inclusive and wide ranging. Referring to one such conversation, Ella said,

> Some people who were in that specific conversation because we're like all four of us, like Lucy's gone to art school. I'm in art school, you're in art school, Bob is a ceramicist. But it was a really interesting conversation. I feel like we don't talk about that when we're in art school because we don't have that experience yet and we don't know. So like I don't talk about that with my peers… And I don't know, it's kind of intimidating to solicit that kind of conversation from your professors. [Personal communication, June 14, 2023]

This struck a positive chord, as one of my goals as an instructor is to both foster a strong community, and to empower each participant to engage in dialogue without reservation. Feedback such as this meant that my teaching philosophy was having positive effects on both the research the class was set up for, and the humanistic aims of my pedagogy.

Despite these positive aspects. I felt I fumbled the community aspect of the class in the later components. The first four weeks led to a tight-knit community that had a positive energy in the classroom. There was some confusion among participants about *what* we were doing, even though some shared that it was unclear *why* we were conjoining painting and drawing. But overall, the course maintained its shape and direction. We had a scheduled visit to the Peel Basin in week 5 that was completely washed out by heavy rain. Most of the class had joined us for a walk through the neighborhood, but just as we reached the Peel Basin it began to downpour and most people left. The five that continued ended up in a McDonalds in Griffintown drinking tea and coffee talking about the city in what turned out to be a personal highlight for the class. I will discuss how this rainout impacted the research in the discussion section but given that the following weeks were dedicated for studio time informed by our site visit, it left many people without ideas for their project. The final three classes had sparser attendance, with the final critique and potluck having only 13 students. Based on what those who fell away said, I believe I could have had a more scaffolded or prescriptive approach to the final project that might have kept others engaged, with the open working time appearing intimidating to some. I will discuss some possible solutions to this in my conclusion in Chapter 9.

Research

On the first day of the class, my doctoral supervisor came to hand out the Information and Consent forms to hold in trust until the course was concluded. Nadia said that this placed a gravity over the course which was well received because it was free, but also on what we were doing in the research. She said,

> it was a little bit intimidating and confusing at least for me, because this introduction by Kathleen seemed, at least for me, it's like, do I sell my blood or [laughing]… So it was really like, what am I signing up for? Because it really sounded like, it was a lot of "you can drop off any time," and all of these instructions. But we really wanted to be part of the project, but this sounded really like a medical test or something. This is probably the institution behind it and the research, and I understand you have to maintain certain standards, but this was confusing because our school is pretty easy going. [Personal communication, February 6, 2024]

On one level, I am happy as a researcher that the gravity of the study was communicated to participants, but it is unfortunate that a cold, clinical spell was cast over the first days of the research. I imagine I bought some good will at least with the repeating students who knew me and had taken other iterations of *Landscaping the City*. Nevertheless, we seemed to move on from this tone quickly and it did not seem to re-surface.

The call for participants [Appendix C] mentioned that research would feature prominently in the class, and I imagined this would deter many from registering. However, during the discussion about the consent forms, participants mentioned that the research component was a reason for their registration rather than an incidental component. This interest meant that participants asked lots of questions about my project, posing thoughts and suggestions for technical aspects such as transcription and data analysis. Others offered sources for me to follow up on that might be of interest. Lucie L. worked as a college professor for many years and grappled with critical pedagogy through a feminist and Marxist lens, and suggested books on Montréal neighborhoods and critical pedagogy. Others offered suggestions on some of the translations of Kevin Lynch's work, such as more precise words in French for the five elements. Many participants had extensive résumés as researchers, holding advanced degrees. Andrea worked in medical research, and we had discussions about the overlaps and divisions between scientific, qualitative, and arts-based research. Lucie L. was working on a project on fostering empathy in medical students at a local university, and we had a few discussions about the iterative process of research questions. Louise worked for a research project that studied mental health and homelessness, where they found it was cheaper to simply find apartments for homeless people and provide proper supports, as otherwise people end up in the medical and carceral system. Not only did this provide for vibrant discussions during the class, but excellent meta-discussions about the position of my own research.

Beyond the specific discussion on research, students took a helpful tone in what I was looking for as a researcher, which created some awkward moments where I struggled to explain my position. As Deborah G said, "A lot of us are trying to define what your thesis is going to be. In some ways we want to try to stay on topic so we can help you, but you have left it pretty wide open too." My aim was to invite inductive participant reflection, basing my research off what participants themselves brought to the course. However, I never found a satisfactory way to answer this in the moment, often complicating research that I was in the process of deducing.

When inductive research is done properly and openly, one is required to enter with an open mind without preconceptions. This often led to conversations fuelled by my own uncertainty that got into the weeds of educational research, place-based research, and arts-based research. Arts-based research often became the quilting point that many participants latched on to in these discussions, often for its novelty. Bob, who wrote a practice-based dissertation focused on craft, asked me many epistemological and theoretical questions about what arts-based research is, and discussed at length what constitutes knowledge, and how knowledge would be created through my dissertation.

Instructor / Researcher Themes

In my own reflections, I also identified being uncertain about the dynamic of the class, noting that at times I felt like I was more of an observer than an active participant or a leader. By this, I meant that many students over time became close and developed personal relationships, while the size overall meant that I divided students often into smaller groups as part of think-pair-share exercises. This meant that as a researcher, it felt like I was performing a biopsy of conversations I was not fully privy to, noting that it felt like I was not inside the classroom. This was reified when I was later examining student sketchbooks, which came to me in a moment while reading Vivianne's sketchbook. Page by page, my handouts and notes from different course components were pasted beside the in-class assignments for the week. Each component was taken with a care and seriousness that served as a reminder that each student is has a deeply personal connection to the course material that I was not privy to as an instructor. In the case of Vivianne's sketchbook, I could chart her growth page by page, as course content shifted to self-direction and into a final project. Part of the vulnerability of my method through this class was my direct involvement in making as an artist researcher (discussed in Chapters 5 and 8), and until that point it had been unclear how these were first finding resonance, and then integration into someone's practice. Never had I been so directly reminded of the co-creation that happens in every classroom.

Discussion and Conclusion

Examining the themes in their totality, I feel the class was successful in its goal to foster artistic and intellectual inquiry about the city. Thought and participation splintered in many directions, creating numerous sub-narratives that have been a pleasure (and a struggle) to piece

together. Participants demonstrated intellectual freedom in their pursuits, seemingly unafraid to push back and offer counterpoints against things I and others said. However, I did feel there were missed opportunities to push the conceptual aspects further. Two students who eventually left the class asked me in the first session about where and how we would be imagining the city, which was a promise made in the course description. In my mind, the imagination would be conjured through creation, but there were moments where the creation was not terribly imaginative—Most projects focused on examining what was before us rather than considering what the city *ought* to be. I have already been developing lessons and projects that could invite more direct imagination which would find their way into future iterations of the course (which I will discuss further in the conclusion, Chapter 9). Nevertheless, many students indeed shared perspectives for ideal cities through their making that were featured in the exhibition (some of which are highlighted in Chapter 7).

The Exhibition

Two months after the course concluded, we held the exhibition in a former bank building on the edge of Rue Wellington and Rue Ste Madeleine, which is the residence of a retired McGill architecture professor who was present in neighborhood activism in the 70s. I decided to hold the exhibition two months later so that each participant had time to finish their work, and so we could properly organize an exhibition based on the works participants made. The interior was usually this Professor's living space, which he generously offered to us for a week and a half. Works were hanged on 4' x 8' plywood that was arranged in an accordion fashion, creating a self-supporting structure for display. Each participant was invited to submit their final project and preparatory work. I also invited former participants of on-line *Landscaping the City* classes to contribute projects I felt accented the present iteration. Four video works were played on repeat above a small table, which hosted smaller works on paper, including works from the box painting session. Current and former students contributed about 20 projects in addition to artefacts from the class, such as sketchbook pages and box paintings. 11 of those were complete final projects as part of *Landscaping the City III.*

Figure 49: Image showing works on the table and the projection screen at the final exhibition.

Figure 50: Image showing works on the table. We can also see the ways in which the walls were suspended, using an accordion shape which created a self-sustaining structure.

The exhibition was open to the public for seven total days over two weekends in addition to a vernissage. We advertised internally to Bâtiment 7, my networks in Concordia, and with a poster on the door. The vernissage was well attended with students and their families and the school's community at large, attracting dozens of people through the evening. Drinking and socializing continued well into the night both in the gallery and in the building's backyard garden. We took turns sitting the gallery during its opening hours, and during my shifts we had many people who were walking by and happened into the space. For those participants I spoke with in the months following, the exhibition provided an excellent moment to commend and recognize work participants created.

Conclusion

Developing courses based on the spaces students either live in or access regularly has continued to provide rich ground for pedagogy and research due to the multiple diverging perspectives students bring to the classroom. This case study contributes to a longstanding and growing literature of place-based art education (Eg: Hutzel, 2007; Bertling, 2015; Gray & Birrell, 2015) and provides emerging ideas of the classroom as a site of co-creation. The collection of individuals who chose to accompany me through this course created a dynamic research environment that is seldom matched—They provided me the privilege of having 17 adults thinking through and with the questions I was thinking about. While the results of this will be discussed further in Chapter 7, I would encourage other art educators engaging in research to take up methods that invite co-creation and egalitarian engagement with common questions.

Figure 51: Jaclyn's painting of Habitat 67, an experimental building project developed for Expo 67 near Silo #5.

Chapter 7 | Tobacco, Walks, and Maps: Participant Projects as Inductive Testimony

This chapter focuses on the outcomes of the community-based research-creation (CBRC) component of this dissertation, which is a methodology I developed to gather long-form, inductive testimony that conjoins participants' oral testimony with art projects of their own creation (LeRue, 2023b). CBRC was developed while thinking through possibilities for collaborative artmaking with the frameworks and ethics of oral history (Yow, 2014; High, 2015), taking the participant as an expert of their own lives and stories (Frisch, 1990) while engaging in reciprocal ethnography. *Landscaping the City III* was developed to put this method into action as I addressed my research questions, "How can personal and community classroom-based artworks developed from rooted experiences in place reveal interconnections with the wider world?" And, "how can research-creation be adapted to landscape painting in my personal studio practice and in the community classroom?" I view Chapters 6 and 7 as complementary, with 6 focusing on the insights generated through the process of artistic creation in a community classroom, while 7 contends with what insights products of this creation offer as data in a larger research study. I received 11 final projects that included media such as watercolour, oil painting, painting that used found fabric as surfaces, collage, video, printmaking, a tattoo design, and drawings that

were made with numerous ideas and ambitions, with a few incomplete projects using techniques such as rug hooking and bookmaking. In what follows, I will analyze six projects that speak to the depth of thinking brought about by artmaking, focusing specifically on projects that the participant viewed as complete.

I will begin this chapter by outlining the method of CBRC and the ethics for interpreting student artworks, summarizing points made in my 2023 article on the method. I will continue by discussing the six artworks, putting them into conversation with this research and each other. I will give some background to each participant, and where data are available outline how they came to their ideas. Following this, I will discuss the possibilities of CBRC in future projects before concluding by reflecting on my initial assumptions about the method.

Model of CBRC Methodology

CBRC is a method designed to use the community arts classroom as a method for engaging in inductive research, with principles of reciprocity (Lawless, 1992; 2019) and egalitarian community engagement at its core. In CBRC, the researcher holds art courses that invite either a general or targeted community to engage directly with the researcher-teacher's research through a class on the topic of the researcher-teacher's choosing. Ideally, the participants who join such a study have a pre-existing interest in the topic. The framework calls for prolonged engagements of at least 6-8 weeks, where the researcher and participants can build trust and establish a strong class dynamic, engage in discussions, and where necessary, the researcher can help students develop the necessary skills for artistic expression. Classes should be taught in such a way that provides access to learners of all levels, backgrounds (though backgrounds may be targeted here), and abilities by not requiring that students have expertise in a medium or framework before attending. In addition, time in class should offer ample space for reflection and low-stakes activities to explore key concepts and ideas. A substantial portion of the class should prepare students to complete a final project, which should be open-ended enough that participants are invited to share their honest viewpoints at whatever skill level can feel comfortable in seeing through its completion. The classroom study in Chapter 6, *Landscaping the City III*, was designed with CBRC in mind, with the data collection modeling my ideals in the initial paper.

How this process works is outlined in Figure 52, which is a mind-map of how CBRC works. On the left, we have the class and topic which is animated by in-class exercises, site

visits, experiential learning, participant reflection, group discussions, and peer feedback. In this way, the class becomes an ecosystem that is not based primarily on multiple student-instructor relationships, but one where ideas and perspectives flow between participants, providing richer inputs into participants artworks and broader perspectives than the instructors' alone. These coalesce in the student artwork, which I refer to as a work of CBRC. Finally, the work lives on in the research study, which has its own theoretical framing, engages in other forms of historical and present-day research, may engage with oral history or archive research, and potentially with other works of CBRC.

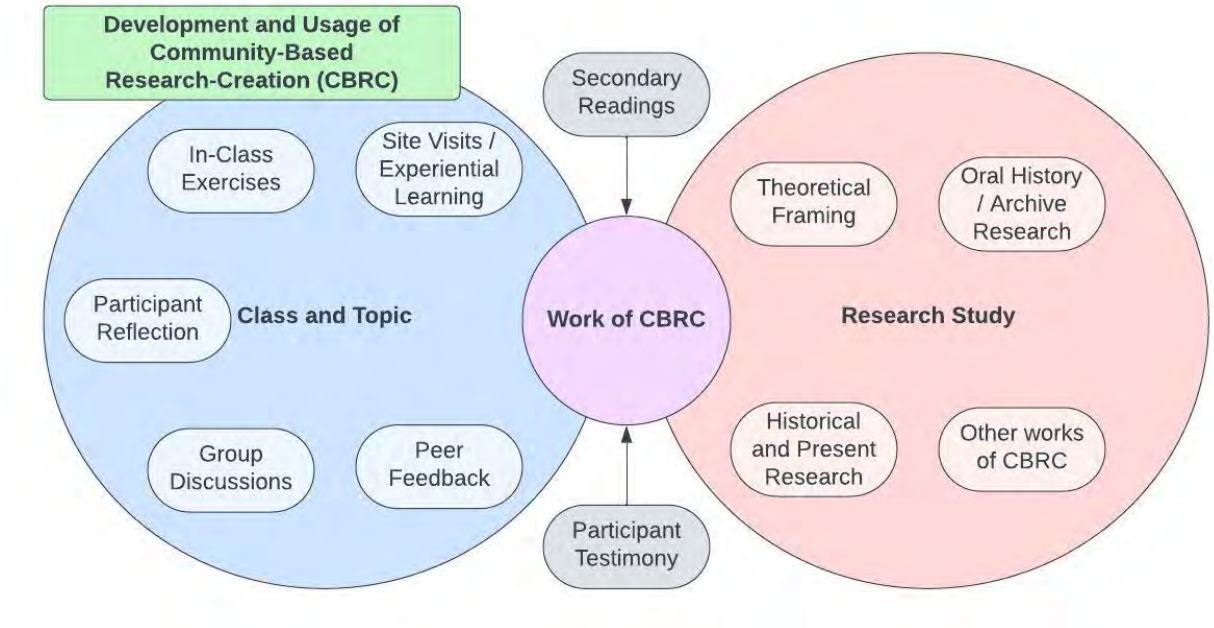

Figure 52: Mind map of the function of CBRC.

Interpretive Framework and Ethics

A work of CBRC appears as a physical artwork like any other, but the teacher-researcher is beholden to certain research ethics that bear consideration. In a traditional studio classroom, the etiquette for observing artworks tends to favour the view that works take a life of their own outside of the intention of the creator and are open to new interpretations after making (Barrett, 2018). In the community classroom, peers are likely to have many ideas about the meaning of a work, just as our sensibilities as educators and artists are likely to draw new interpretations. However, to hold the ethic from oral history that the participant is expert in the context of artmaking requires shifting these values. To overcome this contradiction, I advise a three-stage process for contextualizing CBRC artworks:

1. The creator's interpretation is the primary reading of the artwork. This means that interpretations made by the instructor or fellow peers, even if voiced, should not be used to override the primary reading.
2. Views of the instructor and fellow students can add to, complicate, or otherwise enhance the intended reading of the work. This retains primacy to the creator while also considering what new perspectives can bring to the ideas brought forward by the work.
3. The researcher, acknowledging 1 and 2, may also put the work into conversation with other questions, research, and considerations.

I believe these principles produce the fairest way to keep the organic relationship between what art conjures in the viewer and the art, and the intentions of the primary maker. While it is impossible to control what one thinks or believes when one looks at a work (just as it is impossible to control what one thinks about the contents of an interview), the principle of reciprocity means that we owe participants to do right by their visions. In-line with these ethics, I will be aiming to represent what participants say in this chapter, offering additional contextualization only when necessary. As such, I will not be fact checking what participants say, instead giving written representation and contextualization to their ideas as an accent to the concepts that underpin the artworks.

Putting CBRC Into Action

In this thesis, CBRC was used to learn about the relationships between the participants and the neighborhood, building on the inductive dialectical theory in Chapter 3 and the inductive arts-based methods discussed in Chapter 4 (see also LeRue & Jalil, 2024) and considerations of landscape representation.[66] In-line with Figure 53, the classroom was set up to bring participant perspectives into conversation with the city of Montréal through an open-ended art curriculum. In-line with the dialectical triad of Henri Lefebvre (1991), student-participants come to the course with their own theoretical perspectives of the city, which may (for example) include extensive thoughts about the philosophy of urbanism or rather rudimentary views of the

[66] Landscape is brought into frameworks of spatial development through Lefebvre's (1991) dialectical urbanism, which states that the built environment is the product of human production which in turn comes to produce the lives of the people that live there. Lefebvre's dialectical triad argues that spaces are first produced for production by those with power–such as capitalists or kings-- Adding to this Massey's (1995; 2005) assertion that the meanings of places are always contested, subject to change now and in the future.

importance of certain neighborhood amenities. Likewise, artistic perspectives may include those who have not drawn since they were children, while others may be accomplished artists. Additionally, each has a personal relationship to the city that may span a lifetime or only a few weeks. The lines in Figure 53 represent how the participant acts upon and engages with the city of Montréal, which is considered as both a built and social environment. The curriculum specifically focused on Pointe-Saint-Charles, but many of our participants came from other parts of the city, and reflections about Montréal in general were indeed most welcome. The city in turn acts upon the participant, which creates an overlapping intersection labelled the participant – city relationship, which is what I am trying to know through this study.

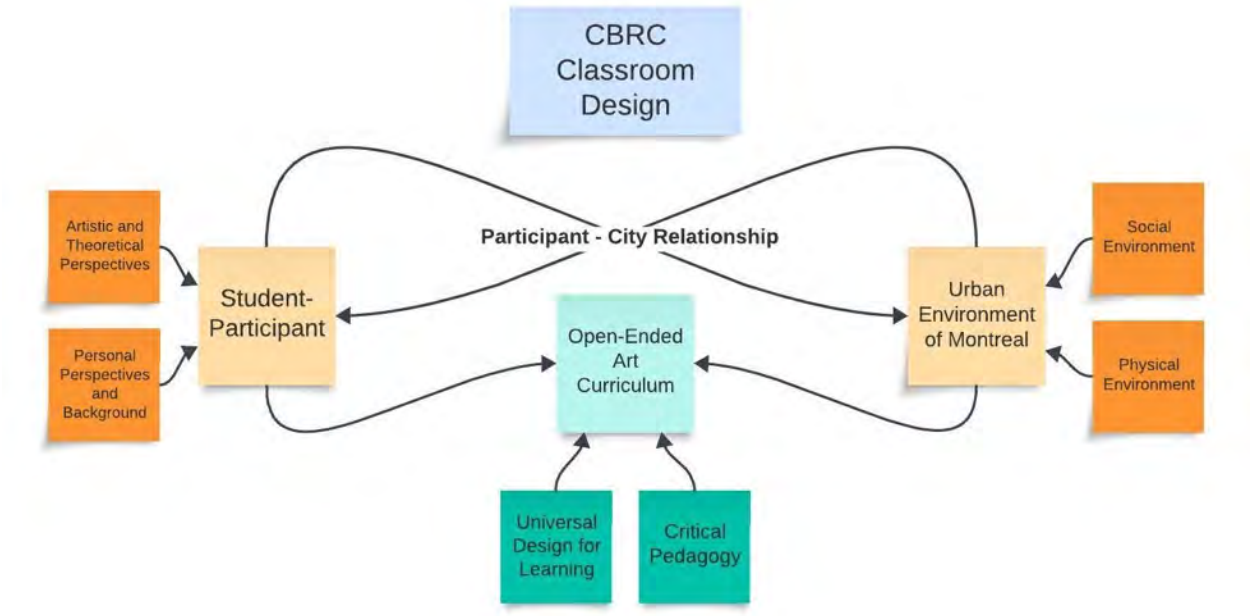

Figure 53: Map of the CBRC classroom.

This work takes the participant-city relationship as that of which the open-ended curriculum and method are trying to gain deeper understanding. As such, the curriculum was designed with both Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and critical pedagogy at the core. UDL was chosen to offer many modes for engaging with art and reflection regardless of level, ability, or background (Ralabate, 2011; Roski et al., 2021). Meanwhile, critical pedagogy meant that components posed problems about the city for learners to engage with through dialogue. Through the course content and the final project, participants created works that when triangulated with interview data began to reveal insights about the participants' relationships to the city. Over the course of this class, 11 students completed a final project, taking on mediums

as diverse as video, painting, drawing, watercolour, printmaking, collage, tattoo design, and mapmaking, dealing with personal histories of the neighborhood, points of interest, local establishments, landmarks, the changing neighborhood, memory, nostalgia, borders, displacement, and the uses of greenspace. In this chapter, we will narrow in on six projects that go deep into the participant-city relationship, using available data to convey the concepts and themes that emerged from the works.

