

Call for Papers

What Ethics for Public Art in Canada? Reciprocities, Communities, Territories

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June 20, 2024: deadline for receipt of article proposals (250-300 words)

July 1st, 2024: notification to authors selected for inclusion

September 30, 2024: deadline for submission of articles ready for peer review (7,500-8,000 words)

Over the last fifteen years, the past, present, and future of public art on the territory known as Canada has been the focus of many initiatives. The work of professional organizations such as the *Creative City Network of Canada* joins sporadic academic, community, and government-sponsored roundtables and panels. Key publications, including contributions by Annie Gérin and James S. McLean (2009), Annie Gérin *et al.* (2010), Martha Radice and Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier (2017), Laurent Vernet (2021), and Analays Alvarez Hernandez and Marie-Blanche Fourcade (2021), as well as conferences¹ and curatorial projects,² have delved into issues about art practices in public spaces, wholly or mainly focused on the Canadian context. Still, public art practice in Canada (and elsewhere) may benefit from further investigation into its nature, temporalities, materials, places, mechanisms, actors, and publics. This is why we organized the colloquium *Ethical Public Art in Canada* in the summer of 2022 in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, aiming to provide a collective, critical, and ongoing space for dialogue and reflection on public art matters³. The colloquium brought together artists, public art professionals from municipalities,

¹ We are thinking of: *Tracing the City: Interventions of Art in Public Space*, NSCAD University, 2011; *Urban Encounters: Art and the Public*, Dalhousie University, 2013; *L'art public : nouveaux territoires, nouveaux enjeux*, Université du Québec à Montréal and Bureau d'art public de la Ville de Montréal, 2014; *Public Art: New Ways of Thinking and Working*, York University, 2017; *Entre raison et tension – L'art public à l'épreuve de la commémoration corrigée*, Culture Montréal and Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ), 2019; *ArtworxTO Symposium: Public art of Tomorrow*, Toronto City and Government of Québec, 2021.

² See, *LandMarks2017/Repères2017*, Partners in Art, <https://partnersinart.ca/projects/landmarks2017-reperes2017/>.

³ The colloquium, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), took place from August 24 to 27, 2022 at Université de Montréal and Concordia University, as well as in the artist-run centres Dare-Dare, 3e impérial and Verticale.

independent cultural workers, representatives of cultural organizations, emerging and established researchers, and students and interested citizens, to discuss current issues in public art, such as equity, representation, and citizen participation. We aim to continue and consolidate the reflections and dialogue opened in 2022 by inviting contributions to a thematic issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies* that builds upon the discussions from the colloquium, enriching them with diverse perspectives.

Context and Issue

We had to wait until 2009 to see one of the first scholarly contributions critically examining public art in Canada: the edited volume *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives* by Annie Gérin and James S. MacLean. As a result, our understanding of public art has been primarily shaped by the extensive literature in the United States from the 1980s to today (Raven 1989; Senie and Webster 1992; Lacy 1995; Doss 1995; Deutsche 1996; Kwon 2002; Hein 2006; Krause Knight 2008; Evans 2019; Rooney, Wingate and Senie 2021). We are particularly interested in situating the discussion of public art in Canada within the country's current socio-political, ecological, and economic realities while embracing various approaches to this practice. Given the significant societal challenges and unrest Canada has experienced in recent decades, mainly manifested through local and global movements such as Idle No More, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Black Lives Matter, and right-wing populist movements like the Freedom Convoy, we want to explore not just public art but *ethical* public art in this country.

What does it mean for public art to be ethical? Should it be? If so, why? What rules or principles guide the conception and creation of public art in Canada today, and how can they be updated and reinvented? What does it mean to think and make public art not *for* communities but *with* them? The aim is not to identify a single form of ethical public art but to explore the links between ethics and public art in the current Canadian context. In this context, marked by distress, contradictions, antagonisms, struggles and environmental and health crises, public art has been part of the response, informed by decolonial approaches (Quijano 2007; Rivera Cusicanqui 2012; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Ferdinand 2019), indigenization (Phillips 2011; Kermoal and Gareau 2019), and anti-colonial, anti-racist, queer, ecological, and anti-oppression perspectives and practices. Considering this complex background, compounded by the ongoing *glocal* crisis surrounding commemoration (Gérin 2019; Abraham 2021; Alvarez Hernandez and Fourcade 2021), ethical public art may align with initiatives and approaches seeking structural and societal change toward establishing more horizontal relationships. Therefore, public art might have the potential to contribute to current practices and relations that prefigure future transformations that enhance socially just worlds.

Some Canadian actors engage in art in public spaces, including artist-run centres, artists, independent curators, and collectives, have led the way by disrupting, altering, relaunching, and reinventing art practices outside the gallery and the museum. What can actors in the more institutionalized realm of public art learn from these initiatives? Today, establishing ethical public art practices depends on opening alternative channels of expression that allow mutual listening among diverse and unequal publics. Ethical public art is, therefore,

receptive to current contemporary issues and engages in dialogue with citizens, residents and migrants; it cares about their interests, living spaces, and ecosystems. In this sense, it leads to a rethinking of the terms of collaboration in public art practices and processes. Ethical public art entails pluriversalism rather than unique, separate, and consensual points of view: it does not necessarily seek objective truth and goodness but reflects what is at stake. It may foster consensus but can also make room for ambiguity and conflict.

Potential Topics

We invite authors, through analyses and case studies, to explore a wide range of topics related to public art, including but not limited to:

- Public art and the ethics/politics of listening/care
- Public art and the ethics of collaboration
- Public art and the ethics of identity
- Public art and the ethics of creativity
- Public art and the ethics of curating
- Public art and the ethics of knowledge sharing
- Public art and the ethics of place
- Public art and environmental ethics

We strongly encourage submissions from Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, Deaf people, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities, as necessary to a pluralistic and rigorous dialogue. Their perspectives have been critical to public art but have not always been at the forefront of discussions about public art as practice, place, and meaning.

We are soliciting essays in French or English, 7,500 to 8,000 words in length, including notes and a bibliography.

PROPOSALS

June 20, 2024

- Please submit your proposals of a maximum of 250 words and a short CV highlighting research activities and publications of no more than 10 pages by June 20, 2024, to **Analays Alvarez Hernandez** (analays.alvarez@umontreal.ca) and **Laurent Vernet** (laurent.piche-vernet@umontreal.ca).

ARTICLES READY FOR PEER REVIEW

September 30, 2024

- Please follow the journal's guidelines available at:

<<https://www.utpjournals.press/journals/jcs/submissions>>

- All submissions are done through JCS's Online Peer Review System,* available at:

<https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/utp_jcs>

*If you are a new contributor to the journal, please visit <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/utp_jcs> and select “Create an account.” You will be asked to fill out a brief contributor form. Be sure to click the “Finish” button to save your data. You can then log in using the username and password you created and view the contributor homepage, which is the starting point for all functions available to you as a contributor.

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