

DI OCTO II (2017), Anthony Howe

This is the first stop on the [Public Art, Science and Technology](#) tour.

Di Octo II is a stainless-steel sunflower that blooms with the breeze. Perched on a triangular stand and rising seven meters above the corner of Mackay Street and De Maisonneuve Boulevard, hundreds of synchronized silver petals silently sway in and out of a modulating core. A ballet-mecanique whose manoeuvres are choreographed by gusts as light as a breeze, this kinetic sculpture is an iconic landmark of the Sir George Williams Campus. Take a moment to observe or imagine the work's movements. What do they remind you of? If you change positions, what does your new vantage point reveal?

Di Octo II was created by renowned American sculptor Anthony Howe and manufactured by the Show Canada company. The work was gifted to the university by the Wener family in 2017. While the artwork was intended to commemorate Montreal's 375th birthday and Canada's 150th year, we instead invite you to consider the technological and orchestral functions that position it as a central sculptural figure in the community.

Di Octo II's breezy, seemingly effortless movements are no simple feat. Rather, the artwork was carefully engineered to harmonize with the wind. In the months leading to its installation, the university planning team, engineering faculty and administrators conducted countless wind and solar shading studies to maximize *Di Octo II's* impact and optimize its placement. This project was cross-disciplinary and cross-departmental. Mana Hemami, a university architect, designed a customized concrete base using results from the studies. Years after its installation, *Di Octo II* is maintained by conservationists on a quarterly basis.

The sculpture was placed next to the historic Henry F. Hall Building to engage Quartier Concordia's diverse public beyond the university walls. The 12-storey Hall Building is the first purpose-built structure on the Sir George William campus. Today it is home to many academic departments, student unions, and the university's largest lecture hall. The sculpture's placement at the entrance to a central artery is therefore no mere coincidence: this eye-catching kinetic artwork links the university to both art and technology.

Although it was created by a single artist, the work, its installation, and upkeep require a symphony of architects, administrators, curators, conservators, and engineers. The artwork's installation and maintenance successfully marries art and science — a reflection of the university's eclectic strengths. In a state of eternal metamorphosis, *Di Octo II* flows with the cycles of the academy.

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