CBRC Projects

Jaclyn's 45 Tiny Watercolours

Jaclyn is a trained architect who has a passion and an eye for drawing urban spaces. It was clear from the first class that Jaclyn was going to sweat the details: on her personal map, despite instructions that the map did not have to be to scale, she spent most of her time drawing every street, intersection, bridge, and road to proper scale in its proper placement. When she moved into her group map, Jaclyn began meticulously drafting everything together in a manner that cohered with her three map group members (Figure 55). This precision was also apparent in her sketches outdoors, which were consistently accurate renderings in life (Figure 54). She said that she joined the class because as an architect she was mostly working on computers but looking for ways to begin drawing outside more regularly. Furthermore, Jaclyn is personally involved in urban activism around biking and walking. She self-described as anti-car, stating in an interview that she moved to Montréal because of its pedestrian friendly architecture. She said,

> I am very interested in the class because I love urban planning. I'm a cyclist, a runner, and a walker, and I'm always looking for a place to improve how we get our around our cities...[Personal communication, April 6, 2023].

Beyond this class, Jaclyn is also a drawing teacher at the school and a regular participant in urban sketching groups around the city.

Figure 54: Jaclyn's thumbnail sketches from an optional session at the Verdun riverside park.

Figure 55: Jaclyn's group map from week 1. Also included are Lou, Deborah A. and Nadia.

In her first idea for the final project, Jaclyn planned to take pictures on a Polaroid film camera in different parts of the neighborhood that she would annotate with markers and paint. After some initial pieces, she said she did not find this process satisfying, and did not have enough Polaroid film–which is becoming exceedingly rare and expensive– to take as many photos as she had hoped for. But she did take an interest in the box paintings, which seemed to fit with her plein air practice on the one hand and her interest in vignettes from the planned Polaroid picture project.

Figure 56: The skies painted in to her 45 tiny watercolours. This figure also demonstrates how these were created concurrently.

Ultimately, her chosen project took up miniatures to depict a walk around Pointe-Saint-Charles through 45 tiny watercolours painted concurrently. Each image was roughly 1 inch by 1.5 inches. This was informed by work she had done while visiting family in the United States. She said,

> A year ago when I was driving on a road trip with my parents to my grandparents' house [two states over], I just took a ton of just random pictures along the way. So, I did something similar after that trip where I just kind of captured the day, everything we saw. Um, I've been doing this road trip since I was like 14. So, um, it was all of these sites that we're used to seeing, but the sky changed during the day. We arrived at sunset. Um, so I kind of took that idea and wanted to do… Well then I also did that idea again as a version, um, taking the train from Montréal to Québec City. So I thought I had a car version, a train version, I should do a walking version. So this is a walk in Pointe-Saint-Charles. Starts at Bâtiment 7 and ends at Bâtiment 7 more like in sunset. Um, also it was the anniversary of Bâtiment 7, so I wanted to include that as the starting point and the ending point. [Personal communication, June 6, 2023]

In preparing this project, she plotted out landmarks she knew she wanted to include, but also remained open to spontaneous moments that occurred during the walk. The first image began at Bâtiment 7 in daylight, with the light progressively changing in each image before concluding back at Bâtiment 7 at sunset. Jaclyn worked from digital photography, taking pictures at each location which became the inspiration for the 45 paintings in a single afternoon, finishing the work over a weekend.

Figure 57: The 45 watercolours held up to Bâtiment 7

The paintings are lively and loose yet capture a surprising amount of detail, speaking to her artistic skills. Some of the sites are known landmarks, some are immediately recognizable areas, while others capture architectures that offer a general sense of Pointe-Saint-Charles' elements. Familiarity with the neighborhood reveals some critical landmarks that may not appear to have significance to the outside observer, such as the retaining wall built to block noise from the train tracks about 15 years ago that now serves as a lookoff to Montréal's downtown. On capturing the neighborhood, Jaclyn said

> I really have been into series pieces and creating a comic feeling, or something that has a narration or a story to it. So yeah, I was just inspired by that and I've been walking this neighborhood for so many years now that I just really wanted to capture it. I feel like The Pointe also has such a color palette. And I was really happy after my first few passes of paint that I–that color palette–was just naturally appearing. [Personal communication, June 6, 2023]

Indeed, the Pointe has a perceptible colour palette, with many of the bricks on houses painted in vibrant and bright colours that makes it stand out from other Montréal neighborhoods. [67]

Figure 58: Two paintings of the shipping container site.

Figure 59: A painting of Murale sur le viaduc by Collectif au pied du muir

Jaclyn completed this work on the Saturday and Sunday before our final class, and by that Tuesday the neighborhood perceptibly changed. First, a local coffee shop that many in the class frequent that was the subject of one of Jaclyn's paintings changed its storefront from a modest grey to a vibrant lime green (Figure 60 and 62). Second, some of the buildings around the shipping containers on the north-west edge of Pointe-Saint-Charles were demolished, which is part of a long-term project to relocate shipping operations to the east end of the city toward Hochelaga (a borough in Eastern Montréal) to make way for a condominium development. Further, the mural *Murale sur le viaduc* (2014) by Collectif au pied du mur has been the target of graffiti periodically since it was revealed and is itself consistently being remade and re-painted ("Racist Attack Targets Mural," 2013), appearing in Jaclyn's paintings (Figure 59). Connecting to the framework of formal and informal spaces discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, there are numerous components here that will indeed not be the same tomorrow. But it was striking to see

Some of my own early artwork about the Pointe was examining the unique palette of colours on the houses undertaken during *Right to the City* in 2016, shortly after I moved to Montréal. Over the course of the semester, I took dozens of walks through ruelles, identifying a palette of five or six paint colours—A light, neutral blue, a deep neutral blue, a vibrant red, an alizarin or magenta / blue red, a reddish brown, and a light forest green. While it was unclear how this palette came to be, it is possible too for the browns and reds that they were mixed to match the existing brick colours. However, this does not fully explain why these colours recur in the Pointe and not in other neighborhoods. However, upon revisiting the [documentary on the Pointe], there was a striking resemblance to these colours of the train cars and the colours on the houses. So much so, that my best guess was that the paint found its way out the door of the trainyard as a cheaper alternative than shopping at the hardware store. It is interesting though to re-visit this eight years later and examine how the neighborhood has changed. More than before, as houses are indeed selling in the millions, new owners do not seem beholden to these colours. They can still be found in little nooks and crannies, but more houses are receiving a coat of grey paint over what was once vibrant colours.

the speed to which even seemingly formal spaces underwent change. Whereas we often think of change occurring over many years or decades, here, we were seeing change happen before our eyes. In consideration too of the long arc of the neighborhood, Jaclyn said,

> I find it interesting that they've captured a certain time of how this neighborhood has existed in this exact moment because my coffee shop, Mollo that I painted here, I biked by this morning and it's now neon green. And before it was this kind of nice, kind of navy blue and I much preferred that color so I'm really happy I captured it before it turned neon green. [Personal communication, June 6, 2023]

Figure 60: Shows the coffee shop sporting its new bright green colours. Part of a series of works Jaclyn did on the Pointe.

Figure 61: Jaclyn's collection of painted tins from after the class concluded.

Figure 62: Painting from the 45 tiny watercolours showing the coffee shop before it was painted lime green.

Jaclyn carried forward the box paintings in her process, continuing her habit of capturing vignettes of the neighborhood. She developed the collection in Figure 61, which she presented at a crafters' market the following holiday season that included works from the class, prints of the final project, these box paintings, in addition to prints of other projects and stickers of her illustrations. When asked about the connection between the box paintings we did in class and the directions of her work, she said

> I was glad that we had done those because it got me kind of in the mindset of working tiny again. I really like working small. I also had the idea that I wanted to do them on a single kind of Bristol board sheet just with pen and ink. I like just in like black pen. Because that's kind of my happy place, it's just black fine liner pen. But seeing it in

> colors just kind of makes me realize that it kind of has to be in color, especially to capture the color palette of the neighborhood. [Personal communication, June 6, 2023]

Deborah G's "The Gentrification Process"

Deborah G enrolled in the class due to her concern about the housing crisis in Montréal, which came from having lived in a co-op in Milton Parc and later having owned real estate in redeveloped areas such as Griffintown and along the Lachine Canal. She mentioned coming with tremendous interest in the research component, self-describing as someone who fills out surveys and gives feedback. Her concern comes from wondering who these developments were designed for, noting the stark differences between median salaries and the costs of housing, and how these figures have widened after the federal disinvestment from public and subsidized housing in the 90s (August, 2020; August, 2021; Kipfer & Petrunia, 2009). Deborah purchased one of the first condominiums along the canal in the late 90s for what she described as a reasonable price for her as a single mother in a middle-income job. But she said that these conditions eroded rather quickly, with her unit doubling in price within a couple years as many other nearby constructions came into fruition. The late 90s was the beginning of an urban revitalization project that saw the de-industrialized areas of the Sud Ouest find new life, as discussed in Chapter 2. The Lachine Canal had been turned over to Parks Canada in 1978 ("Lachine Canal Historic Site," 2024), many former factories had found new life for white collar uses, and Griffintown's industrial infrastructures were mostly demolished and re-made into a dense, high-rise condominium and office district. Today, the costs for these condominiums are consistently higher than affordability for median wages. In discussions and in interviews, Deborah consistently remarked on the difficulty for future generations trying to establish themselves in the housing market, specifically those being displaced through rising rents and evictions.

Figure 63: Deborah's drawing of chickens from the fermette behind Bâtiment 7.

Figure 64: A drawing of a single chicken peeking out from the coop.

Deborah G also demonstrated tremendous engagement through her sketchbook. Figures 63 and 64 were drawn outside during the early days of *Landscaping the City*, where she rapidly thought through colour, composition, and figuration / abstraction. This engagement served her well as she worked through iterative imagery to come to her final project. Deborah G was ambitious in her initial plan for the final project, working through many possible ideas of what the project could be. She settled on a manageable three panel display (Figures 67, 68, 69) that would feature Montréal's iconic *Farine Five Roses*[68] sign, which is a bright red neon sign on a building located at the edge of the Peel Basin that has been preserved even as the Five Roses Flour company no longer owns the building.[69] She chose this sign as a recognizable landmark and because it represents an era of Montréal industrialization that no longer exists. Geographically, this building sits at the Peel Basin and is visible both in Griffintown and Pointe-Saint-Charles, areas of the city that have seen rapid changes in the 21st century (near 5A on the Figure 30 map). Figure 65 demonstrates four thumbnail sketches that sample how she worked

[68] Translated as Five Roses Flour

[69] The sign was once bilingual, reading as "FARINE FIVE ROSES FLOUR" until the rules around signage in the language Bill 101 forced the word flour to be turned off and eventually removed ("A Brief History of the Sign," n.d.).

through the process of designing the paintings, while Figure 66 shows the drawn plan for the first panel (Figure 67).

Figure 65: Four thumbnail plan for the final painted project.

Figure 66: The plan for the first panel of the final painted project (Figure 67).

These paintings combine watercolour and acrylic on watercolour paper and are about 5 x 7 inches each in landscape format. The Farine Five Roses sign appears in a top corner of each painting, leading us to believe that each painting is depicting similar geographic space. The first panel depicts a relatively low-rise neighborhood showing a street with a depanneur (corner store) and relatively low-rise housing with a person pushing a stroller. The second panel depicts bustling construction, showing high-density buildings going up with cranes presumably over the first scene we saw. In many parts of Montréal–including Griffintown–massive construction projects are common and often swift. The re-development of Griffintown in the early 2000s, for example, completely remade that part of the city, replacing housing and factories with high-rise offices and condominiums. The third scene shows an imagined Montréal skyline with numerous recognizable high-rises and the new REM train running along a highway, that seems to hold the high-rises in. Beneath the highway, there are numerous tents alluding to the increasing amount of homelessness in Montréal after the pandemic.

Figure 67: The first panel of Deborah G's triptych. This panel demonstrates the neighborhood before gentrification.

Figure 68: This is the second panel of Deborah G's triptych. This panel demonstrates the neighborhood as it undergoes rapid build-up and construction.

Figure 69: The third panel of Deborah G's triptych. This panel demonstrates the neighborhood after gentrification, showing high rises with tents under the overpass to symbolize the displacement that comes from higher rents.

Deborah G regularly draws and paints, and she said that the drawing exercises encouraged her to look more directly at the built environment, bringing her attention to things like cranes and construction sites which fostered reflection on the adjacent community. Deborah considered many iterations of the project before settling on the three-panel paintings. She said,

> This shows an era that is no longer around, and I wanted to make comparisons on how it is fitting the old into the new surroundings. So I started a project where I was fitting the condos into the new environment, but it didn't make sense in terms of this location of the [Farine] Five Roses versus my buildings kind of thing. And then I started to get discouraged because I worried people would say, 'this building is not really over there." I found this would not really convey my message, which was that new developments often displace those paying low rent with trendy condominiums for those with yoga mats, buying new furniture at EQ3 or West Elm… My message was, what do you expect when you take away affordable housing and replace it with expensive high-rise condos? [Personal communication, November 12, 2023]

It was this intended message that informed the three-panel format of the painting, which had an embedded narrative.

> This painting shows the first community, then the construction and bulldozing of the whole area, and then the high rises, the REM, and the tent cities underneath, representing that it contributed to the homelessness possibly–that this type of thing is contributing. [Personal communication, November 12, 2023]

Deborah acknowledged that it is hard to argue there is a causal relationship between development like that seen in Griffintown and homelessness. However, the tent cities that have

emerged at in many Canadian cities including Montréal have certainly arrived in tandem with rapid redevelopment and the inaccessible price tags of new building projects which often displaced once affordable stock. As mentioned, the social needs of citizens are often not considered in these developments, which is part of what Action-Gardien is trying to address in their Peel Basin development proposal (Plan d'ensemble, 2023). Despite these concerns, Deborah said that some people love the energy of Griffintown, citing a friend who prefers condominium living in a dense neighborhood. However, she felt that this method of urban renewal was becoming dominant in Montréal, and was unsustainable due to its displacement, price inaccessibility, and inability to meet civic needs. Furthermore, Deborah's project expressed a common anxiety that was noted from many other discussions in *Landscaping the City*—That the changing landscape of Montréal not only represents new lifestyles by largely white-collar workers living in high-rise condominiums, but also signals a threat to those who enjoy the city as it is, and to those without the means to afford newer housing.

Deborah A.'s "Tabagie Arsenault"

Deborah A. has been a long-time student at the art school, joining the second iteration if *Landscaping the City* in 2021 and remaining an active member of the art school since. This version of *Landscaping the City* was her first time attending a class at the school in person. Discussing the difference between online and in-person classes, she said,

> this is my second time but it's a completely different. It was such a different experience. The first time it was at night it was in the winter online. I never met you in person or anyone else in the class, but I could never imagine what this would have led to this school and continuing on with you again this term. [Personal communication, June 15, 2023]

Deborah is a lifelong Montrealer who retired from working in education a few years ago, and since then has taken up artmaking as a regular part of her life. She regularly sketches both indoors and outdoors and participates in the school's outdoor artmaking club.

Figure 70: A watercolour work of Tabagie Aresenault.

For the final project, Deborah made a watercolour painting (Figure 70) and 6:03 minute iMovie about her grandfather's *tabagie*[70] that operated for over 50 years in Milton Park, a neighborhood about five kilometers north of Pointe-Saint-Charles that borders McGill University (sometimes called the "McGill Ghetto") as part of the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough. The neighborhood, like the Pointe, was subject to large redevelopment projects in the mid 20th century. Deborah A said,

[70] Translated as tobacco store

> I'm telling the story of the point of history of how it started and how it was such a communal hub for the whole area. And then how this American developer came into the area and started buying up a lot of properties. And in the end, I think 255 different buildings were torn down. And unfortunately, my grandfather's tabagie was one of them. [Personal communication, June 15, 2023]

Her grandfather's tabagie closed in 1972, with the building demolished to make way for construction. The night the tabagie closed, they held a party to commemorate the end of an era. Poet Marc Plourde (2016) was in attendance and wrote a poem about the experience.

> Arsenault's *Tobacco Magazines Novelties* is closing:
> everyone has locked arms and is dancing.
> The Arsenaults have given away flags, trinkets,
> greeting cards from the '40s. Everyone dances
> so that the floor shakes like the floor of a boat
> while musicians huddle in a corner,
> hardly noticing the audience,
> and young men shouldering film cameras
> as they circle the dancers
> record for reasons known to film students
> a rum bottle changing hands,
> the singer's face, the girl next to me,
> her blue eyelids and fingernails —
> and there's a small dog here unseen by the cameras;
> as the floor shakes, as the floor rolls, he jumps
> straight up and barks at the noise everywhere. (p. 40)

In our interview, Deborah A. discussed how before the development overtook the neighborhood, Milton Park was once home to a broad multi-ethnic population of varied class backgrounds that lived in relative harmony.

> The residents were really incensed that this was happening to such a beautiful neighborhood. And it was a very close-knit neighborhood. It still is. They formed the Milton Park Citizens Committee, which is still going strong. And pushed the government to stop after the destruction of the 255 places. And they actually formed a co-op–and it's the largest cooperative housing project in North America. [Excerpt from Arsenault, 2023]

Indeed, the Milton Parc co-op was the product of protests and grassroots activism that ultimately led to large swaths of the neighborhoods being preserved. In the 1960's, neighborhood activists caught wind of the plan of the developer Concordia Developments[71] and began organizing to

[71] Concordia Developments has no institutional relation or affiliation with Concordia University.

preserve the housing stock and unique neighborhood character. Despite years of violent backlash from the city and developers, grassroots activists fronted strong opposition to these developments, which led to many existing architectures being retained as public housing (Helman, 1987). Deborah G mentioned that the quality of the public housing was so high that some politicians proclaimed that the units were nicer than their own. Nevertheless, a large portion of the development that ultimately came to be called La Cité was built and exists today as mixed-use condominiums, retail, and office space.

Deborah A's video was 6:03 minutes presented in the tone of a documentary. It begins with images from contemporary Milton-Parc, showing the Victorian era houses that characterize the neighborhood and the La Cité development. This is interspersed with a historical account of the demographics of the neighborhood, and how they changed over time, as had the uses of space. She explained that that by the mid 20th century, many of the homes had been subdivided into flats, moving from wealthy to mixed-economic use.

> Slowly, a new population moved in to take advantage of the opportunity to live right in the center of the city. This diverse population was a wonderful mix–French, English, immigrant families, students and professors from McGill, older people of diverse ethnic backgrounds–they all blended in with the original population to create a cosmopolitan neighborhood. And Parc Avenue became a focal point for the people of the area. [Excerpt from Arsenault, 2023]

The video moves into an analysis and discussion about the history of tobacco, noting the earliest use with North American Indigenous peoples, and how tobacco became an important component of Québec's agricultural and economic output and Canadian nationalism. By the time her great-grandfather Auguste opened the store in 1920, Imperial Tobacco had a monopoly over the industry and circulated set price lists.

Figure 71: Arsenault's business card (film still from Arsenault, 2003).

Deborah A's grandfather, Elzéar, took over from Auguste upon his death, and turned the store into more of a general store offering magazines, candy, soda, and ice-cream. The back of the store had chairs rented to barbers. Furthermore, Elzéar found new ways to make money, such as renting out jigsaw puzzles and books. She described the store in the video,

> I remember the store being filled with colour and a revolving assortment of interesting things. The high ceiling was covered with large metal advertisements for drinks and cigarettes. The interior was long and narrow with a shiny three-drawer brass cash register across from the front door, followed by a long row of dark oak cabinets with glass fronts. [Excerpt from Arsenault, 2023]

We can see a glimpse of this description in her accompanied watercolour (Figure 70), which depicts vibrantly and flashy signs that stand out from the neutral-coloured exterior of the building wall.

Throughout our discussions of this project, Deborah frequently mentioned how much her grandfather and the store meant to her family. In the video, she said

> He worked long hours seven days a week. A quiet and humble person short and slight, I think of him as a man who was willing to sacrifice so much to enable his own children, and subsequently his grandchildren, to live a very different life. Ironically and sadly, Elzéar died of lung disease after a lifetime of smoking at 74. [Excerpt from Arsenault, 2023]

After her grandfather's death, the store was purchased by a new owner who kept the store under the family name until the Milton Parc plan saw the building destroyed in 1972. The documentary closes by reflecting on what was lost in this development: "The lost reference points that

established a continuity for generations and local residents were irreplaceable" (Arsenault, 2023).

Deborah A's video and drawing go beyond the research aims of CBRC to present a novel way of representing family histories and was successful in drawing larger societal connections to the roles that her grandfather and great-grandfather held in running the store. Furthermore, this project connects her family history directly to one of the most significant urban development projects in Montréal's history. The relatively small stories of tobacco stores in these large projects risk being overlooked yet provide a rich look into the life and history of the neighborhood. For Deborah A, this work seemed to have deep meaning for her and her family. In one of my last e-mail exchanges with Deborah before writing this chapter, she spoke to what this work meant for her:

> I am grateful for taking your course last spring as it resulted in a video that will be passed down to cousins and grandkids. It never would have been made without your inspiring class and support, (and of course, you expecting to see a finished product.) [Personal communication, May 16, 2024]

As such, this work reveals some of the profound interconnections between individuals and their familial ties to the built environment and opens discussions between family histories and urban histories.

Nadia's Love Letter to a Park

Nadia is a longstanding member of the school and was a multi-time participant of *Landscaping the City*. During our interviews, she discussed frequently how the class helped her to know her neighborhood better and get outside during the COVID-19 lockdowns in the autumn and winter of 2020-21. During that class, she completed an animation with her twelve-year-old son that I described in previous writing (LeRue, 2023a) on the atmosphere of ruelles. Nadia said that this was her first time learning to draw in a classroom setting, but she had some experience drawing with her kids at the beginning of the pandemic. A year later, she joined my painting class where it was her first time learning to paint. She is one of the most naturally gifted artists I have ever met, demonstrating tremendous openness to techniques and a zeal when it comes to engaging with blank canvases. As such, she developed a consistent personal practice that includes painting and drawing every week both on her own time and through activities with the school. Much of her work now deals with the city, depicting urban spaces and figures through

painting that embraces the material and the muddiness of oil. Her zeal at first would lead to overworking paintings and drawings by putting too much material down, making control over the painting process messy and difficult. But through refinement and practice, Nadia has developed control over her heavy hand, which remains a feature of her work through thick brushstrokes and large buildups of material on her surfaces.

When Nadia had arrived in *Landscaping the City III*, she had spent the previous six months making drawings and paintings of figures occupying space in the city. As such, in developing her independent work, she drew on her own background as a new immigrant to Canada, moving to Montréal in 2019 with her husband and two kids. Born in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), her family previously resided in eastern Germany before coming to Canada for work. They rented an apartment in the Plateau, a neighborhood close to downtown and Milton Parc. She said that in her experience, immigrants tend to gravitate toward social spaces such as libraries, parks, and swimming pools which have inclusive programming that is often free and accessible. It was likewise a desire for social inclusion that led Nadia to the school, where she has been a long-time participant in classes, volunteer, and paid administrator, helping to shepherd the school through the difficulties of the pandemic. The need for socializing, paired with the demand that socializing happen outside during the pandemic years, meant that outdoor park spaces came to hold an important role in Nadia and her family's life.

Figure 73: Nadia's drawing of people playing hockey in the park.

Figure 72: The source image for Figure 72

Nadia's final project was called a love letter to a park, focusing on Parc Baldwin[72] adjacent to her house in the Plateau. Nadia said that because of the pandemic, "it [Parc Baldwin] became the most important place for us outside of our home" (personal communication, February 6, 2024). The park, as she said, came to animate life specifically due to its proximity to their home, its place along most of their routes, and later, due to the pandemic restrictions on indoor gathering forcing meetings with other families to take place outside. The project included a booklet with scans of drawings from a sketchbook placed alongside photos in the park, and a video showing the same images played over music. The idea came to her as she was looking through photo albums of her family's time in Canada, realizing that the park became a recurring character for activities such as sports and birthday parties. Looking through these photos, she noticed photos of people lounging in buildings, playing hockey, people doing circus, kids hitting piñatas, and someone wearing an inflatable dinosaur costume as kids chase it through a park on Halloween. It is clear from the work that the park is central to life in all seasons.

[72] Described on the municipal website here: https://Montréal.ca/en/places/parc-baldwin

Figure 74: Nadia's drawing of children in costumes chasing an inflatable dinosaur through the park.

Figure 75: Source image for Figure 74

Nadia had some deeper realizations about the meaning of Parc Baldwin on her life after the ice storm mentioned in Chapter 5 and 6, when she realized that many of the trees and infrastructures of the park were damaged.

> I walked the next day through the park, and we were looking at the damage on the trees. Parc Baldwin basically only has big trees, huge trees. And there was a guy I met, and he was just doing the same like me, and we were talking again about the trees and he said he had a favourite tree. And it hurt him so much that this tree was damaged, and it shows the importance of how we connect to these spaces and these places and the trees–even one tree! Maybe everyone has a special tree. But it really stuck with me that there is a big connection. [Personal communication, February 6, 2024]

For Nadia then, she made her love letter to the park

> To acknowledge and address that these parks are not only important to us, but that they mean something to us. The personalization of a park maybe–but that places are probably almost as important as people. [Personal communication, February 6, 2024]

Nadia's work is helpful to illuminate the ways in which non-human spaces become critical for our relationships to space and place. This work illuminated the way public spaces can come to take such profound meanings in our personal lives, but also help to form the identities of cities. In Montréal, parks find uses all year around, with hockey and skating rinks set up in the winter, and outdoor lounging activities in the summer. Most housing in the city has smaller

yards, which means that parks become a public common area for all outdoor activities. I recall the first summer I moved to Montréal, the entirety of the park near my downtown apartment was consistently full, with people dancing to boom boxes, napping on benches, socializing over a barbeque for hours. Furthermore, laws such as the picnic law means that alcohol is permitted so long as it is consumed with a meal. Compared to my home city where parks were seldom used, I found the use of park space in Montréal to be more central to social life. It is just as common that someone invites you to a gathering at their apartment as it is they invite you to a barbeque in a park. Nadia mentioned that in her hometown in Germany, parks have a similar social role in the city, with some key differences.

> I feel in Montréal, parks can have a bit more of a focus. Some are for sport, picnics, parties, feeding the birds, for every–I feel like the use is the same but in Montréal some parks have a use. Like Parc Pelican they have a baseball field, like someone made up their mind this is the baseball park and this one has a soccer field, and Parc Lafontaine has the tennis courts. So, I think it just fits the needs of a person, and depending on what you are into you might have to go to another park. [Personal communication, February 6, 2023]

But these different uses for parks are part of how spaces are mediated in specific places, and how non-human landscapes mediate relationships to place.

Figure 76: Nadia's painting of children chasing after a person in a dinosaur costume. Oil on Canvas. 18" x 24". 2023.

After *Landscaping the City III*, Nadia has continued to hone her landscape practice, developing striking paintings of figures in the city that were informed by her drawings (Figure 76). She continues to paint and draw weekly through my painting class and through the art school's outdoor club, and recently participated in an exhibition with the art school at the tavern in Bâtiment 7. Her paintings demonstrate substantial maturity in style, using neutral colours to emphasize the connections between people and place while using more advanced painterly techniques such as blending, glazing, and texture to naturalize these relationships (Figure 77).

Figure 77: Nadia's painting of figures in an urban environment. Oil on Canvas. 18" x 24". 2023.

Vivianne's Cityscape Painting

Vivianne took this class because of her interest in artmaking, Montréal's architecture, and her family connection to industrialization and the neighborhood. Vivianne immigrated to Canada as a child from Preston, Lancashire, England in the late 60s, a place she described as having similar architectural facets as the Sud Ouest: row houses, bricks, mills, and factories, which were the basis of organization for social life. Coming to Canada, her father found work first at Northern Electric, a research and development subsidiary of Bell Telecom located at the north-east corner

of the Pointe, and later at the Canadian National Railroad, one of the largest employers in the Pointe and with a large geographic footprint that still exists today. Bâtiment 7 is adjacent to CN's present operations and was once part of their expansive campus. Vivianne's family settled in the suburbs, but Vivianne would often pick up and drop off her father for work. In our present day, the CN campus and neighborhood adjacent to Bâitment 7 is fairly quiet, partially due to its seclusion from main streets and highways. However, Vivianne recalls the area as being marked off with fences and would be a bustling with hundreds of workers between shifts.

> There were people that was busyness. There were chain link fences. There were the tracks. There was my, you know, all the men going in the factory in the workshop actually. Yeah. And it was busy. And now I look and it's empty. But at least we have this little gem [Bâtiment 7] here. [Personal communication, May 23, 2023]

Her husband grew up in neighboring St. Henri, which was equally poor and industrial along the Lachine Canal. She mentioned in an interview how amazed her husband was at the changes in the neighborhood, and how he was completely shocked at the million-dollar price-tag on many houses. Just as Vivianne had nostalgia for the factories in Preston, it was clear that she was developing a similar nostalgia for the Pointe. She first developed her style of painting while studying at university in the early 2000s, exploring questions of nostalgia and memory through the painted image (Figure 78). She said,

> I thought about where my memories were, was when the town that I used to live in. So what I did, I tried to bring the atmosphere when I remember my family into it, places I remembered. And I just thought, because memories are not all just linear, they're all in your head mixed up and one will be in one place and will come in another place and then another place. And so that's why I wanted to place the people, the places in the same idea on the canvas. As they wouldn't be in scale and they wouldn't be in like realism, but the idea of them would be there. So I placed the idea of them on my canvas. [Personal communication, May 23, 2023]

Figure 78: A painting carried out in Vivianne's undergraduate about Preston, Lancashire, painted in the early 2000s.

Indeed, the painting presented a fragmented view of her former city, using wispy strokes of greyed neutral colours to convey the fragmented nature of memory.

Vivianne planned to integrate some of these components into her final project for *Landscaping the City III.* Additionally, perhaps more than any other participant, Vivianne demonstrated artistic growth through in-class materials. Her sketchbook pages each showed a serious engagement with course content, with pages successively implementing internalized understanding of materials that naturally turned into the final project (Figures 79 and 80). When asked how the courses ideas informed the painting, she said,

> I have come to see that my ideas of the compositions have been informed by the sheets that you gave us and I thought, yeah, you know, like composition, I should sort of like get back to focusing on composition. And also the idea of, I never realized how the Pointe had changed so much since I had been here. [Personal communication, May 23, 2023]

The Pointe's reputation as a working class, factory filled neighborhood is powerful in the living memory of those who knew the Pointe decades ago. For a long time, real estate here was depressed compared to the rest of Montréal, and Montréal to the rest of Canada. For Vivianne, the increasing costs were unbelievable.

> I never realized that it's going to disappear, it seems. But then I informed myself of the price of real estate here. And I know one of our [classmates] lives on St. Madeleine Street

and I looked up one of the listings of the real estate. And it was for a house that had been converted from two flats to one and it's listed for a million six. [Interview, May 23, 2023]

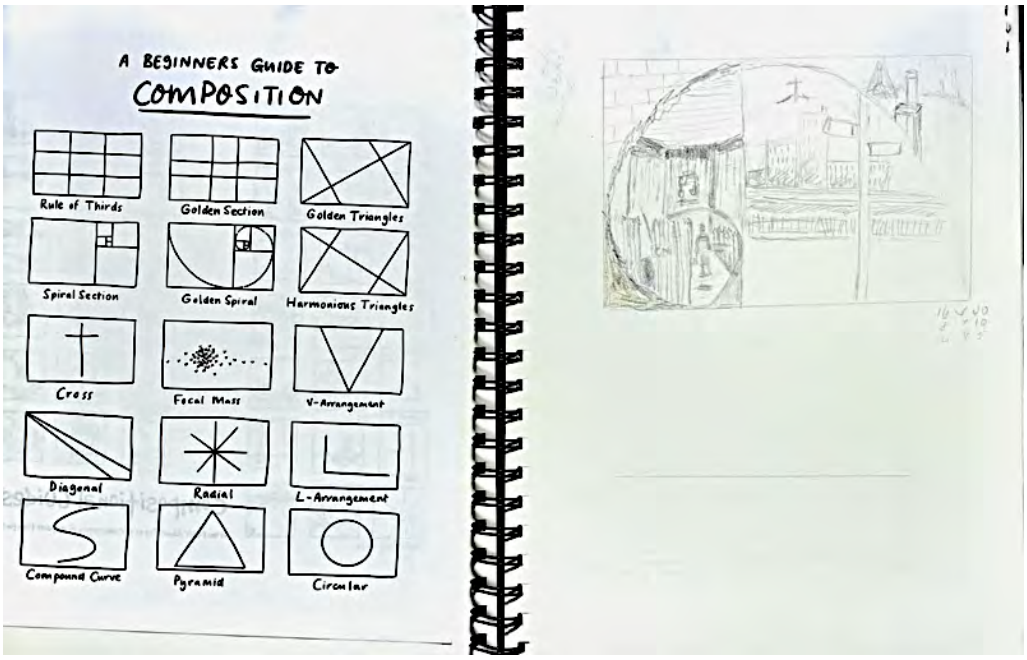

Figure 79: Vivianne's sketchbook pages. The page to the left includes a handout given as part of the armature workshop.

Figure 80: Vivianne's sketchbook pages, including a plan for her final painting (Figure 81)

Vivianne's final painting relied heavily on the composition exercises, conjoining the work with the visual style from her previous painting exercise on memory (Figure 81). The

inspiration for the imagery was informed by the walks we took as a class through the neighborhood, where she took photographs at various points of interest. She recalled that the walks cemented just how drastic the changes had been in the neighborhood over the years. As such, she used the S armature–a compositional device designed to lead the eye through a still image–to show the architectural facets of what Vivianne called the old Pointe-Saint-Charles wind toward the facets of the new Pointe-Saint-Charles. The new Pointe is symbolized by the overpass that hosts the REM train that runs over the top corner of the neighborhood. The space is clearly exaggerated and represents no specific part of the neighborhood despite using specific elements. Vivianne took advice that I offer each time we use armatures, which is to get inventive in how objects are placed along the composition. In the composition, the old part of

> The Pointe going up somehow to the old bridge, but then the new railway would be on the top. So the new railway signifies the modernity and where the Pointe will be going because it's the march of time. I put the new railway on the top so it looks like everything is leading up to the new. [Personal communication, May 23, 2023]

Figure 81: Vivianne's final painting. Acrylic on canvas. 18" x 20".

The painting succeeds in realizing Vivianne's goal to lead the eye through the neighborhood, and the caricatured elements and path helps to solidify the movement in time the work depicts. Her ideas about the history of the Pointe leading up to the present likewise speak to industrialization and its afterlives in Pointe-Saint-Charles, specifically the community activism that preserved the Pointe from the destruction faced by neighboring Goose Village and Grtiffintown (Spjikes, 1989; Portolese & Bonin, 2023). Nevertheless, the ideals of social welfare that these activists have pushed for succeeded in preserving architectures that are now financially valuable, leads to displacement by one social class over another. As observed in Chapter 3 and the points made by Zukin (2011), the architectures are valued and preserved for their authenticity by those who often appreciate the history of the neighborhood, even as those who have lived the architectural changes remain at risk of displacement. Nevertheless, Vivianne points to something critical about doing research about space and place, which is that through the march of time that changes are inevitable, and that in 20 years Pointe-Saint-Charles may be dealing with a completely new set of unanticipatable problems.

Bob's Map

The final work is the most conceptual of the bunch, but also cuts to deep questions about the fundamental identity of the neighborhood, and where one space begins and ends. Bob spent many years working in administration at various universities and colleges across Canada. He also was a potter by training and holds a PhD that focused on the philosophy and practice of craft, at various times running ceramics studios. He said, "I get restless, just like that. I think it's sort of, if I feel I'm not learning something rich, I start looking around" (personal communication, April 20, 2023). Now retired, Bob has owned a house in the Pointe since the mid 2000s. He now spends much of his time working on his blog and thinking about philosophy, taking some adult education courses at a nearby university and courses such as *Landscaping the City*. Bob and I met many times during and in the aftermath of the course, and our conversations have been invaluable to my own thinking throughout this dissertation.

Bob said that his motivations for taking the class were to get out of the house and start to re-engage with the world after COVID. Early in the class, Bob admitted to having little experience drawing, and thought that the class might be an opportunity to learn those skills, expressing a fascination with how one renders the 3D world in two dimensions. On a few elective Thursday sessions, I demonstrated techniques such as perspective to Bob and a few

others, and he demonstrated enthusiasm for understanding how it worked in practice. However, after a while, Bob lost interest in drawing all together. But he did start to take an interest in the community of the classroom and the course content. He said that before the class he did not normally think about the functioning of the city, but that through class presentations and our ongoing one on one discussions, he became attuned to how political decisions and discussions impacted the built environment. As an active participant in the social aspect of the class, Bob showed tremendous interest in what everyone else was thinking and doing, and he often ended up engaged in deep conversations with others about their own ideas and concepts. He later said that the social aspect was what kept him returning to the class on a weekly basis.

Bob struggled to settle on a final project, going through many iterations and plans for ideas. He consistently returned to ideas revolving around mapmaking and the identity of the neighborhood. Bob and I had many dialogues throughout the course about the boundaries of Pointe-Saint-Charles, and the past and present social histories. One of Bob's first ideas was to create a map with a church at the center depicted with prison bars over the window, which was meant to make commentary on the religious history of Pointe-Saint-Charles and how present-day activism can become equally insular. He swiftly abandoned that idea and began to ask questions about the boundaries of Pointe-Saint-Charles, considering specifically which overpasses and intersections contain the Pointe. Here, Bob revealed some insights that I would not have otherwise considered, such as when he identified that the physical center of Pointe-Saint-Charles is only a few blocks away from Bâtiment 7, which is usually seen as the inner edge of the neighborhood. Indeed, the land where Bâtiment 7 sits was at one time on or at the shoreline, but this has been filled in so much over the past 100 years that lands that host the CN railyard, Autoroute 10, and some industrial sites that are deceptively almost the width of the rest of the neighborhood (Heffez, 2010; Blundell, 2012). Further, Bob asked about the areas around the Peel Basin and near the Costco where Goose Village was. This space clearly feels disconnected from the rest of the Pointe, but definitionally, the space on the Pointe's side of the Canal is Pointe-Saint-Charles.

The first cohesive project Bob planned to create was akin to a performance piece. After studying all the Pointe's intricacies, Bob planned to memorize the formation of the neighborhood to be able to draw a perfect contour of Pointe-Saint-Charles. This was reminiscent of videos on the internet of those who can draw a perfect circle on a chalkboard after years of practice. After

some consideration and subsequent abandonment, Bob instead began to take pictures of the neighborhood on his many walks, documenting places both past and present that he liked.

Figure 82: Bob's collaged map. 4" x 5". Inkjet photographs, marker, and text on paper. 2023.

After some discussion, Bob decided that he would draw a map of Pointe-Saint-Charles and affix to it with hodge-podge (an easy-to-use glue that dries transparent) images that corresponded to these places (Figure 82). The images are mostly taken by Bob from a cell phone camera, and includes everything from buildings, power meters, seagulls, and waterways. The map was large in scale, about 4 x 5 feet on a piece of cardstock cut off a roll. In addition to his final map, Bob affixed a musing in both English and French, presented in English here below:

> **<u>Homescape – the Point: a slant</u>**
>
> *For me, a community is an amalgam, a collective aggregate, a disjointed coherence. It's about the little things, the right coffee served with the courtesy of a smile, a neighbor who says hello and helps shovel snow, the ducks swimming in the canal in mid-winter, the first glimmer of morning like from the Saint Charles Lookout, looking at the painting on the elementary school wall, which reminds us of the 17th century, the Nordelec building* [former home of Northern Electric]*, which houses contemporary creativity in a mostly industrial building which generated bushels of dollars and thousands of jobs, and its still sitting there, like a mountain. There is a church that looks like a jail, somethings are kept in; something are kept out. The old stone church on Centre Street which helped us desperately in our fight with covid; a new bakery, Mollo; Boom J's; a genuine new sandwich joint, Clarke, on Centre street; and the best Tex-Mex food; Détour, the small*

co-op depanneur which kept us going in the dark days and is improving all the time; a fantastic public transit system and so on…
The loss of the YMCA as a centre was tragic. Masala Indian food has retired, etc. There is always change.
The condos are coming, the condos are coming!
Pointe-Saint-Charles is genuinely and deeply anxious not to be invaded by the ugliness of Griffintown,
The proposed walkway by Action-Gardien, from the Point to the Fleuve is absolutely genius: this idea should be pursued with all the energy. And so on…
I live in the Pointe. I like it here. Here is what I presently call home.
These photographs are teensy-weensy instances of seeing.

Bob's paragraph is much like his photographs on the map: It highlights small vignettes of Bob's thoughts and likes in the built environment of Pointe-Saint-Charles. It captures the Pointe as Bob sees it, revealing his very personal image of the city with few generalities.

Bob's map connects to the dialectical conceptions of space discussed in Chapter 3 and foreshadows some of the challenges I had in creating my own landscapes in Chapter 8. In dialectical frameworks, the totality of a thing is not simply the sum of its parts but is instead heavily interdependent on the things that sustain it. In this instance, Bob had an implicit understanding that the Pointe is deeply interconnected with other neighborhoods, while not being concerned with representing the Pointe in its totality. Rather, Bob presents an image of the city that he acknowledges is but a fragment of the larger image, mediated by his subjective experience of trying to understand both what makes the Pointe unique and his home.

Reflections on Participatory Artmaking as Testimony Through CBRC

In this section, I will reflect on the method of CBRC to consider how the artmaking from *Landscaping the City* and the follow-through of projects mentioned here contributed to richer research insights. Throughout, I will be evaluating and re-visiting my assumptions from creating the method, and considering in a balanced way what CBRC might offer to future projects.

First, it was clear that artmaking paired with testimony enhanced both the artmaking and testimony components of participation. On the surface this makes sense, as the two main reasons participants stated they joined the class was for the art class and the research. But as things continued, it appeared that practicing artmaking methods and discussing concepts offered participants language and form to anchor their ideas on. Many of the themes brought about in Chapter 6 were a direct product of bringing together artmaking and testimony, and many of the

projects had a direct relationship between testimony and making. A project like Bob's map was unlikely to be created without Bob considering *what* he wanted to say through the making, given that this form of making was not one he engaged with before nor one he would have likely engaged with again. In the case of Jaclyn's watercolours, it was entirely possible she would have made a project like this one, but because we were generally discussing concepts about the city, the meaning derived from the work for her, myself, and other participants was likely quite different. Furthermore, in many projects, there was evidence of the creation itself leading to further thinking and practice either about the project or about concepts in the city. This can be seen in the afterlife of projects such as Nadia's city paintings and Jaclyn's box paintings, but also in Vivianne's painting fostering consideration of what the Pointe is and where it is going in the future. These projects helped give visual coherence to ideas, but also contributed in each case to participants taking ideas for a walk, which led to different testimony at the end than might have been gleaned when the project was merely a plan.

Second, the final created work having an afterlife helped to create enhanced significance for many participants. While it would not be unusual for one to assemble an album of oral histories to share with friends and family, or to discuss how one feels about urban development in the city, artworks have different resonance than other modalities. In taking up artmaking as testimony in Chapters 6 and 7, it was clear that the core ideas of each project were superseded through the act of making, becoming more intricate and complicated through iterative processes of making and reflection. I recall in my interview discussing Andrea's planned (but not realized) project of the clotheslines, the significance was altered and made more complicated when she considered not only how clotheslines are a political issue due to zoning bylaws, but how they create new aesthetic formations each time they are raised, and inherently create informality in otherwise organized space. Likewise, the significance of Jaclyn's drawings changed dramatically when considered alongside the march of development in the Pointe, and Deborah A's documentary and drawing became an important re-telling of her family history that came to be shared with children and grandchildren. I continue to reflect on the final exhibition, which brought artists and their friends and families around the exhibition to socialize and reflect on what was done. Many wonderful conversations ensued about the work that added to the meaning for each of the participants, and in future iterations of these projects I would like to push the exhibition further. I was grateful to Pieter to opening his bank/residence to us, and I felt the

grassroots nature of the course was retained through this manner of exhibiting. But perhaps finding ways to make this work more public-facing as a CBRC outcome, such as in a public gallery or through a public event that invites the participants to speak to their work, could enhance this component. This certainly raises some issues around ethics and planning but is nevertheless something I will consider in the future.

Figure 83: Opening night of the Landscaping the City exhibition at Pieter's bank.

Third, the energy of the classroom dynamic created a petri-dish of ideas that surpassed my expectations for co-creation in the CBRC method. I was expecting on some level that I as the instructor-researcher would have a chance to get to know my students and their projects better throughout the making process. I was not expecting the relationships students would build with each other, including organic peer-support networks and forming genuine friendships. As mentioned in Chapter 6, it felt like I had 17 adults thinking with my project who were keen to help each other out and to offer pointers and insights into each other's work. There were numerous planned conversations through in-class activities, but there were also hundreds of sidebar conversations that I was not always privy to but were equally as important in the data that was ultimately collected. Part of this was that many participants knew each other, having

worked at various points at a local college and in education, or knowing each other from arts programming around the Sud Ouest. While it is necessary to some degree to have a teacher/researcher on the outside of these conversations, I think that building on my second point, I would like to do more to gather data around future activities such as exhibitions in ways that do not intrude on the organic nature of the class dynamic. I can imagine participating in these discussions as focus groups, or having some participants take the role of note-takers.

Fourth, the delay in the development of the Peel Basin meant that many components of the class became untethered, instead focusing more on the lands adjacent to Bâtiment 7. Though the Peel Basin was a critical part of class content, not having the opportunity to visit the site more regularly and as a complete class meant that it fell from the radar. In a future iteration of a CBRC class, I would hope to organize classes on-site rather than off-site. Part of it, which I will discuss in the fifth point, was that organizing sessions on the site of the Peel Basin would have required more coordination. Nevertheless, the Peel Basin and plans from Action-Gardien made their way into participant discussions, but this does not replace the possibilities of being live in place. Adjacent to the development was work conducted alongside my supervisor, a team of artists and scientists, and fellow student RAs called *Learning with the St. Lawrence* (Vaughan, LeRue & LeGallais, 2023), where collaborative artmaking took place outside in tents. These workshops were usually one offs but brought us into direct contact with the elements that seemed to enhance the experience for participants. During one workshop, participants created water puppets based on fish life in the St. Lawrence River that were filmed using a slow-motion camera. Outside, the rain was pouring down, but we were sheltered by the tents that kept us dry during the storm. Afterward, someone quipped that it felt like the river had come to us, implying that direct contact with the elements added to the meaning in the creation of the artworks. I believe that working outside over a longer period could help to create stronger meanings in space, and there is no reason a future project could not adopt using tents outside in the spaces being studied.

Fifth, the logistics of being a teacher and researcher required my full focus on two things that had different priorities. Oral history interviewing is already considered a labour-intensive process, as is grounded theory, planning and running a class, and completing a personal art project. During the process, I felt like I was not able to give the required attention to each component as it was happening, even as I felt I ultimately pulled the project off in ways that

were complementary: my artmaking successfully informed the class components, and the early analysis of data through grounded theory meant I was able to respond to–and build on–early themes through future class work. Further, concurrent to this class I also had obligations toward my academic career, which included conferences and applications to future opportunities, and my other teaching at the university and the art school. In the classroom, I constantly felt pulled between my obligations of being a teacher and researcher, unable to feel fully present for either activity. There was certainly a synergy with things happening at once that made the process of creating this dissertation special, and I remain dedicated to the core concept of CBRC of having community members create their own works of research-creation in a community classroom. However, when I conduct CBRC again, I would find ways to lighten the load so that the important part–the co-creation of meaning–could happen in a more manageable way, either through clearing other components of my schedule, limiting my own artmaking to before and after the class, and / or taking on fewer participants. I could also foresee consolidating components by directly collaborating with participants on art projects. However, these solutions may ultimately hinder the connections formed by doing everything at once, and it could have felt more manageable if I hired a research assistant to help with the logistics of setting up the classroom, interviewing, observations, and transcribing. I think this would be the most workable solution to maintain the dynamism of the CBRC method.

Sixth, and finally, the creation of the final project proved to be difficult in this iteration of *Landscaping the City*, as many participants did not feel comfortable or ready to create a final work. Furthermore, the time commitment outside of class led a few students with great ideas to not create their works or discontinue. I attempted to account for this by offering ample in-class time, but there was difficulty balancing participant ambitions with the length of time projects take to complete. While some attrition is always to be expected in community classrooms, I would consider having some readymade projects that offered participants flexibility in their ideas but offered some direction for making. For instance, the open-ended final project could suggest extending in-class projects into fully realized projects—Participants could make 5 box paintings of their chosen space, or four drawings of informal spaces in their neighborhood. Something like this is likely to generate ample insights and ideas, even as it might not be clear to the participant from the start what those insights or ideas might be. CBRC is fundamentally presented as an iterative process, with an important component being the gathering of testimony amid participant

making. This might also make it possible to run sessions over shorter 3-4-week spans where the readymade project is the component that leads all other course content. With this revision, more students would then have the pleasure of completion and participating in a final exhibition, as well.

Conclusion

CBRC is a labour-intensive method that brings together many forms of research and inquiry. After fulfilling this process from start to finish, I think the best way I can think of to describe the process is as chaotic and unpredictable. These outcomes were truly the product of those who registered for the course, the insights generated from my own artmaking, and even elements such as the rain. Another project of this nature with 17 different adults would have led to very different outcomes. Furthermore, grounded theory calls for coding to take place on the outset of research, which was subsequently implanted into questions I asked others, into course content itself, and my subsequent artmaking (discussed in Chapter 8). This ongoing unpredictability pushed the limits of my capacities as a researcher, artist, and teacher, and required turning over to the process over which I felt I could not control. In these ways, I felt CBRC made this thesis truly unpredictable, fulfilling the call from Corley, Bansal, and Yu (2021) to loosen the straightjacket and predictability put on many inductive methods to generate new insights. Thinking through my research questions thus far (re-stated in the introductory paragraph of this chapter), *Landscaping the City III*'s place-based artmaking curriculum offered an effective entry point into creation and thinking about the neighborhood, and invited participants to share their numerous and divergent thoughts about the nature of the spaces they inhabit. Further, the class indeed facilitated the making of participant projects as research-creation that in my view provided a much richer narrative of urban space than if I had simply gathered testimony and made the works myself. This method provided ample intersection between my thinking and participants', influencing my own thinking (and hopefully participants' thinking) about the wider world in what I call co-thinking about the city. In Chapter 8's discussion of my own research-creation, I will consider how exactly this co-thinking influenced the works I made after the conclusion of the class. In my concluding chapter, I will consider the viability of this approach going forward, and additional adaptations I might make.

Figure 84: Darling Foundry Diner. Oil on Canvas. 24" x 36". 2020.

Chapter 8 | Piecing it Together: Coalescing Meanings in Landscape Pictures

This dissertation has opened many threads of inquiry about the city, community art education, landscape, and place-based study to name a few. As I came toward the end of this project, which thus far has relied on co-creation between myself and my research participants, I felt it was important to return to my studio practice, which was where the germs of this project originated. As such, this penultimate chapter revisits many of the why's and what's in this project that were implicit in the research questions, such as what purposes are served by bringing students together around the same questions I am examining in my own research and artmaking? And what does artmaking about space add when considering interrelations with the wider world? This chapter builds on my experiences as a researcher-teacher through *Landscaping the City* to create new paintings piecing together the imagery created in plein air and the meanings co-developed with my research participants. As such, returning to my studio practice allows me to re-visit my triple position of artist, teacher, and researcher, and to see the interconnections between the many threads of inquiry this project has opened. In short, I hope this chapter can reveal the interconnections between the sub-projects and my thought through the creation of studio paintings.

To begin this chapter, I will introduce the methods for creating the paintings here, which were informed by my classroom study and fieldwork. This will lead into the final component, which will introduce four studio-based painting projects that almost exclusively referenced the plein-air paintings and memory, avoiding photography when possible. Three of these paintings bring multiple smaller paintings from plein air together, relying on intuition and memory to guide how they inform the creation of the larger landscapes. Each painting's sub-section will assume the form of a visual essay, reflecting on how the meaning from this dissertation influenced the imagery. As I will explain in the methods for creating these paintings, the works themselves and the reflection on the research are not intended to be a 1-1, but instead tries to understand how the making and the research have organically informed each other.

Piecing it Together: Turning Paintings into Paintings

After the fieldwork and the classroom study, I was left with reams of participant data and personal artworks from *Landscaping the City III* that were instrumental in the development of Chapters 5, 6, and 7 and that greatly informed my thinking about the city. However, after these chapters were written, I was unsure of how I could approach these through my studio practice. The movement of events began with my fieldwork, which led into the classroom study, which led into works of CBRC. In a sense, the project could have ended here, but I felt there were connections to my studio practice that was yet to be addressed. Looking at the table full of images among the various other paintings and debris in my studio (Figure 85), I thought about how I could let these inform the creation of studio paintings. As such, I began to consider what approaches I could take to close the loop of research back into my studio practice. I remembered the work of my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, who had pioneered methods of collage in her doctoral work (Vaughan, 2005). For Vaughan, collage is a versatile a postmodern method that "accommodates multiple texts and visuals in a single work" that "values multiple distinctive understandings" (p. 27). In a project working with a photo album left behind from her late father, she created a series of textiles works that were influenced by his stories, which she said created work that was not only about her and her father, but also connects to broader social questions around the connection between personal and public life. The fragments in this case were a material that allowed the works to come through as a form of collage.

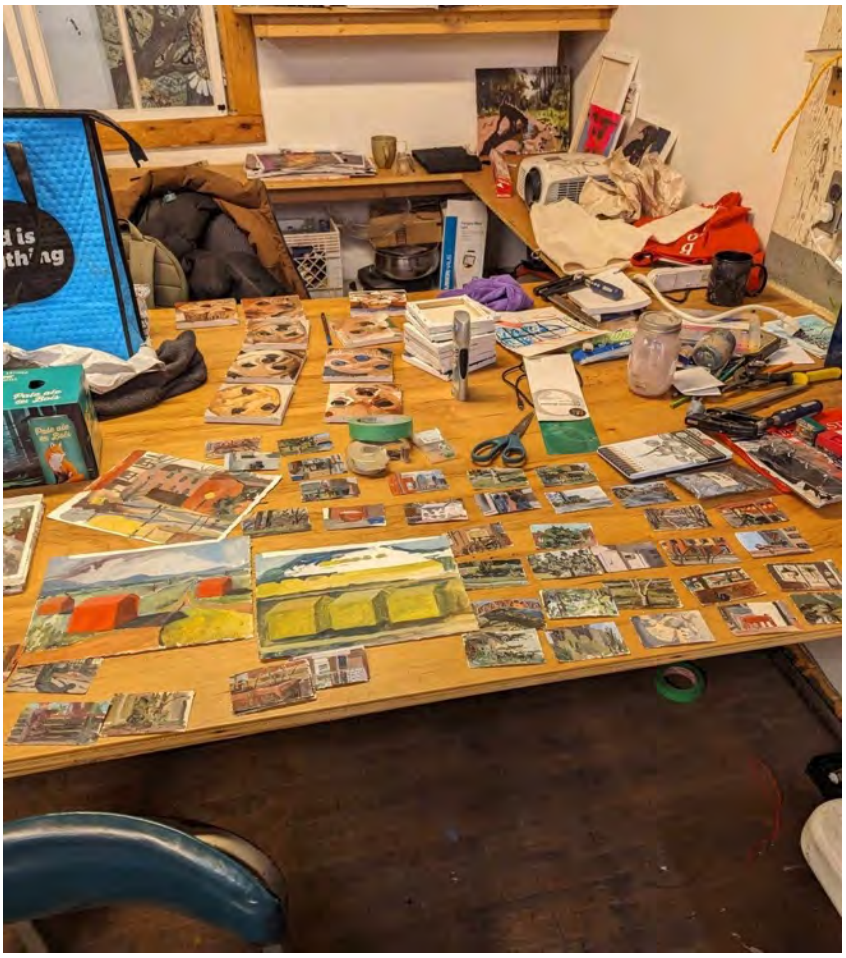

Figure 85: Arranging works on my studio table.

Landscape as Method and Model has involved a lot of thinking with others who have impressed their views of the city onto me, just as I have impressed my views of the city onto them. In addition to their numerous works, I have collected dozens of paintings that now appear to me as fragments of views of the city, captured in space at certain times, whose meanings have evolved as I created the project. I have associations with each of them that are deeply intertwined with research, memory, and experience rooted in place. I tried to think about them together, to consider their implications for how I imagine the landscape of Pointe-Saint-Charles and the Sud Ouest.

Figure 86: A painting of a gardening box in front of Bâtiment 7.

Figure 87: A painting of gardening boxes in front of Bâtiment 7

Before starting on the larger works, I tested out what it would be like to bring works together intuitively, working from my non-visual data as a researcher, my memories, and my small paintings from my fieldwork. Intuition is generally likened to instincts, or "hunches or gut feelings that we cannot justify rationally" (Topolinski, 2011, p. 275), to that which comes to the tip of your tongue when asked your thoughts on a given topic, informed by your experiences, preconceptions, and knowledge. Artists rely on intuition constantly in the act of creation, from knowing from years of practice (intuitively) what will happen when solvent is applied to oily paint, to how to remedy a composition that is heavily favoured to one side. Further, when one creates representations of 3D objects in 2D mediums, one relies on intuition to make the 3D object legible in the limited 2D space. For philosopher Ole Koksvik (2021), our intuitions are tied to our structures of belief, insofar as "anything you can believe you can also intuit" (p. 22). By this, he means that our intuitions come about through our experiences, serving for a foundation of further action. Further, Koksvik argued that perception and intuition overlap significantly due to how beliefs are often formed or tested through perception. Discussing this overlap, he observed that phenomenologically, perception and intuition "allows both states to provide the experiencer with ground-level justification" (p. 22), meaning that each have the capacity to justify one's beliefs. In the process of studying Pointe-Saint-Charles, I developed perceptions about the neighborhood in part gleaned by fieldwork, painting, embeddedness, and through the creation and dialogue of my student-participants. Likewise, I was asking on them to draw on their intuitions during drawing exercises–what do participants choose to draw, and what techniques do they use to realize these drawings–and reflective activities such as the mapmaking session—how does one represent their movements through a map? What gets included or not? In

developing works of research-creation, Sullivan (2008; 2010) noted that the subjective perspective of the artist is at the center of possible insights. In this way, intuition through artmaking can help to reframe existing knowledges through research-creation.

Procedurally, I would begin by putting paintings together, and I developed a couple ground rules for doing this. The first rule was no (or few) photographic references, instead relying on the small and medium sized paintings from Chapter 5. Second, I would prioritize painting believable spaces, attempting to obscure that these spaces were collages from small works. Third is that the works had to connect to ideas that were not simply my own, but ideas that had been co-created with my *Landscaping the City* students. Figure 88 was my first experiment, which worked with two paintings that were of a common area in front of Bâtiment 7 (Figures 86 and 87), where I placed objects in the space as I remembered their placement. This became intuitive as I began working, and after all the components I knew were in place, I remembered the placement of other components such as the white box in the front right and the freezer–which looks like a cube–in the top left of the painting. Furthermore, consideration such as light and shadow–which was inconsistent in the source material–became critical in the creation of a believable space. What formed was a painting that held the elements together in a visually compelling way that represented numerous components of the same space, even if the painting seemed to compress the elements. I found that I could work from the small paintings to create believable spaces.

Figure 88: A collaged painting using paintings from the front of Bâtiment 7 (Figures 86 and 87).

I also wanted to test what would happen if I brought images together that were of unalike or unrelated spaces. As such, my next studio experiment conjoined the two images from my paintings that were most unalike both visually and conceptually. Figure 91 for instance conjoins a painting of a mural in Montréal's Mile End on an overpass near my studio, and a willow tree and a river from the greenspace along the river near my house (Figure 89 and 90).

Figure 89: An underpass mural in Mile End.

Figure 90: A willow tree from the St. Lawrence River Park in Verdun.

The urban geographies of these spaces could not be more different, with the mural painted onto the pillar of an underpass next to a skate park and an extremely cultivated greenspace, and the willow tree along the water in Verdun, which is a rather open place of greenspace.

Figure 91: Bringing two paintings together (abandoned). A mix of Figures 90 and 91.

Beyond being an aesthetic struggle to make the elements work, it was also a conceptual struggle to see what these components revealed about their respective spaces. Neither ideas nor inspiration came about in the melding of these images, and after a couple hours of working I decided to abandon the experiment. Conjoining elements at random in Figure 91 seemed to interfere with the intuitive aspect that made Figure 88 come together naturally, and the randomness did not seem to provide any unexpected insights or thematic connections. However, integrating images together that I could rationalize and 'intuit' together meant that the meanings of the images became clear to me. While I can understand this process on an intuitive level, what meanings are created by bringing these images together? I return to this question when discussing one of the paintings below. In addition to Vaughan's (2005) method of collage, the paintings below serve as a way to process my dual loves of research and creation, drawing on components of each (Loveless, 2019). Returning to my discussion of Loveless' (2019) view that research-creation centers the subject of inquiry itself, and Cazeaux's (2017) view that concepts are what drive artworks in the dematerialized art world, I take up my metaphor of arts-based research being the center of gravity between the dual planets of art and research, wherein the center of orbit is somewhere in between. What insights are generated if we focus on this axis using intuition?

In the following section, I will discuss the creation of four paintings that were derived from the experience of making plein air paintings, where I will describe the inspiration for each work, how they connect to themes within the dissertation, and how they have come to demonstrate ideas that have come from the co-creation of meaning within this project. The written component of this chapter was undertaken concurrent to the creation of the artworks, drawing on many ideas that have repeated throughout the thesis. The reflective tone will help to coalesce and calcify ideas that have been worked through in this dissertation, attempting to give voice to the center of orbit between art and research in this dissertation. I have used this way of bringing together research and creation before in my article on plein air digital painting (LeRue, 2024), which I felt gave a fresher snapshot of how the creation of the paintings helped to concurrently represent and generate ideas. In this case, I hope this can bring my personal and pedagogical practice full circle into the studio.

Studio Paintings

Overwhelming Elements (The Spatial Urban Museum)

Figure 92: A close up of Silo #5's rusty panel and piping on the

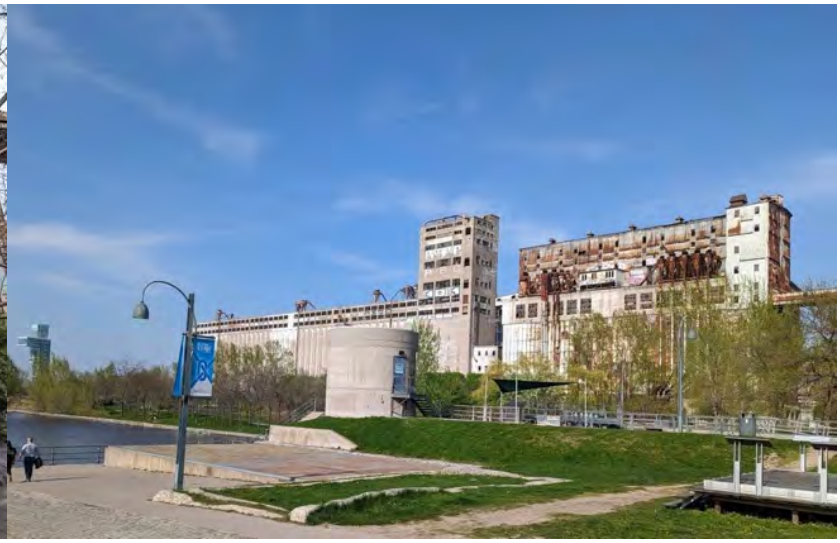

Figure 93: A view of Silo #5 from a distance.

The objects that litter space are always a product of the production of that space. Early in the class, Bob mentioned how drawing his map of Pointe-Saint-Charles was difficult due to the neighborhood's overwhelming number of elements, which are the core materials of Lynch's (1960) framework of the image of the city. Lynch after all argues that it is the elements within a neighborhood that give it its distinctive character. In Chapter 5, a primary interest in painting

Pointe-Saint-Charles in plein air was the infrastructures that occupy and shape the neighborhood today, such as the canal, train tracks, the style of housing, roadways, and bridges, which convene to shape the image of the neighborhood even as their purpose for existence has substantially changed since they were built. Drawing on the insight from Santos (2021a; 2021b) that infrastructures from different epochs often exist concurrently, and that the state of technological innovation is not consistent in the built environment, I became interested in what these outdated elements create for how one sees a neighborhood. As Zukin (2011) noted, upper class people often move into certain neighborhoods with an interest in its histories, which leads to the preservation of industrial elements for their historical value, even as those who once relied on them as a way of life end up displaced from gentrification.

Figure 94: A painting of the overpass running over the Peel Basin. 8" x 10". Oil on Paper

Figure 95: A painting from the other side of the Peel Basin of Figure 94 capturing kayakers using the space for recreation. Created as part of a pilot project in 2020. 10" x 12". Watercolour on Paper.

Pointe-Saint-Charles indeed hosts numerous elements that are a product of its histories, which are constantly finding new–often white collar– uses which have been mentioned in my fieldwork and pedagogy and referenced by participant projects. But in the academic literature, I seldom encounter the reality that post-industrialism is indeed aesthetically pleasing even as it is often dripping with nostalgia, despite the problematic relationship between the legacies of industrialization and present developments. In Mark Fisher's (2014a) introduction to Laura Grace Ford's collection of zines about working class life in post-industrial London, he recalls how London used to have large post-industrial areas to wander through, which in the 80s hosted things like squatters, encampments, rave culture, and drifters, which he argued provided possibilities for those on the fringes of society. However, the London Olympics provided cover

for the city to re-imagine these spaces as ordered and structured, with what was once interesting re-imagined with corporate banality. I admit that I find ample nostalgia for the ruins of industrialisation. My own studio sits in a former industrial warehouse in Montréal's Mile End, where almost nothing is up to code, and murals and pianos line the hallways. Outside there is an impromptu sculpture garden that line railroad tracks, and it is adjacent to a few other buildings that have a similar character. There are no frills (and little cleanliness) with the space, but the building also defies the order that comes about when capital moves in to create boutique office space as it has in many of the former studio buildings in the area. The cheap rents of buildings like this are part of the formula of what gives people the time and space to be creative, though every year they raise the rent a little more and a little more. The era of cheap post-industrial real-estate is over, and real estate in Canada has fully fallen under the clutches of market logics. It feels inevitable that my studio building soon too will be converted into slick grey office buildings, all in the name of progress in urban development.

Figure 96: An example of a dock cleat (1987-1989). Photo credit: Graeme.

Figure 97: Arrangement of elements along the Canal (1987-1989). Photo credit: Graeme.

As I do for my studio, I find a similar sense of nostalgia for the post-industrial areas of Pointe-Saint-Charles. In my walks through the neighborhood, I am consistently happening upon numerous elements whose intended uses have changed either through re-use or abandonment. This might be from ruminants of structures, such as the various foundations and dilapidated structures along the Canal and in the Peel Basin, or through small traces, such as the dock cleats one can find along the Canal. When we visited the lands adjacent to the *Bota-Bota Quayside Spa on a Boat* to paint Silo #5 (Figures 92 and 93), I mentioned how the building stands today because of the extreme cost of its demolition. It sits on valuable land adjacent to the Peel Basin,

and while some ideas have been floated for its redevelopment (Smith, 2017; Marotte, 2019), both destruction and renovation would be so expensive that the building remains in its present state of dilapidation. I chose this location to paint because of the grandiosity of the building and the ample visual interest within the rust and crumbling within its dilapidation. A few participants remarked that they appreciate that the building is there, visible from Griffintown and Old Port, as a kind of unmissable white elephant landmark. Silo #5 takes on a similar status to the Farine Five Roses sign, perhaps one of the Sud Ouest's most iconic landmarks (and the subject of Deborah G's work of CBRC), which is no longer affixed to a flour mill, but is instead owned by the Smucker's Jam Company. The sign's preservation has become a political issue, and it was given special designation by the city in 2020 that will ensure its ongoing protection (Elliot, 2020). But as was demonstrated in Deborah G.'s artwork in Chapter 7, the sign itself has changed its form over the years. It was first lit up in 1949 as a sign for a building along the Peel Basin facing shipping traffic but has seen the destruction and re-building of the industrial infrastructures. Its existence and ongoing admiration today are a symptom of appreciation and nostalgia for the industrial past. So what does this say about the appreciation of Silo #5? Is keeping a dilapidated building in prime real estate the same as preserving a landmark sign?

Figure 98:An image showing where the bike path bifurcates near the Peel Basin.

Figure 99: This was part of two tanks attached to a bar next to Bota-Bota Spa sur l'eau, where we painted adjacent to the Peel Basin. These were removed when I returned to the site a year later.

These adapted infrastructures that permeate every neighborhood in Montréal provides layers of usage and meaning that continue to build over time. If the city is indeed like a palimpsest (Powell, 2008; Turgut, 2021), then the arguments by some that developers should be given carte blanche to hack and slash at these elements risk overlooking the beauty and meaning

that they create. These elements, I argue, make the city feel like a museum of living and past histories. Sometimes, these histories are actively suppressed, as is the case in parts of Griffintown, where strings of new buildings appear beamed down from space. Though even in Griffintown there remain numerous industrial architectures and traces, many of which have been blended seamlessly into its emerging character. Even still, I remain split about the problematics of preserving traces of the past in a city. What good is a museum if its preservation means constricting supply and ensuring that only the wealthy can live there? A museum is nothing if it is not democratic. But can we really build enough shoebox condominiums to restore affordability? Somehow, as massive shoebox developments pop up across the city, I doubt it.

Figure 101: A painting of a water tower or hopper on top of Silo #5.

Figure 100: A photograph of tires used as planters at the entrance of a ruelle in Pointe-Saint-Charles.

In thinking about the elements of Pointe-Saint-Charles, I like to think about the space and the happenings that one might not encounter in a new build suburb. I recall my conversation with Andrea about the politics of clotheslines and how many municipalities have them banned for aesthetic reasons. Suburbs are also built around the logic of cars, with long rows of houses that are often kept by single families. But the residential component of the Pointe was built up before automobile traffic and with workers and their families in mind, meaning that we have the iconic outdoor Montréal staircases in the front, and jagged ruelles with their patchy asphalt, disordered fences and inconsistent flora. As such, it is not unusual to come across elements such as in Figure 102, where two tires have been painted and repurposed as planters. I often stop to look at this arrangement, as it is along many of the routes I take to Bâtiment 7, to remark on how

unusual and interesting it is. It was painted from memory in the work below, but I have also captured it in photography for your benefit.

Figure 102: Overwhelming Elements. Oil on paper. 11" x 15". 2024.

In painting *Overwhelming Elements*, I began by looking through my paintings to find as many elements as possible, placing them intuitively onto the oil paper. I chose elements that often catch my attention, such as signs and bike paths, but also recurring characters from student work such as Silo #5 and the REM train. My references were Figures 94, 95, 98, 99, and 100, with memories and sketches of the imagery in Figures 92, 93, and 101. The tire planters make an appearance, as do two industrial tanks that were caged in above a brewpub that sits across from Silo #5. However, these tanks were removed sometime over the winter. I have also taken efforts to represent the road, the waterway, and an orange cone like the ones that seem to pop up throughout the city during construction season (which lately feels like it is all year around). Additionally, the bike paths and trails along the canal are represented in the bottom right to left, including two signs and a bush from the trail (Figure 98). I was also inspired by participant

Graeme's photo series of the Canal from the 1980s,[73] where he captured the waterway adjacent to all sorts of industrial infrastructures in ways that appeared crowded (Figures 94 and 95), and Vivianne's use of composition in her work of CBRC (Figure 81, Chapter 7) which led me to the use of pathways travelling into the composition. These elements have created a caricature of the industrial aspects of the Pointe, with some allusions to the domestic relationship that is never too far from the former factory sites through the clothesline. In my view, the space is not strictly believable, but instead gives an essence or flavour for the architectures adjacent to the Lachine Canal and Peel Basin, even as this was not the exclusive focus of the work.

Duel Parks

Figure 103: A painting of ripples and shapes in the water at the Lachine Canal.

Figure 104: A painting of a spider web playground along the Verdun riverside park.

Duel Parks is a play on words of two parks that seem to merge together in my imagining of the Sud Ouest, even as they have wildly different locations, histories, and functions in the ecosystem of the city. I live in Verdun, which has an extensive shoreline with a pathway and park space that extends with some brief interruptions several kilometers west to Lachine, and only a couple kilometers east, ending just before the Pointe where the railyards cut off the

[73] Graeme's photo series of the Lachine Canal has been a valuable resource to think with through the creation of this work, and the thinking in general of the dissertation. He captured dozens of photos on film between 1987-1989, at a time that the Canal was already turned over to Parks Canada but was not yet accepted as a valuable amenity. Former industrial buildings and infrastructures were left to rust openly, and as Graeme said in our interview, the space was largely ignored and abandoned (personal communication, May 5, 2023). He later used these images to create a series of paintings about the Canal, a sampling of which can be found here: https://imprimo.ca/collections/lachine-canal-paintings.

I had intended to find further integration of these images into the dissertation but did not find an opening to do so. I may find a way to work with them in the future.

neighborhood. Verdun is known as one of the few places in the city where the shoreline is uninterrupted by industry, and it is an amenity I enjoy in my daily life. The park today appears quite naturalistic, with green, grassy space on the city side, and unkempt, wilded natural space along the shoreline. However, the park was in fact the product of a dyke system built to stop flooding in the 19th and 20th century, and once housed a boardwalk, agricultural land, and some industry ("Boardwalk," n.d.). Though today, there are only a few small traces of these legacies, and the shoreline appears naturalized. The Canal, itself an outdated infrastructure, has retained many of the built amenities along its shores, while the park space in Verdun only retains small traces of what was there before, visible through small brick stairs and rusted pipes that pop out of the ground. While their histories are different, they function as waterways and leisure spaces adjacent to relatively dense neighborhoods.

Figure 105: A painting of a condominium near the Atwater Market.

*Figure 106: *I cannot remember where this tree is located. I believe it was along the Verdun shoreline.*

I began to formulate the idea for this painting when I realized that for some paintings, I was unsure initially whether what I was looking at was the park adjacent to the Lachine Canal (Figures 103, 105, and 108) or the St. Lawrence River (Figures 104, 106*, and 107). In person, there is no mistaking the St. Lawrence River with the relatively narrow canal, but in the visual language of landscape, water is much like sky in that it becomes read with a certain kind of simplicity. Further, each park also has plenty of elements that read like the other, such as the ample trees along the Canal, or tree lined pathways with benches. It reminded me of when I first moved to Montréal, where I lived close to Concordia's campus downtown. On walks around the neighborhood, I encountered the Lachine Canal, and had simply assumed that this was some kind of natural outflow of the St. Lawrence River. It was simply read as a generic waterway, and the paradigm only shifted upon learning of its important historical significance.

Figure 107: A tree-lined pathway facing the river in Verdun.

Figure 108: Trees blocking the view of the Lachine Canal

Waterways recurred so often in this body of work due to their enjoyability and recognition as landscape. I am often reminded of Appleton's (1975) belief that the enjoyment of landscapes is encoded in our DNA due to the elements having important components of our survival—A mountain lookoff allows us to see far out enemies, while a waterway proves nutrition and hydration. While there is certainly no proof of Appleton's landscape gene, I certainly felt more at ease painting in the park along a waterway and am sympathetic to this thesis. Despite its artifice, being along the Lachine Canal provides a similar ease to a babbling brook. Every so often, the city drains the Canal for maintenance, and the site of a gravel pit is always jarring. I often feel uneasy, even as I know that the water indeed did not all evaporate due to a drought, but due to an intentional locking mechanism. The Canal for those who live nearby is thus an important amenity, and its repurposing into a park is a good use of defunct architectures.

Figure 109: People using an early version of the bike path along the Lachine Canal between 1987 – 1989. Photo credit: Graeme.

Figure 110: A boat and clothesline adjacent to the Lachine Canal between 1987 – 1989. Photo credit: Graeme.

Duel Parks (Figure 109) then is a painting about the water, and I exclusively worked from paintings of the Verdun and Pointe-Saint-Charles waterside park spaces. In making the work, they seemed to go together seamlessly, with the Canal in the middle holding as the intermediary waterway separating the two parks. The water itself allowed for intricate explorations in things like the ripples and the reflections, which depending on the vantage point abstracted the physical elements. I was also interested in how each waterway acts as a barrier to movement, for both in Verdun and in the Pointe, hitting the waterway signifies the end of the neighborhood, and calls back to Lynch's (year) five key elements. In this painting, the far side of the waterway represent the lands adjacent to the Lachine Canal, which are noticeably built up with the conversion of former factories into condominiums and office spaces. Further, the landscaping along the Canal tends to be more proper, with things like the shrubs along the water in a row alluding to the more planned nature of this park space. On the close side, we have the airy, often open feeling of the park near Verdun, which tends to have fewer elements, more open spaces, and more tree cover. There are also fewer buildings that are right up against the river, making for a more natural seeming park. However, both parks are indeed largely human

constructions, where re-development has successfully masked their artifice. Nevertheless, they each provide a reprieve, a naturalistic oasis perhaps, amid dense urban building.

Figure 111: Duel Parks. Oil on paper. 22" x 30". 2024.

Monopoly Paintings

The monopoly paintings were influenced by my thinking about the economic role of housing and my interviews around housing insecurity, specifically those with Lou. During the class and our interview, Lou discussed how she was leaving the city for a more affordable township to the south of Montréal, expressing a mix of excitement and promise for a new chapter, and some regret for the economic position forcing her hand. She was being renovicted, meaning that her landlord was using coercive measures to get her to move so that they could renovate her unit and rent it out at a higher price. This process often occurs when a building sells, and the new owner seeks to enhance their investment. Sometimes this happens illegally, with a landlord claiming to move either themselves or a direct family member into a unit only to turn around and lease it at a higher price. In the case of Lou, the landlord's tactics were technically

legal, using a combination of a “buyout” and intimidation which led her to give in. As we discussed in the interview, it is difficult to want to stay in a place where you are made to feel unwelcome, even if the legal standing is often shaky. My partner and I had a similar experience when new landlord bought our building in 2022. They began to spread rumours between tenants while offering us to buy our units. He assured us we would not be evicted if we did not buy, while telling others that he would be evicting everybody to turn the building into condos. The uneasiness was compounded by his inability to keep a story straight within the same sentence, which caused us to jump on an opportunity to move to the house next door. Within eight months, each other unit had received a formal eviction notice, and none of the original tenants will live in the building by Fall, 2024.

The experiences of Lou and myself speak to the messy middle between the commodification of housing and the ‘inconvenience’ (from landlord’s perspectives) of tenants’ rights. In Québec, units are difficult to repossess outside of undertaking critical (structural) work, personal repossession, or the enlargement of units. As such, this often leads to landlords purchasing a building for a sum that when mortgaged is higher than the existing rents can sustain. Run ups in property prices over the past several years meant that as housing values nearly doubled, rents were kept relatively stable in units that did not see turnover. This is not to express sympathy for those who make such a purchase, as they are free to not invest in housing which would relieve some of the upward momentum on prices. But nevertheless, making the purchase of a plex profitable requires bending the rules to bring in a higher paying tenant, or to list units on AirBNB to maximize the value of the investment. In the case of my past building, one of the units is already listed on AirBNB for stays of one month or longer, which circumvents local bans while tripling the monthly intake from only a couple years prior. As Rolnik (2019) and Harvey (2017) noted, housing has become a new frontier for investment, leading to a decoupling of housing from its use value to something that instead is a sponge for excess capital. Those who used the housing to live in–the tenants– become inconveniences in the game of investment. In a city like Montréal where rents have grown exponentially while median wages have remained stagnant, this calls into question the decisions and sentiments of policy makers who seem to reify the relationship between housing and investment while ignoring the ever-increasing number of families who cannot afford it. François Legault, the Premier of Québec, claimed that increasing housing prices was a side effect of Québec wages increasing, and that

increasing rents was a necessary consequence of economic prosperity (Riga, 2023a). Meanwhile, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau said housing prices had to stay high to preserve retirement savings, saying nothing of the needs of families trying to enter the housing market and benefit from its stability. Paradoxically, his housing plan is to keep housing prices high, while making housing affordable for those who do not yet own houses (Younglai, 2024). Besides the incompatibility and incoherence of these positions, the positions of federal, provincial, and municipal governments seem to affirm Rolnik's (2019) point that the role of housing in the economy has been subsumed by its capacity to be a financial instrument. This in turn has incentivized some municipalities to openly restrict supply in favour of homeowners and investors (Moore, 2023), effectively making it more difficult for new development within their borders.

Reflecting on these experiences and contradictions with housing, I could not help but think about the board game Monopoly, which is based on the economics of housing. Published by Parker Brothers in 1935, Monopoly ripped off *The Landlord's Game*, which was patented by Elizabeth Magie in 1904 (Parlett, 2019). *The Landlord's Game* was decidedly anti-capitalist, developed as a critique and a warning of land speculation by demonstrating how those who have already (metaphorically) circled the board a few times have an entrenched advantage over others, meaning that non-landowners become indentured to the price named by those holding the title. The anti-capitalist messaging was so clear that one professor even added the game to their curriculum, which was credited with conveying the dangers of monopoly capitalism in a sophisticated and dynamic way (Parlett, 2019). When Parker Brothers developed their variation, they purged it of many of its anti-capitalist messages, instead presenting the amassing of a 'monopoly' as the fundamental aim of 'winning' the game. If a player fills their properties with enough houses and hotels, one can command ever greater amounts of other players' money who have the misfortune of landing there, entrenching a permanent advantage… But you know, in a fun way! Is this principle not what essentially happens when capital is free to speculate in the housing market, and landlords are permitted to leverage their portfolio to their ears? In twenty years, Canadian housing markets went from being well within reach for most, with the average house being affordable for the median income, to requiring a six-figure salary to afford a two-bedroom condominium in most major Canadian cities. Those showing up to the board now face stark disadvantages.

Figure 112: Monopoly 1. Oil on paper. 7" x 10". 2024.

Two paintings, *Monopoly 1* (Figure 112) and *Monopoly 2* (Figure 113), emerged spontaneously while mucking around in the studio at the onset of studio work completely from imagination. Initially, I planned to make paintings that integrated the paintings of the Monopoly house and hotel into the landscapes of the Sud Ouest and was using these paintings as tests. *Monopoly 1*, which I decided to leave unfinished, shows rows of the iconic green house, which in the board game you can place up to four of on a given property. Using a crude representation of what was supposed to be Mount Royal, I had intended for them to ascend the mountain into what would be the iconic Golden Square Mile. For *Monopoly 2*, I created an image that I felt was far more finished and cohesive. Here, I used the hotel piece, which stands alone on the property as a pinnacle of what one can achieve. As such, I gave the pieces ample room in the painting, with lots of greenspace and a relatively calm blue sky above.

Figure 113: Monopoly 2. Oil on paper. 7" x 10". 2024.

As I moved to use these paintings as inspiration to integrate elements of the Pointe, I remembered Vivianne's final interview. She described her disbelief at the changes in the neighborhood and recalled telling her husband–who was from neighboring St. Henri–that houses near Bâtiment 7 were listed around $1.5 million. It required her pulling up the listings on her phone, because he found this number to be unbelievable for the neighborhood he remembered. But indeed, the cost of a former working-class home is now more than many working class people would make in their lifetimes. Certainly, The Pointe is a gem in that it was preserved from the destruction of many other adjacent neighborhoods that had similar makeups which makes a home like this a rare commodity (Spjkies, 1989). But with the starting point of even a small one-bedroom condominium in the Sud Ouest priced between 350,000 – 450,000,[74] what is

[74] Figures approximated from current listings on www.realtor.ca by setting the geographic area to "Le Sud Ouest".

to happen to those who are trying to enter the market today? What about four generations from now? Are those living in cities indeed doomed to a life of paying (ever increasing) rents?

I tried numerous times to make a painting from these images, using different orientations and placements on a larger paper. Despite my attempts, I never found that I was able to make the Monopoly pieces fit naturally within the built environment. After a few sessions of frustration, I realized that I had developed a fondness for the smaller paintings, even as they were somewhat didactic. Given that the paintings stood as works on their own, I decided that they stood on their own as painting projects. There are some regrets that they do not refer to specific elements in the Pointe, but they nevertheless emerged organically through ideas from this dissertation and stoked further thought and reflection. As I will discuss in the conclusion of this chapter, the fruits of research-creation in this analysis came from the middle point between the two orbits of artmaking and research.

Common Grounds

Figure 114: Plein air painting of the houses across from Bâtiment 7, painted as the sun was setting in Spring, 2024.

Figure 115: Plein air painting of the houses across from Bâtiment 7. The sun had set and the ligts were turning on in the houses, Spring 2024.

One of the places I frequently painted was the land in front of Bâtiment 7, which is currently a dirt patch that acts as a common space for occupants of the building. It features picnic tables, planters, a gazebo, a terrace for the tavern, a ramp, and numerous other elements that are consistently changing. During *Landscaping the City III*, I used this space as an illustrative example of an informal space, and participants favoured drawing this space due to its proximity to the art school and the high number of elements available to draw. This space is connected to land that wraps around the south side of the building, connecting to some of the CN rail yard space that is being reclaimed and the fermette, which wraps behind the back of the building between Bâtiment 7 and the less used oil store. The strip along the souths side of the building

was decontaminated between 2021 and 2023, after which they installed the water reservoir system for the ruelle belue-verte. This led the front space to lose some of its elements in the process, including a geodesic dome and some larger trees that were cut down.

Figure 116: Painting of space in front of Bâtiment 7, Summer 2023.

Figure 117: Painting of street and fence in front of Bâtiment 7 during decontamination, Spring 2023.

I painted some of these canvases during the decontamination and construction, with the fences and a pile of dirt appearing in Figure 117. I also captured things like the picnic tables at different stages of their movement, such as in Figure 116 and 118. Figures 114 and 115 were painted as dusk was falling, with the housing on the other side of Rue Le Ber appearing as abstract shapes, largely due to that vantage point being directly down a ruelle, therefore revealing the backs of houses. Part of the character of the housing in Pointe-Saint-Charles is that despite it being mostly the walk-up plex style housing that Montréal is known for, it is seldom a uniform kind of house as one might see in parts of Verdun. The houses have varying sizes and styles that give ample visual character.

Figure 118: Picnic tables and planter boxes in front of Bâtiment 7. The orange rectangle in the middle is a multi-sided funhouse mirror contraption one can enter.

Since I began working at The Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School in 2020, the outdoor space underwent numerous conversions and re-imaginings, but it was also incredibly lively, especially during periods of high COVID when gathering indoors was not advised. The art school made ample use of the space as I and other instructors take our students outside. During the winter, someone built a snowman, and it was not unusual to see kids playing outside. In the summer, the space was often full of people sitting on picnic tables and benches, which were sometimes used as an extension of the terrace for Bâtiment 7's tavern and brewery. Action-Gardien likewise would set up public outreach in the area, including sharing their plan for the Peel Basin. While the space might seem unassuming when walking up to Bâtiment 7, it indeed became one of the most consequential places of my entire dissertation. Upon reviewing my data, it was this space and not the Peel Basin that recurred most often in my paintings and my students' drawings. It was indeed unintentional, as outside of discussing formal and informal spaces I do not believe I would have thought much of this space at all. But its closeness made it a main backdrop to the

landscape of the Pointe, and its unassuming nature perhaps made it the most generic Pointe-Saint-Charles landscape.

Figure 119: Common Grounds. Oil on Paper. 22" x 30". 2024.

As I developed *Common Grounds* (Figure 119), I worked largely from the placements in my paintings and my memory to represent the space. While I had each element, I had little memory for its size and scale. How wide is the fence on the other size? Where exactly is that building placed in relation to the others? The final painting missed the mark in exactitude, but it nevertheless captured the sentiment of the common ground, including many of the individual elements. In creating this work, I was reminded of Bob's planning for the map, where he was trying to figure out the identity of Pointe-Saint-Charles, which is both a multiple and moving target that can only be approximated. In working through these paintings, they captured the space in many different lights at different times, meaning that the ongoing changes were present in what I captured and painted. This also reminded me of the dialogue around Jaclyn's 45 tiny watercolours, which captured the Pointe in a space and time. Much of what characterized this

space was its ongoing changes—Specifically because it was not a manicured park could it find itself subject to so many rearrangements. Something that was new with predetermined lounging areas and specific placements for a picnic table, the space's importance might have registered more directly, but it was specifically because it is an unassuming dirt lot that the space could be so dynamic in the first place.

Discussion and Conclusion

Bringing these paintings together as 'collages' was ultimately fruitful in helping to think through the act of painting landscapes, and the elements that are ultimately important in representing places and spaces. I encountered new problems in the painting process working directly from painted images compared to working from photographs, which had led my painting process in the years before undertaking this project. But this new way of working also forced my hand at being inventive, and letting my memory and intuition take over. While each of the small paintings from life did not leave time for a struggle due to the 30–60-minute sprints, putting them together on a larger canvas took further contemplation, as if I was wrestling to make the imagery 'fit'. As such, I feel like there are numerous successes and failures here in these works as paintings, but they are ultimately not something I would hang in a commercial gallery as I might have with the works I shared from my earlier practice. But wrestling with the imagery was indeed fruitful in thinking through the ideas that emerged from the dissertation, which I believe takes precedence in a research-creation dissertation.

Thinking through these works as landscapes, I believe the collage works were effective in that they successfully represented the landscape of the Sud Ouest, and the amalgam of elements assemble to make something resembling a landscape. I do find that the collage method indeed opens a dialogue about how the identity of a place is represented and aestheticized. As argued in Chapter 3, landscapes are socially co-created, and are the products of many years of depictions and thought that help to form cohesive images of space (Mitchell, 2003). Thinking through landscape dialectically, a singular landscape captures but part of the whole of what a landscape is, while contributing further to the on-going imagination of space. In working with many small landscapes to create collaged spaces with varying amounts of fidelity to the world, I often felt tension between what I knew to be real about the spaces, and what I was ultimately deciding to depict. Only in *Common Ground* did I try to represent a space accurately. Reflecting on these collage paintings, my closeness to them made me feel as if they were not as successful as

paintings as I would have liked. I believe this to be a personal hang-up based on my habits as a painter, specifically thinking about who I was trying to please in the studio. While my earlier pre-doctoral works were indeed informed by research, the paintings ultimately unaccountable to a concept because the merit of the work would be judged either by buyers, granting agencies, or my peers based on what occurred in the frame. In arts-based research, for a concept to be truly centred in arts-based research, the research questions must become the focus, arguably as the works act for a conduit to thinking.

Thinking through my research questions, which are "How can personal and community classroom-based artworks developed from rooted experiences in place reveal interconnections with the wider world?" And, "how can research-creation be adapted to landscape painting in my personal studio practice and in the community classroom?", I found landscape painting and its deep associations with the formations of space and place offered some meaty connections between aesthetics and spatial representations. Thinking through this chapter in relation to my first question, the connections to the wider world came about when the themes of the classroom study, my fieldwork, and my research about the spaces and places I was depicting coalesced in my intuition, leading to both the paintings and the written reflections about the connections they conjure for me. Thinking through the second question in relation to this chapter, I turn to the fieldwork I developed through plein air painting in Chapter 5. These paintings, and the associations that being in space developed with them, led to a deeper connection between my art practice and the community classroom. In the scope of this chapter and the larger research, I believe it came down to *how* landscape was being used, rather than specific methods for its use. Certainly, the collaged approach informed thinking here, but there are numerous other forms landscape painting could take in the formation of research. One need only see the works that my students created in Chapter 7 to highlight only a few possibilities of landscape painting as research.

Given more time, I may refine the style to figure out how to best situate this style of painting in the logic of my prior projects. I am thinking specifically about how to draw my sentiments about the paintings from fieldwork, which I think led to some of the most intriguing and innovative painting moves I have made for years. It felt like working from life allowed for an immediacy, and the small scale meant that even a painting I was not happy with developed a life of its own that only became apparent as the painting was moved into my inventory of small

paintings. I felt they started to tell their own stories, and it felt like each time I arranged them on a table to create a new composition, a narrative or logical structure would emerge from arranging them together. At first, I thought it was only me who saw this, but as I was writing this chapter, an artist friend of mine was looking through my stack of paintings on the table. She intuitively started arranging them, developing her own compositions of paintings of greenspace that were captured around the Lachine Canal. As I continue to refine these techniques, I would like to continue to build a body of plein air paintings to work up into larger works in the studio. I feel as though this research and this chapter only scratched the surface of the potential of developing plein air-based studio creations.

Figure 120: Photograph of Charlevoix bridge connecting Pointe-Saint-Charles and Griffintown across the Lachine Canal. Taken between 1987-1989. Credit to participant Graeme.

Chapter 9 | Conclusions and the Co-Creation of Meaning

Landscape as Method and Model is the coalescence of over a decade of pursuits and branches of my intellectual and artistic inquiry, and these past five years have been tremendously helpful to synthesize and expand upon these ideas. Though I entered the dissertation with clear ideas about what my project would be, happenstance from COVID-19 lockdowns thrust me into community organizations and led to the vast expansions of the scope of this project. What was once intended to be a research-creation project with elements of oral history came to include a whole network of people and institutions, including personal implications in Bâtiment 7 and the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School, and falling down the rabbit hole of community engagement and collaborative arts-based research. This led to undertaking two complementary projects in community: A personal research-creation project including painting as fieldwork and subsequent studio outputs, and a CBRC art class, each of which studied the built environment in Montréal's Sud Ouest. In this chapter, I will consider the significance of this project, which is at once far reaching and muddy, rooted on the one hand in the co-created meaning through engagement with the built environment, and in the methods I developed to do so through painting and community engagement. First, I will re-visit my questions to consider the primary takeaways from this research drawing on my experiences and making in place, and the works created by my

participants. Following this, I will highlight the direction of my future research before offering some concluding thoughts of this project.

Significance of the Research

In thinking through the significance of this research, I find it imperative to re-visit the research questions to consider how they were taken up and considered through the two projects that studied the landscape of Montréal's Sud Ouest. The first question asked, "How can personal and community classroom-based artworks developed from rooted experiences in place reveal interconnections with the wider world?" Approaching this question required embedding in a community as a researcher, developing landscape paintings focused on place, and creating an arts-based course curriculum that invited others to consider the connections between their personal lives and urban development projects. This led into the second question, which asked: "How can research-creation be adapted to landscape painting in my personal studio practice and the community classroom?" Answering this question required first theorizing the role of landscape painting and drawing as research-creation, which was then implemented within the two complementary projects. Reflecting on the chapters written here, I propose the following takeaways and significance.

The Significance of Timely Spatial Undertakings

This project has significance for place-based arts-based research, place-based art education, and participatory art education, specifically for those oriented to ethnography and social histories. Critical to this project is that it happened in a time and place that was undergoing substantial, perceptible shifts in the social fabric and the built environment. These shifts are immediately apparent in the organizations I have engaged with, that have continued to morph and change even after the conclusion of my data collection. I have continued teaching at The Pointe Saint Charles Art School throughout this thesis, teaching anywhere from 1-4 weekly classes at a time. Presently, I teach a weekly painting class with students who have followed my courses for years, including some who took *Landscaping the City III*. The school has struggled to attract enough paying students to remain financially viable, but has moved to a new, large, beautiful space within Bâtiment 7 that is likely to revamp interest in the school. I remain dedicated to the school's success as I continue my involvement as a volunteer and board member. Bâtiment 7 meanwhile has recently opened the second phase of its development, which includes the art school's new site, an anarchist archive, a satellite office for Action-Gardien, a

daycare, and a larger grocery store, as other studios and services have moved around and expanded in other parts of the building. The ruelle bleue-verte adjacent to Bâtiment 7 is now decontaminated and the water processing component is installed, but the park is not yet landscaped. The building felt dormant for the years after COVID lockdowns, but the renovation seems to have reinvigorated interest in the space as I write this in the spring of 2024. The evenings I taught used to be quiet, but now the building is now regularly abuzz in classes and activities.

The Wellington and Peel Basin today remains as it was when my research began, but new plans have emerged for its future development. The stadium plan has been abandoned, but the newest proposal comprises 7,600 housing units, including 1,100 social housing and 1,100 affordable housing units (Greig, 2023). These plans suggest incorporating up to three parks, including an urban beach adjacent to the Farine Five Roses building (Rukavina, 2024). On paper, this appears to meet some of the social needs outlined in the initial Action-Gardien plan, though there is still a long public consultation period ahead of anything being built. I believe there are reasons to be optimistic, as any development requires approval from the city and the Sud Ouest borough. Sud Ouest city councillor Craig Sauvé is calling for 40% of the units to be social housing (Greig, 2023), while Montréal Mayor Valerie Plante appears to hold high expectations for what happens to the land, citing its central location and potential importance for addressing issues the city is facing (Rukavina, 2014). When I ran into participant Deborah G. at a reunion for a local education program, she was so ecstatic about the project that we had a follow-up interview shortly after.

> Well, when I heard the announcement, I heard they were going to have access to water, they were going to have an arts centre, and they were going to have affordable and low-cost housing. So, these are things we discussed in the class and in our projects. I was certainly thinking about this in my project, and so when they announced it, it sounded like many of the things we discussed in class were part of it. [Personal communication, April 27, 2024]

Indeed, the proposals discussed by Action-Gardien were received favourably by those in the class, which aligned with many of the needs that participants cited. The initial plan was put forward by a consortium led by Groupe Mach (“Bridge-Bonaventure Consortium,” 2023), a private developer implicated in numerous Montréal building projects and the developer who spearheaded the casino development planned on Bâtiment 7’s land. But the city and the borough

retain veto power over any development, meaning activists likely have more leverage than normal to influence what is built.

Landscaping the City III contended with numerous trends within municipal politics, and as will be discussed in the limitations to this project, those who took the course are not necessarily intended to be a representative sample of the public. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suspect that the general needs and desires for space as expressed in the classroom did not relate to public sentiments about the city. Deborah G. continued,

> I remember when I was thinking about not exhibiting that Bob said to me, "You never know when someone might come from Québec and will see it. It might strike a chord!" So anyway, I thought maybe you handed in your thesis and somebody somewhere saw what we said! [Personal communication, April 27, 2024]

While the dissertation was not yet submitted, I do believe it speaks to the ability of oral history and CBRC's prolonged engagement to take the vitals of a given situation, and to capture timely sentiments. The power of a method like this lies in the ability to spend longer on problems to envision possible solutions. In this way, CBRC's prolonged engagement offers the potential to go deep into problems, and brainstorm possible solutions that are aware of more variables than are possible to discuss in shorter methods of community engagement, such as focus groups or surveys. I did not fully realize this power in the dissertation, but this follows into the next point of significance.

The Significance of Prolonged Community Engagement

The methods developed for this thesis provide significance for dialogues around the ethics of community engagement. University-based engagements within community have long been criticized for having a fundamentally extractivist approach to the communities that academics work with. This is doubly difficult in communities where the relationships between the University and their adjacent communities are strained, even as these relationships have the potential to be mutually beneficial (Gioia, 2014). This project was possible through embedding within organizations such as the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School and Bâtiment 7, where I was privy to the directions of these organizations while contributing to their ongoing functioning and sustainability. Not only did this fulfill my desire to engage in what Elaine Lawless (2000; 2019) called reciprocal ethnography, but it also allowed me to think about community with a view from within. While the PhD project was indeed a driving factor in this engagement, I felt like my

contributions to B7 and the art school were also out of personal interest and passions, and I did not feel like I was primarily perceived as an agent of the university. The art school fully embraced me as a member of the core team, and these relationships will persist regardless of my research interests or directions. At Bâtiment 7 however, I consistently felt anxiety about my position in the organization. Around the time I joined, some divergences in vision led to Concordia pulling the plug on a years-long partnership with Bâtiment 7. In one of my first in-person meetings, someone said that Concordia had colonized Bâtiment 7 with its Anglo-Saxon ethic. Aside from the hostility, it was unclear to me what this even meant, as to my knowledge Concordia did not attempt to impose its values onto the language and programming. Further, the politics of language was brought up at various points and became inflamed in my last eight months: one active member felt the space became too anglicized and did not uphold a strong quality of French. Despite being an Anglophone and from Concordia, I almost always felt personally welcomed even with discomfort around some conversations. As I discussed in Chapter 5, by embedding beyond what was necessary to undertake the research I was able to develop ample first-hand knowledge about the workings on the sites and the dynamics of the neighborhood. As such, this dissertation has significance for the discourse of *how* and on whose terms projects from University's engage with community, especially as community engagement becomes a core strategy for many Universities.

I have come to believe that engaging with community organizations on their own terms– as an embedded participant– help to alleviate and appreciate the inequalities that exist between universities and community organizations. By comparison with community organizations, even poorly funded universities tend to have relatively well-paid employees on payroll to aid in the day-to-day operations, in addition to a clear institutional structure that is mirrored in many places across the world. This is not to say that a university is a utopia and that exploitation does not happen in these institutions, rather, that these institutions tend to have resources at their disposal. Grassroots community organizations, meanwhile, are often labours of love that aim to meet needs that are not being met in formal societal institutions and are often run either by volunteers or low-wage workers. Decisions and adaptations are often mired in complexity, requiring buy-in and motivation from others to go in the same direction. When I consider these complexities, I recall a conversation with one of my colleagues at Bâtiment 7 after we received a report on how to foster engagements from consultants. The consultants suggested an easy way to engage the

public is to put coffee in the lobby. My colleague pointed out that not only do we need to procure a coffee maker and a fridge for the milk, but we also need to procure mugs and ensure they are washed. Someone must buy the coffee and the milk, including non-dairy options for lactose intolerant and vegan people. Someone needs to make sure that the coffee is regularly made, taking the initiative to measure out and place the coffee in the filter, and someone else must ensure the coffee area is clean after there are inevitable spills. Not everyone likes coffee, so we need to procure a kettle with tea bags, which in turn require their own management and curation. And where will people sit? This requires purchasing a sofa to create a space conducive to such engagement... and surely the point has been made. This vignette illustrates that seemingly simple tasks reveal numerous considerations and labour. These considerations become more complex and numerous when one accounts for what it takes to win a building, spearhead a renovation, run an art school, or facilitate an internal political structure, each of which requires submitting permits, filing taxes, sending e-mails, filling out newsletters, recruiting students, and so on. Procuring funding, which is often short term and patchwork, means that at no point are grassroots organizations able to coast on their built momentum, and must constantly justify their existence. Given the precarious positions of many of those who sustain these institutions, either making low wages, working multiple jobs, or working as volunteers, I have come to think of every community organization as a herculean effort of passionate people that requires incredible amounts of collaboration to build and sustain. By working within two of these organizations as a contributing member, I have been able to witness the specific complexities these institutions face firsthand. I hope this thesis can encourage others to embrace egalitarian engagement and personal investment in institutional sustainability when conducting community engaged ethnographic work.

Prolonged engagement with place strengthened the quality of the classroom study components. CBRC created a dynamic where the engagement with participants was ongoing over weeks, meaning the relationships transcended one- or two-hour interviews or shorter community making. In writing about this research, I constantly recalled sidebar discussions which helped to contextualize and depict participant's perspectives and the themes that emerged from the class. This prolonged process also meant that I built trust with participants before and after interviews and had a more direct (and often informal) way to follow up with questions and observations. This also provided more direct and ongoing feedback for artworks, which each

required weeks of work from planning to creation. While some participants were happy to make their work without much guidance, others benefitted from feedback and discussions at each stage of the artwork creation. In short, I became a regular part of participants' lives, and they became a regular part of mine. As such, these methods have significance for those doing prolonged qualitative study and demonstrates the benefits of using classroom research to discuss broader social concerns.

Dialectics: Community, Space, and Contradiction

Dialectics, arts-based research, landscape, and community-based art education proved to be a powerful combination that helped to conceptualize ties between imaginings of space and urban politics. As mentioned in Chapter 2, activists often claim to speak for communities, which often papers over internal conflicts while creating insider and outsider dynamics. While this is often necessary in politics, it is also almost always a fiction, which creates a rich entry point for examining the forces at play in spatial development. By adopting Doreen Massey's (1995; 2005) argument that the essential meanings of place are often contested, and Henri Lefebvre's (1991) framework that sees spaces as consistently in the process of redevelopment amid competing social forces, we can instead begin to view urban spaces made of concrete and steel as dynamic interplays of human and non-human systems. Dialectics, defined by Luckàcs (1928 / 2013) as how the whole reveals itself through the particular, often leads to analysis that jumps back and forth between specific and general examples. Or, as concluded in the work of Chapter 3, dialectics stresses the profound interconnection between all things (James, 1980). This provides an entry point for pedagogical approaches such as critical pedagogy (Freire, 2018; hooks, 1994), which is modeled in dialectical thinking that encourages students to think critically about the connection between their own lives and the wider world. Class content was designed with this connection in mind, with an aim to create an entry point for participants to bring their experiences in urban space into conversation with frameworks of urbanism and planned neighborhood developments through both dialogue and artmaking. Ideally, course content created many loops between the personal and the structural. For example, a class presentation might introduce planned Peel Basin developments, including the initial Devimco proposal and how it compares to the Action-Gardien proposal. Discussing these needs might reveal how some participants fear that housing is often not aligned to wages, while others reveal their own challenges with housing insecurity. This may in turn feed into discussions about the

commodification of housing (Rolnik, 2019; August, 2020; August, 2021), or about the changing economic demographics of a given neighborhood. Indeed, these connections were teased out both in-class, often with the aid of the many participants who brought their own frameworks of the city into the classroom, and in the subsequent interviews and research.

I was not often transparent about my philosophical proclivities in the classroom, but it did recur in my extensive conversations with Bob, who said he enjoyed how I would often bounce between theory, urbanism, and art. Early on, I sensed a curious apprehension from Bob about my approach. Our first interview was almost two hours and spanned all kinds of epistemological questions relating to cities, philosophies, and arts-based research. Bob frequently questioned my assumptions, and I was often speaking to him at the edge of my knowledge. Reading back over this transcript, I struggled to answer questions about my approach. Bob asked me a few times over the class what I was specifically doing or looking for, which always led to a bumbling answer about whatever we had been talking about: Urbanism, community engagement, inductive research, research-creation, and so on. But Bob seemed to understand how I was thinking over time, which came to influence his own thought. He said,

> Over the course of the time when you are talking, it's rare that you are what I would call a definitive talker. You allude, portray. And implicit in what you are saying or acting out… I get the impression, that, you're sort of looking at how does thinking art, doing art, living art, being involved in art, and in the city, and being involved in the city, and being a city person, you ask what kinds of dynamics and dialogues take place in these sociocognitive environments. And once I got the notion that you were operating in a domain like that, I began thinking about myself… [and] I think a bit more quickly than what I used to think about around urban questions.
>
> I would say it comes more easily to mind, or more smoothly to mind, to say "wait a minute, what's going on here?" I begin to think more readily about the social disputes, the economic disputes, the housing questions around things like universities and international students. Part of it is I know them, but part of them is that I have been made aware of the issues just by being part of the class… [Personal communication, December 1, 2023]

Indeed, Bob made a point about the importance of dialogue in the class and how it shaped his thought: He said that because the class was focused on interconnections in the city, he thought of the city (Personal communication, December 1, 2023). When discussing how this played out in the classroom, Bob said the open-ended nature of the projects meant that individuals seemed free

to pursue what they were interested in. For Bob, he said that he was not thinking about larger connections when making his collage.

> When I did my project, none of that [the interconnections with other things] entered my mind. The only thing that entered my mind was, 'how can I represent the Pointe in pictures?' So, from your perspective, it's all very simple on that level, right? [Personal communication, December 1, 2023]

However, the meaning of a work such as Bob's only fully comes through later as the work itself fosters dialogue and thought from Bob, myself, and others in the class. Thinking dialectically about a project such as Bob's builds on the connections that are immanent to the work.

Beyond the influences on dialogue and pedagogy, the connection to dialectics had threads through three components of the research. First, the methods employed in this research meant that the results would be difficult to anticipate. Before *Landscaping the City III* began in 2023, I could not have known the interconnections between participants' lives and their neighborhoods. This helped to ease what Corley, Bansal, and Yu (2021) called the methodological straitjacket that has stifled inductive research. By this, they mean that inductive methods that were initially intended to provide more freedom in the projects that researchers took on have instead become formulaic. As mentioned in Chapter 7's conclusion, this made research chaotic and muddy, and the time investment was a risk. But it also led to connections and scenarios that often surprised and challenged me. For instance, a participant like Bob provided ample intellectual challenges and chaos that pushed the directions of my thinking. A project like Jaclyn's 45 watercolours was likely to generate numerous insights on its own, but the happenstance of physical changes happening in the neighborhood immediately following the creation of the work led to much deeper insights about the identity and changes within place. It was luck that the café painted its storefront that weekend, which in turn led to deeper thinking about the pace of change and how it is perceptible. Teasing out these numerous connections while contextualizing them in the writing required many hours of brain racking that was difficult but proved rewarding.

The second way that dialectical thinking influenced this project was finding connections between conceptions of space and landscape. Lynch's (1960; 1984) frameworks became the initial quilting point connecting aesthetic understandings of place to the social and political formations of space introduced by Lefebvre (1991). In other words, the image of the city revealed both an aesthetic understanding and social formation of space, both of which had a

connection to–but were distinct from–larger understandings of space. Dialectically, the particular (the student and their particular image of the map) reveals a relationship to an imagined whole (the neighborhood, spatial formations). When Santos (2021b) said "each place is, in its way, the world" (p. 216), he meant that by looking closely at where one resides, we can start to uncover vast local and global networks that influence spatial formation. Thus, by examining the projects closely, and following up with testimony, projects revealed a particular instance of an imagined whole. Santos' (2023a) philosophy of space also influenced my personal work when he argued that spatial development happens unevenly, with infrastructures from different epochs existing in use concurrently. This led me to develop plein air painting as fieldwork, which I introduced in Chapter 5 and expanded on in Chapter 8. The act of looking closely at space through the production of landscape paintings can reveal traces of the past and present of place, which can reveal connections to the broader social and political conditions.

Third, dialectics influenced my conceptualization of community, helping to frame community as inherently contradictory rather than cohesive. In the social sciences and humanities, community is rarely theorized yet is often invoked as a shorthand for a group of people living in a certain geography, who share aspects of their identity, or who come together around a cause or interest (E.g.: the church community, the Pokémon community, etc.). Referring to the framing of novelist and trans writer Casey Plett (2023), what makes one a member of a community or not is complex, wherein one is sometimes able to self-identify while other times there are gatekeeping mechanisms. Activist projects like Bâtiment 7 often invoke the community in their justification and framing, but *who* is meant by the community is often a contentious issue. Much of the activism to win Bâtiment 7 was carried out by Francophones, and in my time there, some have asserted the Pointe as a Francophone community despite longstanding Anglophone and Allophone[75] histories in the neighborhood. Furthermore, there have been many discussions about who should be welcomed within the political structure, with some floating whether gentrifiers should be allowed to be active members at all. But who is a gentrifier and who are the gentrified veers into complexities and essentialisms that would be hard to meaningfully engage here. Adding to this complexity, some in the Pointe view Bâtiment 7 as

[75] Allophone is a Québec-specific term to describe individuals whose first language is neither French nor English. This becomes consequential in accessing government services in the aftermath of Bill 101, which stipulates that only historic Anglophones (those whose parents went to an English school) can attend English school boards.

an extension of gentrification, finding the anarchist politic to be alienating while ignoring the needs of residents (High, 2022). If one is seeking a unified and idealized community, these internal contradictions would make a project like Bâtiment 7 appear beyond saving, and this has been a common response when I speak candidly about my time there. However, by letting go of cohesion and accepting that the countless passionate individuals that make a project like Bâtiment 7 run and remain relevant, we can see that the site is instead a conduit for the contradictory views held by members of the community. Far from being a utopia as some have tried to call it (though I hear this refrain less and less), I like to think of it as a concentration of political opinions for those passionate about civic activism and urbanism. By situating my project within a site like Bâtiment 7, and by keeping my allegiances during the dissertation within the community rather than the University, I felt more in tune with the contradictions that exist today within Pointe-Saint-Charles.

Painting as Research and Testimony

Carrying out my personal research-creation project and a CBRC project required theorizing the role of painting in arts-based research. As such, a subplot of this dissertation examined the place of painting within research-creation methodology and arts-based research methods (Jalil & LeRue, 2024), in addition to considering what insights were generated from landscape painting in place (LeRue & Jalil, 2024). The bulk of the theorization mentioned here took place outside of the confines of the thesis but was nevertheless critical to the work (see the overviews in Chapter 4). To summarize my argument, though I agreed with Natalie Loveless (2019) that arts-based research and research-creation makes similar moves for research as did Rosalind Kraus's (1979) notion of the expanded field, I agreed with Graeme Sullivan (2008) that painting could retain its form while engaging with post-disciplinary research investigations. I emphasized that painting is not always research-creation, but that it could be when being conducted in the service of research questions. This theorizing was necessary for considering how to bring 2D community-made artworks into the testimony. I argued in Chapter 7 and in *Meaning and Making: Laying the Groundwork for Community-Based Research-Creation* (LeRue, 2023b) that 2D practices are often recognizable to the public as art, meaning that 2D practices provide fewer barriers to participants to share their testimony and to engage with the works of others. In my personal project, the creation of the paintings was deeply interconnected with the research questions, which guided both what and how I painted, in addition to what I was

looking for and doing while I was painting. I hope this theoretical work will be of significance for considering the trajectory of research-creation generally, and offer an entry point for painters and those using other forms of fine-arts mediums to engage with research-creation methods.

Future Directions of the Work

In considering the future direction of this dissertation, I am fortunate that I will be starting tenure track employment in the Fall of 2024, meaning that I am finishing this project with certainty that I will have the time, resources, and motivation to continue my research program. Furthermore, I have published about several aspects of this thesis both individually and as part of research collaborations, meaning that some threads of this inquiry are already out in the world with their own trajectory. As such, I feel I can speak with more certainty and precision about where the threads of this thesis will move to next.

My primary and most significant future direction are my plans to work with urban studies scholars to bring methods like CBRC forward as consultation methods for urban studies. Initially developed as a postdoctoral fellowship in collaboration with the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Montréal, my forthcoming project *Remedying Urban Democracy: Developing Participatory Arts-Based Inductive Methods for Urban Futures and Social Sustainability* will be a cornerstone of my research agenda in the coming years. This project examines the state of public consultation in urban development to create participatory arts-based research methods to consult broad and diverse publics about their values and desires for space. At the root of this project is the question of sustainability, which has come to the fore in recent years in urban studies to ensure development is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable (Purvis et al., 2019). However, sustainability is often criticized for centering economic and environmental factors while ignoring the social impacts of these developments (Quastel et al., 2012). For example, a development might be economically sustainable and produce zero emissions but may be too expensive for most families to afford. Meanwhile, planners express a deep frustration with consultation processes, claiming that the public often do not tell them what they want or need from urban developments (Åström, 2019; 2020). As such, this project will use the findings from this dissertation to develop and implement consultation methods through public workshops at sites that are often heralded as examples of social sustainability and civic activism (such as Bâtiment 7) to invite participants to channel the extra-linguistic insights of artmaking into works of participatory planning, drawing on classroom studies while developing

applied approaches to research-creation. Critical to this project are relationships with the sites themselves, and I hope to expand on the discussion of the criticality of egalitarian relationship building with community organizations and the public by creating frameworks for others doing community engaged projects.

As discussed in Chapter 7, CBRC posed conundrums and challenges that I had not anticipated on the outset of this research that I believe merits revisiting in a future project of this kind. There were a number of logistics to balance as a singular teacher-researcher. For example, the time necessary to interview and transcribe alone was substantial, let alone gathering data from the class, engaging with grounded theory in a timely manner, planning the class in a responsive way, planning the logistics of site visits, setting up things like interviews, setting up the classroom, planning the exhibition, and so on, not to mention making my own project concurrently. All these elements were responsible for the dynamism of *Landscaping the City III* and CBRC, but I was spreading myself too thin and barely able to keep up with the various components. In the future, I only see a few possible options to rectify this: Simplify the course by taking on fewer students, doing fewer things, or not concurrently doing my personal art practice; Hire a research assistant who could be additional eyes and ears and could assume some of the load of the research; And / or hire a TA to help with logistics. Of these options, the latter two are the most appealing, as I think something substantial would have been lost if any of the previous elements had been missing. I am also considering the attrition that occurred with the final project, and how I could make final project prompts that are just as open-ended while offering participants who are not used to making art projects some workable guide rails to create a project that reveals their insights into the given research topic. For example, I could have suggested someone complete five of the box paintings at a park of their choosing, or complete ten sketches using the eraser technique. With each participant who completed projects, there were inevitably themes that emerged from those works that connected or contributed to larger class themes. As I often say in my teaching, the ideas often follow the creation of the works.

Duration of engagement was an important component of this dissertation, and if I were to take up this method in the future, I must consider that I will likely not have four years to embed into community project. I must also consider how I will engage this method in the future, where I will not have four years to invest in an organization as I did at Bâtiment 7 and the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School. The investment of time in these organizations made the rootedness in place

of this dissertation feel more meaningful and accountable to those within these organizations, while giving ample understanding of the workings of these spaces. It is possible for when I have less time to build relationships, as I have already been considering in my future projects, to partner with researchers or locals (those who might be called 'gatekeepers' in social science research) who are already well versed in these components. This might also open up CBRC to groups who are not formulated exclusively around the arts. I have also been considering building a CBRC class around the creation of a specific project that each participant completes, which could open the method to relatively shorter engagements of 4-6 weeks. This could include a readymade painting and drawing project as mentioned in the previous section, but also works engaging video, photovoice, sound, and so on, and act to also teach a novel technology. For these shorter engagements, I think it is important to think through how to be less extractive, which for me was an important component of CBRC methodology. This could mean partnering directly on research with someone already implicated at the site, offering cash payment, or offering some other skill or service as makes sense.

The second direction of this work is to build upon the insights of being an artist and teacher, and how they tied together throughout this dissertation. The dual identities of artist and teacher have been often theorized in Art Education (Diachendt, 2010; Thorton, 2013), but this duality has remained an ongoing challenge that I have observed throughout my graduate studies and in my pre-service teacher-students, who express an intense frustration with the fragmentation between learning methods of pedagogy and discovering ones' identity as an artist. And, despite my best intentions, my university classrooms have regrettably enforced this division by not creating space for the interrelationship of these identities, often marginalizing art practice in favour of teaching. However, through carrying out the three iterations of *Landscaping the City*, I have found numerous connections between my own art practice and teaching approaches, which I am eager to experiment with in teaching preservice teachers. Presently, I am developing two courses that will use assignments that will connect personal studio projects and pedagogical components simultaneously. Depending on these outcomes, I will work toward publications both individually and with my teaching collective, Shortcuts for Teachers Artists Collective (STAC) (Shanahan et al., 2024) on fostering these dual identities in the classroom. I am also developing a graduate level studio course that will invite students to use landscape theory and fieldwork to examine the built environment. Through the development and undertaking of this class, I will

further consider some of the implications of Chapter 5 and Chapter 8 – very briefly, that arts-based fieldwork undertaken in place can indeed reveal existing interrelations in space and that these interrelations are indeed a fruitful place to develop research-creation –and consider publishing components of them as methods for artist-researchers, in addition to the connection between fieldwork and pedagogy.

I have continued to think about the role of painting as research, and am concurrently thinking about methodologies for painting, and further research on the role of painting in arts-based research paradigms. Presently, I am planning works with my collaborator, Pakistan-based painter and professor Rabeya Jalil, on research methods for painters and intercultural painting practices. We are developing a proposal for an edited volume on painting as research, with the hopes of bringing together the perspectives of painters who view research as critical to their practices, and to consider what epistemic perspectives this brings forward. This volume aims to present a survey of international painting and research practices to open a further dialogue about fine arts mediums as research.

Finally, I plan to continue theorizing the possibilities of community art education through both community-based research methods and projects, and by thinking through and theorizing what we mean by community, specifically thinking through how dialectical contradiction. On the first point, I have begun to brainstorm with local and international collaborators about potential research outcomes. This spring, my supervisor Dr. Kathleen Vaughan and I organized a study day with art educators in community at Concordia University, inviting four community artists and arts facilitators to give presentations and workshops on their practice to an audience made up of community practitioners, academics, and students in Concordia's art education program. I hosted the event, facilitating discussion in the opening and closing sections. My opening remarks noted the precarious yet central role of community art education today, highlighting its emancipatory potential while also alluding to some of the traps outlined by art historian Claire Bishop (2012) and others about how community practices can also paper over deep seated social contradictions. Dr. Vaughan and I are planning to compile a book outlining the discussions of the day as a record of the thinking from guest speakers and participants. In thinking through theories of community, I am presently planning a project with a colleague in the UK that is still taking shape, exploring how the contradictions of community are revealed and contended with through

arts practice. We hope to contribute to dialogues around university engagements with community and consider the ethics and approaches of community-based arts-based research.

Closing Thoughts

This dissertation represents a strange, exciting, and unexpected chapter in my life. I moved from being primarily an artist to being an artist, an educator, and a writer. The world went through a generational pandemic that derailed the entire planned project and made fulfilling it unfeasible. Many of my friends moved away, I got married, and my spouse and I went through substantial external challenges that led to some of the most stressful and chaotic moments of our lives. I ended up involved in the governance of two major projects that I admired, spent countless hours investing in relationships with students and colleagues, sang karaoke until 4:00 in the morning with peers at Bâtiment 7, spent three years teaching pre-service teachers in community, interviewed for jobs, and earned a permanent position that I have long coveted. Everybody told me a PhD would change my life, and blessed with a wonderful supervisor who has been one of my strongest advocates in Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, a loving and supportive partner in Charlotte, and a caring community of friends, students, and artists who have ensured my success. This work is truly the product of these relationships.

Figure 121: A plein air oil painting of the digital work Whispy Pit (Figure 1) at an alcove of the Lachine Canal in Griffintown.

Landscape as Method and Model examined the complexities of space and place through research-creation, participatory research, ethnography, and artistic fieldwork. The circumstances that led me to create this project also led me to let go of my desire to control the outcomes, as I had been used to in my time working as an artist. If a painting was going awry, I knew how to get it back on track, even if it would be different than I imagined it. If an inductive qualitative study spanning nearly five years of my life went off track, I feared that I may simply never finish. But the project indeed went off track, in ways that I found most helpful and productive to my thinking. I hope, then, that I have towed the line of chaos well enough to represent it adequately in this work, and that I have represented each participants' artwork and perspective to their liking. I have found tremendous insight in these projects, and I hope that the readers of this thesis appreciate the deep complexities I have found working in community.

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Appendix A: Syllabus

Landscaping the City III

General Information

Time: Tuesday afternoon, 1:00-4:00
Dates: April 18 – June 13. No Class May 30
Location: Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School. 1900 Rue le Ber. Ring doorbell under sign if door is closed.

Instructor: David LeRue
E-mail: David.lerue@concordia.ca
Phone Number: 438-503-6776
Meetings for any reason are available by appointment either in person or over Zoom.

Supervisor and Ombudsperson: Dr. Kathleen Vaughan
E-mail: Kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca

Please contact Kathleen if you would like to change any responses on the consent forms signed during the first class.

Google Classroom

This will be the easiest way to post announcements and works in progress with fellow classmates. Not mandatory to use.

https://classroom.google.com/c/NjAyODE4NzgyNzcz?cjc=bv7i5an

Course Description

Landscaping the City is a multi-disciplinary course that applies landscape painting and drawing principles and techniques to the built environment of Pointe-Saint-Charles. Guiding questions for the class ask: How does land become landscape? And how do the unique visual elements of a place form into a cohesive image? Using Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* as our guide, students in *Landscaping the City* will participate in skill-building exercises, outdoor site visits and group reflections before undertaking projects that connect our own neighborhoods to these considerations and invite students to connect artmaking to their memories, experiences and hopes of place.

The class welcomes participants of all levels. Participants working in all mediums are welcome, but demonstrations will be given in drawing. Drawing materials will also be provided.

Classes will be delivered in English, but participants are welcome to respond to interviews and in-class discussion in English or French. "Whisper translations" can also be offered from peers.

Materials

All necessary materials will be provided. Each participant will be given:

- Pack of drawing pencils

- A vinyl eraser
- A sharpener
- A sketchbook (may be left at the school or taken home on a weekly basis)
- Other materials will be provided as needed.

If you would like to work with other materials, such as paint or digital tablets, you are welcome to bring them to class and to activities. This is especially welcome for the final project. The instructor may or may not be able to help with these materials.

Information on the Study

This iteration of *Landscaping the City* will be part of a doctoral research study by PhD Candidate David LeRue, studying under Dr. Kathleen Vaughan at Concordia University. The aim of this study is to understand how artmaking from members of the community can inform research about the past, present and future of the city. The researcher will conduct classroom observations, surveys, field notes, individual or collective participant interviews and document all artwork created during the class, which will be made available to participants for free. Participation in the study portion of the class is completely optional, meaning you may take the class and not participate in the study. Furthermore, participants are welcome to withdraw from either the study or the course at any time.

The instructor will not know who has elected to be part of the study until 14 days after the study has concluded.

Please refer to the consent forms signed in the first class

Data Collection

If you participate in the study, your data may be collected in the following ways. Note that you can withhold part or all your data regardless of whether you elect to be part of the study.

Interviews / Focus Groups: After each in-person session, the researcher will invite participants for interviews and discussions about the events and activities from that week. The researcher might also invite students for interviews outside of class time.

Sketchbooks: Participating students will be invited to submit their sketchbooks for analysis and photocopying. This might include your notes, thoughts, collages, etc. This will be returned to you after copying.

Artworks: The instructor will document student artworks from class, including the final project.

Surveys: The instructor will send out a survey after the last class.

Teacher Observations / Journals: The instructor will be collecting notes and observations throughout the class.

Assignments

Each assignment will come with a written prompt, either to be projected or on a piece of paper. Available in English and French. These will be posted to the google classroom.

In-Class: Assignments will be given out weekly to be completed in class. You may or may not have enough time to fully complete these assignments and are encouraged to continue them outside of class time.

Homework: All weekly homework is completely optional and is intended to enrich your experience in the class. You are under no obligation to complete it. It will be handed out in class and also posted to the google classroom *Some homework may be highly recommended for completing future assignments and homework.

Final Project: This project is meant to draw on your experiences of living in the city through artmaking. These projects will be assembled into an exhibition in late summer or early fall. We will discuss this more extensively in week 4, but a link to previous projects from landscaping the city is available here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/16-_alvNnO7_T2fGL26UkmFx8Grzy5mM4/view?usp=sharing.

Class Schedule

A sharable google calendar is available here:
https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=Y2xhc3Nyb29tMTExNjY3MTg4MDQ1NTE5ODc2NjAyQGdyb3VwLmNhbGVuZGFyLmdvb2dsZS5jb20

April 18, Week 1: Introductions and Map Making

April 25, Week 2: Composition and Armatures

May 2, Week 3: Light and Shadow, Ruelles

May 9, Week 4: Perspective

May 16, Week 5: Field Trip: Visit to Peel Basin

We will meet under the Bâtiment 7 awning at

May 23, Week 6: Studio and Classroom

May 30, No Class

June 6, Week 7: Studio and Classroom

June 13, Week 8: Final Critique and Potluck

Date TBD (Late Summer / Early Fall): Exhibition

Activities Schedule

The extra activities are envisioned as extra time to discuss, to practice our skills and grow as a group. These are not mandatory, and unless otherwise indicated, are drop-in for any amount of time you like.

April 20, Week 1: Drop in and draw at Quai 5160 in Verdun. 12:00 – 5:00

May 4, Week 3: Drop in Draw and Paint near Atwater Market
Meet at Ma Bicyclette. 1:00-4:30

May 11, Week 4: Drop in miniature painting demonstration near Silo #5 (Bota Bota spa area). Materials provided, but please let Dave know if you will be attending this event. 2:00 – 5:00.

May 18, Week 5: Tour of Bâtiment 7 / Draw in the Farmette. 1:00 – 4:00
Meet at the art school.

May 24, Week 6: Peel Basin drop-in and draw
Exact Location to be determined.

May 25, Week 6: Studio time @ Dave's studio for final project. 10:00 – 5:00
Meet at 135 Van Horne in Mile End. Suite 206.

June 8, Week 7: Studio time at the Art School. 1:00 – 5:00

June 11, Week 7: Studio time @ Dave's studio for final project. 10:00 – 5:00
Meet at 135 Van Horne in Mile End. Suite 206.

Biblography

Kevin Lynch, Image of the City PDF:
https://www.miguelangelmartinez.net/IMG/pdf/1960_Kevin_Lynch_The_Image_of_The_City_book.pdf

Appendix B: Handouts

Landscaping the City: Class 1 Itinerary

1. Introductions (20 minutes)
    a. Instructor will invite participants to introduce their names and why they decided to participate in the class.
    b. Instructor will introduce himself and his work and discuss the aims of the class.
    c. Instructor will circulate sketchbooks, sharpeners, erasers and pencils.

2. Consent Forms / Registration Forms (20-30 minutes)
    a. We will circulate registration and consent forms.
    b. We will answer questions relating to the consent forms.
    c. David will leave, and Kathleen will answer final questions before collecting the signed forms.

3. In-Class Assignment: Mapmaking (40 minutes)
    a. In your sketchbook, draw a map showing your route from your home to the art school. Or draw a map of your neighborhood.
        i. The map does not have to be to scale.
        ii. You may include whatever you deem relevant.
        iii. You may use whatever materials you like.

Break (15 minutes) 1hr 45

4. Introducing Image of the City (20 minutes)
    a. Instructor will circulate the key terms for Landscaping the City and introduce Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City*.
    b. Return to your map. Identify as many elements as you can.

5. Group mapmaking (40 minutes) **May be altered if there is time.**
    a. In groups of three or four, review your maps.
    b. Draw a new map of the neighborhood that consolidates meaningful elements from each member.
    c. Share with larger group.

6. Introduction to syllabus / plan of the course (15 minutes)
    a. Discuss again the aims of the course.
    b. Go over schedule.

Homework (optional): Looking at the elements identified on your map, take a walk through your neighborhood and gather photographs to the sites you have identified as meaningful to you. If possible, upload these photographs to the Google Classroom.

Week 2: Landscape Drawing Composition

Thumbnail Sketch: A smaller sketch in a sketchbook, usually used to figure out composition, points of interest, and / or light and shade.

Figure 1, Example of Thumbnails

Rule of thirds: A grid of nine equal squares used to arrange composition. Generally, objects of interest touch one or more of the squares in the center.

Generally, an object in the middle of the composition takes our attention away from the rest of the drawing. Thus, I often use the rule of thirds to place the horizon along the top or bottom line, and place objects of interest along the edges of the middle square.

The rule of thirds allows us to get creative. You may use this to find compositions within existing scenery, or to create arrange scenery in believable or abstract compositions.

Armatures: Armatures are forms which hold together larger forms (See handout for examples). I recommend using them to arrange the objects you see before

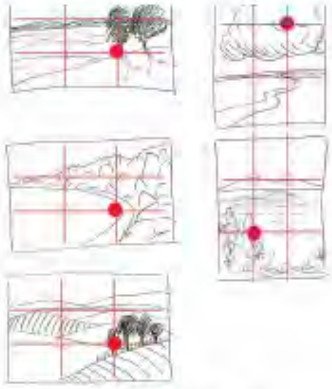


Figure 2 Example of Rule of Thirds

Assignment for Today: Take your sketchbook and go outside near Bâtiment 7. Make 7 or 8 thumbnail sketches using the rule of thirds and / or armatures. If you have time and would like to, pick what you think is the most successful armature for a more developed 30–40-minute drawing from observation.

You may choose one of the following locations to draw:

1. The farmette, a small farm behind Bâtiment 7
2. The lookoff and Jardin des voisins
3. Parc Le Ber (The longer walk)
4. Within Bâtiment 7 either under the awning outside or using the windows in the school and grand atelier.

Return to the school by 3:40 for a wrap-up discussion.

Optional Homework: Return to sites or photos of sites that you identified last week on your map. Make some thumbnail sketches trying out different armatures on the same landscapes. What changes when applying different compositions to the same drawing?

Week 3: Grayscales and Ruelles

Grayscale: A chromatic tool that demonstrates the limits of our materials. The square on the far left should be as light as possible. The square on the far right should be as dark as possible. Working with your drawing implement and eraser, work to make each square slightly lighter or slightly darker than the square before it so that we have an even gradient of light to dark.

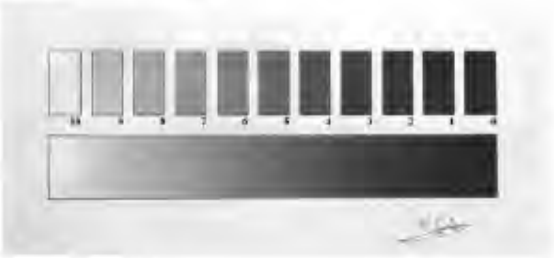


Figure 1, Grayscales

Graphite Ground (Or, Ground): A graphite ground is created by applying your pencil over the drawing surface at medium tension until the entire surface is covered. Then, using a cloth or tissue, wiping the surface until the ground is even.

To draw on a graphite ground, use your eraser to capture the lights, and use your pencil to capture the darks. If you are making a longer drawing, use tape to hold in the edges. For a guide, look here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uel8W67osQ

Figure 2, Graphite Ground

Formal Spaces / Informal Spaces: Formal spaces are spaces that have clear uses and do not tolerate informality, such as downtown malls, subway stations and building fronts, especially in upscale neighborhoods. Informal spaces are spaces that do not have clear uses or clear organization, such as ruelles, community gardens, the fermette, and some parks, such as parc des voisins. Think of the difference between formal and informal spaces as a spectrum rather than a dichotomy.

Discussion questions:

1. In documentary, how did the sounds work in tandem with the visuals? What can sound tell us about the living conditions of the city?
2. How have changes in your neighborhood activated other senses? Have you found that living in one neighborhood compared to another?
3. What are some informal spaces you have sentimental attachment to? How does using and accessing these spaces compare to formal spaces?

In-Class Work:

1. Divide a long rectangle into 5, 7, or 9 equal squares. This can be freehanded or with a ruler. Then, create a graphite ground. Erase as much as possible the square on the left. Press as hard as possible for the square on the right. Now, by erasing and pressing, try to create an even gradient between the first square and the last square. Number them in order beginning with your lightest [20 minutes]
2. Create a small thumbnail graphite ground. Practice drawing a round object, such as an apple, orange, or ball. Each drawing should include the darkest dark and your lightest light from the grayscale.
3. Decide whether you would like to draw inside or outside. Outside, I encourage you to visit less formal spaces near the school, such as ruelles, the park des voisins or the construction site to the side. Inside, I encourage you to find a view in the school or the Grand Atelier or find some objects relating to the usage of the space. You are free to move around the building.
    a. Once you have chosen a site, make a longer (1hr) drawing using the charcoal ground method.

Optional Homework:

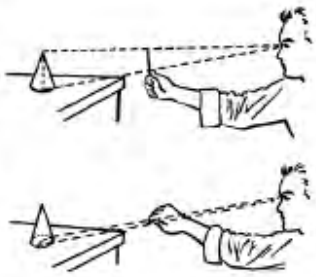
Find an informal subject in the city that has meaning to you, such as a ruelle, a park, a building interior or a construction site. Using the charcoal ground method, make a drawing focusing on something that you might have otherwise overlooked, such as an overflowing garbage can, a broken fence, a birdhouse in a tree. If you are unsure of where to start, begin with a few thumbnails to orient yourself and find a subject.

Link to Artworks from Today:

1. Reverberations d'une crise:
2. Mathew Reichertz *Dogwalk*:

Landscaping the City Week 4: Perspective

Sighting: A method of measurement for drawing by comparing objects to each other to find their relative size and position. Hold your arm straight locked in place and close one eye. Measure the size of objects by taking the vertical or horizontal measurements of one object and compare it to itself. For example, a rectangle may be twice as wide as it is tall or a circle might be three square lengths to the right and one square length above the aforementioned square.
Do not use vertical measurements.



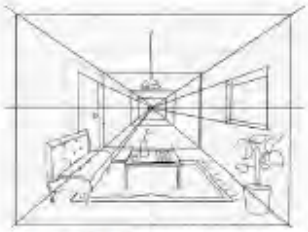
Perspective

A note on perspective: Perspective is a model that helps us render 3d objects and buildings into a believable space on a 2d surface. However, perspective has limitations. It is important as artists to practice and internalize perspective, but to let go of it in our day-to-day practices. While using this in a technical exercise, objects will look wrong. It is important to stick to it because deviating from perspective will cause objects falling outside of perspective to look wrong.

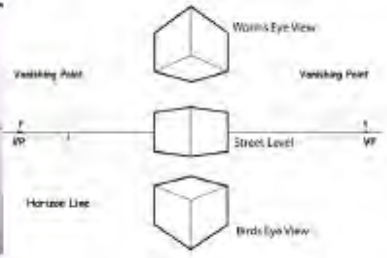
Functional Perspective: The awareness of the rules of perspective in one's art practice.

Academic Perspective: The exercises we will take part in today. They are technical exercises that inform our practice.

One Point Perspective: Perspective that recedes into one vanishing point. Appropriate for long alleyways, streets, and some kinds of landscapes. Horizontal and vertical lines should be left alone. Lines that are diagonal recede into the vanishing point.



Two Point Perspective: Perspective that recedes into two vanishing points at opposing sides of the horizon line. Appropriate for street corners, the side of buildings and skylines. In two-point perspective, horizontal and diagonal lines recede into the appropriate vanishing point, while vertical lines remain straight up and down.



Helpful Tips:

- Objects of the same size that are closer will be bigger and will extend more dramatically higher or lower (but seldom in both directions at once).
- You will only see the top of a box if it is completely below the horizon line. You will only see the bottom of a box if it is above the horizon line.
- When drawing figures in space, choose a body part (chest, head, shoulders). This body part will remain along the horizon line for each figure in the scene. Only the size of the figures will change.

In-Class Assignment: Find a place to draw outside that offers a vantage point for one point perspective. Draw a few thumbnails to figure out your composition integrating perspective before completing a one-hour academic perspective drawing. Optional: Try two-point perspective, especially if you have experience already with one point perspective.

Take-Home Assignment: Make a one-hour drawing using only functional perspective.

Landscaping the City Week 5: Peel Basin Visit

Route:

Here is a map you may use to do the full loop of the Basin, which crosses over to the Griffintown side. It allows you to see the area from both sides. I invite you to walk the loop today with a partner and stop to draw, using the prompts below if you wish.

Reflection Questions:

- How does the city change as we move in / out of the Peel Basin?
- How would the proposed developments we saw early in the class fit into the landscape of the Peel Basin?
- How does the Basin activate our other senses? What can we hear or smell?
- How are formal and informal spaces represented here?
- What do you notice at the edges of the Peel Basin?

Artistic Prompts:

You are free to complete some, all, or none of these. If something else captivates you, by all means continue.

1. Can you find examples of Lynch's five elements? You may photograph or draw them.
2. Make a drawing (either abstract or representational) of the soundscape. How can we represent our other senses?
3. Draw a redundant architecture
4. Represent examples of where informal space meets formal space.
5. Draw as many thumbnails as possible.
6. Represent your walk around the Basin using something on your person that is not a pencil.

Meet in front of the old rotative bridge at 3:45 OR at a time we mutually agree. There is shelter under the train overpass.

Landscaping the City: Key Terms

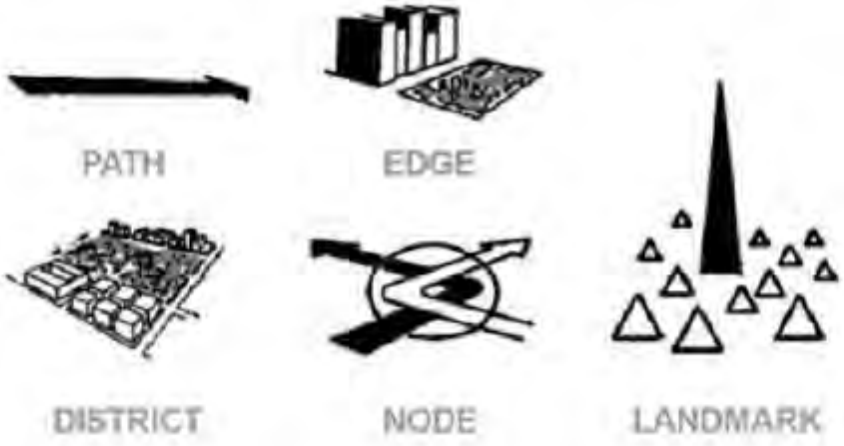
Landscape: An aestheticized view of the land within a geographical boundary. Eg: The Canadian Landscape. How we imagine land.

The Image of the City: The mental image held by the inhabitants of the city. How we imagine the city.

For Lynch, a city's image is made up of many individual images, and no two people are likely to share the same mental image of a city. Nevertheless, there is likely to be overlap between many people thinking of the same place.

Like landscape, the image of a city is unlikely to be stable for long periods of time. Like the natural landscape, it both physically changes and becomes reimagined. For example, Griffintown 15 years ago was a collection of former warehouses that has since been transformed into

The Five Elements



The five elements outlined by Kevin Lynch (Drawings from text).

Paths: The routes one takes through the city.

If we are walking, these can be literal pathways or sidewalks. If we are in cars, they can be the roadways we frequently use. If we use transit, they can be the bus route or the metro lines.

Somewhere like Downtown has many complicated routes, as there are underground and elevated pathways we can use to move through entire city blocks without going outside (Eg: the underground city, place des arts). One can even metro from one underground complex to another.

Edges: The barriers, real or perceived, that shape our movements through the city.

These can be things like highways, shorelines, railroads, streets, over and underpasses, walls, construction sites, parks, etc.

Some prominent examples in the Pointe include the railways, which separate the Pointe from the St Lawrence river and only allows a few pathways to the rest of the city. The Lachine Canal separates the Pointe from Griffintown and Downtown. Edges can also be pathways, such as the pathways built along the canal and the bike and walking path along the St Lawrence in Verdun.

Districts: City areas with unique traits that we noticeably enter and exit.

Districts are medium or large sized areas that are usually architecturally unique from other areas of the city. Sometimes a district is marked by a large institution, such as a university or a seaport, or are separated by the aforementioned barriers.

Districts can be neighborhoods, like Pointe-St-Charles, or boroughs, like the Sud-Ouest or Verdun. We can also think of Old Montreal and the area around McGill as districts.

Nodes: The Focal points of a neighborhood that concentrate its unique elements. They are also junctional areas where many pathways cross over.

Nodes are more contextual than already formed and depend on scale. They can be as small as a street corner and as large as a city. Chicago for instance is a historical meeting point of many railway lines, and the Lachine Canal made Montreal an industrial hub, as all the traffic heading through to the great lakes had to flow through it. The Turcot interchange and Berri UQAM metro station are junctional nodes, where one's path can split into many possible directions.

In a neighborhood, a node can be a street corner, a park,

Landmarks: Large points of reference in the city, be they natural or built.

Prominent landmarks in Montreal include the Oratory, Olympic Stadium, Mount Royal and Notre Dame basilica, but a landmark can be any unique architectural element. For example, many Montreal boroughs have churches that can be seen from a distance and help give shape to place. Likewise, public art, metro stations, statues, etc. can also be landmarks.

Appendix C: Call for Participants

Poster and Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School newsletter:

Call for Participants for a Research-Study on a Community Art Class

Landscaping the City: A Community-Based Arts Inquiry into Development in Montréal's Sud-Ouest

[An image of a previous students' work will be included with their permission]

Cost: Free

Dates and times: April 18 to June 13. Wednesday Afternoon, from 1-4. 3 hours per week.

Places: The Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School at 1900 Rue La Ber; Occasionally we will meet at a predetermined site nearby.

Landscaping the City is a multi-disciplinary course that applies landscape painting and drawing principles and techniques to the built environment of Pointe-Saint-Charles. Guiding questions for the class ask: How does land become landscape? And how do the unique visual elements of a place form into a cohesive image? Using Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* as our guide, students in *Landscaping the City* will participate in skill-building exercises, outdoor site visits and group reflections before undertaking projects that connect our own neighborhoods to these considerations and invite students to connect artmaking to their memories, experiences and hopes of place.

The class welcomes participants of all levels. Participants working in all mediums are welcome, but demonstrations will be given in drawing. Drawing materials will also be provided.

This iteration of *Landscaping the City* will be part of a doctoral research study by PhD Candidate David LeRue, studying under Dr. Kathleen Vaughan at Concordia University. The aim of this study is to understand how artmaking from members of the community can inform research about the past, present and future of the city. The researcher will conduct classroom observations, surveys, field notes, individual or collective participant interviews and document all artwork created during the class, which will be made available to participants for free. Participation in the study portion of the class is completely optional, meaning you may take the class and not participate in the study. Furthermore, participants are welcome to withdraw from either the study or the course at any time.

Classes will be delivered in English, but participants are welcome to respond to interviews and in-class discussion in English or French. "Whisper translations" can also be offered.

Registration for class: Please e-mail Admin@pointesaintcharlesartschool.org . If registration is full, you will be added to a waiting list.

Registration for study: Will be offered in first class through blind selection, meaning the researcher / instructor will not know your choice until after the class is over.

For more information about the class or the study, please contact David LeRue at 438-503-6776 or David.lerue@concordia.ca

Instagram:

[First Image of previous student work, with permission. Second Image will be a QR Code]

Text: Our teacher David LeRue will be offering *Landscaping the City III* from (dates, times). This iteration of the class will be studied for his doctoral work, and all students of the class may optionally participate. For more information, please scan the QR code in image 2 or visit our website at [Link].

E-mail Text:

Hello [person or organization's name],

Hope you are well.

I am David LeRue, an art teacher at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School and PhD Candidate at Concordia University under Dr. Kathleen Vaughan.

I am conducting a study of an art class called *Landscaping the City* I am teaching at the Pointe-Saint-Charles Art School. The aim of this study is to understand how artmaking from members of the community can inform research about the past, present and future of the city. The class will offer in-class demonstrations, discussions and site visits, and will be open to participants of all levels. More information and a course description can be found in the attached poster.

If you think this might be of interest to your [members, community, participants.], would it be possible to have this circulated with them?

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions,

David LeRue

Appendix D: Participant List

Participant List

Participant	Gender	Brief Personal Description	Final Project Thumbnail + Description
Adam	M	Adult living in Pointe-Saint Charles	  

			 Four pen drawings.
Andrea	F	Adult living in nearby Ville Emard. Works in STEM research. Discontinued after week 5	No project received.
Agathe	F	Adult living in Pointe-Saint-Charles	No project received.
Bob	M	Retired adult. Born in Montréal but moved around throughout his life.	 Collaged map with writing. Additional conceptual elements discussed in Chapter 7.
Brianne (Pseudonym)	F	Young adult. Attended two classes. Missed week 1 and discontinued after week 3. No consent form received.	No project received.

Debora A.	F	Retired adult, lifelong Montréaler.	 Pen drawing and video documentary on her family's store in Milton Parc. Discussed extensively in Chapter 7.
Deborah G.	F	Retired adult. Lifelong Montréaler with a history of participating in civic activism.	 Three watercolour and acrylic paintings. Discussed extensively in Chapter 7.

Ella (Pseudonym)	F	Young adult enrolled in University. Lifelong Montrealer living between West Island and Downtown	  Two paintings of landscapes on fabric.
Françoise	F	Retired adult living in the Pointe. Discontinued after week 2.	No project received.
Graeme	M	Retired adult living in neighboring Little Burgundy. Never attended class but participated in some external events.	Contributed photographs and paintings from a series in the 80s. Photographs appeared throughout. Paintings were not included for copyright reasons.

Graziella	F	Retired adult living in the Pointe. Discontinued after week 1	No project received.
Jackie	F	Adult living in the Sud Ouest. Missed first week and discontinued after week 3.	No project received
Jaclyn	F	Adult living in the Pointe.	 Series of 45 tiny watercolours. Discussed more explicitly in Chapter 7.
Lou (Pseudonym)	F		 Painting of Paul Patates

Lucie L.	F	Adult living in neighboring Little Burgundy.	No project received.
Lucie S.	NB	Adult living in northern Montréal.	No project received.
Manon	F	Adult living in neighboring Ville Emard	 Series of 6 prints using imagery from the neighborhood.
Mauve (Pseudonym)	F	Adult. Came to two weeks, but never submitted form.	No project received.
Nadia	F	Adult and longtime member of the school. Lived in the Plateau and immigrated from Germany.	

			Eight drawings and a video described as a loveletter to the park adjacent to her home. Only one drawing shown here but a selection are presented in Chapter 7.
Pouria	M	Adult living north of the mountain in Montréal.	 Tattoo design inspired by a renowned Pointe-Saint-Charles tattoo artist.
Stephanie	F	Lifelong Montréaler and recent resident in Pointe-Saint Charles. Implicated in many neighborhood projects.	No project received.

Vivianne	F	Immigrated to Montréal as young adult. Living in the West Island	 Cityscape painting focused on an armature and works inspired by nostalgia for her girlhood home. Discussed more elaborately in Chapter 7.

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Landscaping the City: A Community-Based Arts Inquiry into Development in Montreal's Sud-Ouest
Researcher: David LeRue
Researcher's Contact Information: David.lerue@concordia.ca ; 438-503-6776
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Kathleen Vaughan
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca | 514 797 3618
Source of funding for the study: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Concordia University Graduate Funding.

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

This classroom study aims to understand how ongoing development in Montreal's Sud-Ouest is understood and interpreted by participants. The purpose of the research is to study art making as a form of personal testimony, which will be used to both develop community-informed arts-based research methods and a larger study on development in Montreal's Sud-Ouest.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to attend class regularly and participate in interviews and discussions with the researcher. The researcher will observe classes and take notes, with participants' discussions possibly quoted or cited in the research outputs. You will also be requested to submit journals, sketchbooks and artworks that will be documented and returned to you. You have a right to refuse or omit any data shared with the researcher over the course of the research. The researcher will not know whether you are participating in the research part of the class, or simply attending the class, until the course is over: you may choose to come to the class

without participating in the research component. All consent forms will be held by the ombudsperson until 14 days after the conclusion of the course, after which the choice for participation will be considered final.

In total, participating in this study will take a minimum of three and a maximum of six hours a week for eight weeks, with voluntary participation including working on artworks outside of class time, participation in exhibitions and interviews beyond the eight weeks.

You may choose to be notified when your data is published or used.

[_] Notify me when my data is published.

[_] Do not notify me when my data is published.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include:

- Possible discomfort in discussions of course material, specifically around the trends on changing cities discussed in the classroom.

Potential benefits include:

- Sharing of personal histories through interviews and the creation of artwork(s).
- Participation in a free art class.
- Participation in exhibition(s) and publication(s).

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: Journals and sketchbooks, interviews, surveys, sketches, in-class exercises, artworks (photographed), teacher observations and a weekly classroom recording.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be identifiable. That means it will have your name directly on it.

We will protect the information by keeping data on a password protected private hard drive that is not connected to the internet. This hard drive will be accessible only to the primary researcher and the researcher's supervisor.

We intend to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

[ ] I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

[ ] Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research.

If the second option is chosen, you will be identified by a pseudonym. If you would like to choose your pseudonym, please indicate it here. _____

We will destroy the information six years after the end of the study.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You may discontinue the course, or continue the course withdraw your permission to have your data studied. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the ombudsperson 14 days after the conclusion of the course and this information will be destroyed.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

_____

SIGNATURE

_____

DATE

_____

If you wish to change the declaration on this form before 14 days following the conclusion of the course, please e-mail the ombudsperson at kathleen.vaughan@concordia.ca

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix F: Ethics Certificates

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	David Lerue
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Landscaping the City: A Community-Based Arts Inquiry into Development in Montreal's Sud-Ouest
Certification Number:	30017930

Valid From: March 19, 2024 To: March 18, 2025

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Richard DeMont

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	David Lerue
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Landscaping the City: A Community-Based Arts Inquiry into Development in Montreal's Sud-Ouest
Certification Number:	30017930

Valid From: March 13, 2023 To: March 12, 2024

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Dr. David Waddington, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee