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# CALL TO ARTISTS

## Public Art Program: Honouring Black Presence at Concordia University

### Project Specifications

Concordia University invites individuals or teams of professional artists, both emerging and established, to submit an Expression of Interest to create a temporary artwork for the inaugural Honouring Black Presence at Concordia Public Art Program. Artists who have limited experience in creating public art can apply if they are appropriately supported by professionals with experience.

We will provide a workshop on how to apply for those with limited experience on July 4th.

Details will be announced on Instagram: [@CUPublicart](#)

**Production Budget: \$85,000 CAD**

**Submission Deadline: July 25, 2023, 11:59 PM EST**

The commissioned artwork will be located in the Hall building at 1450 De Maisonneuve Boulevard West.

The specific areas considered for the placement of the artwork are the south-east corner interior and exterior areas surrounding the Henry F. Hall Building, above the Bishop Street vestibule, and outside on the Bishop Street terrace area. (See attached plans and drawings, including the delineated spaces and specifications.)

The intentions of the project are to:

- commission a series of outstanding works of art that centre around Black aesthetics, knowledge and identities as well as the longstanding and continued Black presence at Concordia;
- serve as a platform for a wider debate on the role of public art and civic spaces in Montreal;
- recognize the vital contributions of Black communities and Black students which have historically been undervalued;
- support and initiate commissions of temporary contemporary art and raise the profile of the commissioned artists;
- support Black artists and showcase the plurality of Black voices and experience.

### Eligibility

This call is open to all professional artists with an interest in public art. However, due to the nature of this project, preference will be given to artists or artist teams who identify as Black. Selected artists or artist teams should also have connections to Concordia University and/or Montreal's Black communities.

### Equity

It is our aim to create an environment where individuals with diverse backgrounds and knowledge are valued and welcomed.

We also recognize that the experience of Blackness is complex, diverse, and rich.

We strongly encourage all qualified candidates to apply. This includes, among others, Black and Indigenous people, members of sexual and gender minorities, persons with disabilities, and members of other marginalized communities who may contribute to greater diversity.

If you need specific accommodations to apply, please get in touch at [s.margolian@concordia.ca](mailto:s.margolian@concordia.ca)

### Background

In 2020, Concordia University struck the [President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism](#) in response to the growing demand to dismantle anti-Black racism, foster relationships with Black communities and create a more inclusive campus for Black students, faculty, and staff. Two years later, the task force presented its [final report](#) which included 88 recommendations, one of which was to create and develop a public art program dedicated to acknowledging the continued presence and contributions of Black communities at Concordia and its founding institutions (Sir George Williams University and Loyola College). The Honouring Black Presence at Concordia Public Art Program is a tangible testament to Concordia's commitment to combatting anti-Black racism and implementing the recommendations of the Task Force.

## Program description

Concordia University is launching a long-term program of ephemeral public artworks dedicated to Black Concordians' histories, presence, and futures and seeks to commission an individual or team of professional artists, both emerging and established to create the inaugural public work. The work, in whatever form it may take, will be available to the public for approximately three years. There will be a total of four cycles of three years and each cycle will showcase the work of a different artist/group of artists.

The format of the program aims to bring visibility to many Black artists, create educational opportunities for an individual or team of professional artists, both emerging and established, and allow Black artists to be commissioned for public art. This program speaks to the importance of mobilizing art for the empowerment of communities, fostering solidarity, and uplifting the voices and presence of Black communities at Concordia and beyond. The artwork will center around the totality of experiences of Concordia's Black communities and will reflect on the passage of time and the (hi)stories that have shaped the University into the postsecondary institution that it is today and that it aspires to be.

The program also seeks to decolonize and redefine what is understood today as 'public art'. For artists, this is an opportunity to experiment with forms and materials that are not traditionally associated with this art, such as digital art, video projection, sound, photography, textile, etc. which allows for more artistic freedom. This expanded definition challenges the permanency embedded mainly, but not exclusively, in historical forms such as monuments that are meant to depict glorified moments in history or individuals from a narrow perspective that was often white, male, and Eurocentric. But as noted by art historian Patricia C. Phillips<sup>1</sup>, "public art does not have to last forever [...] It must rely on its flexibility, its adaptability to be both responsive and timely, to be both specific and temporary. Ephemeral public art provides continuity for analysis of the condition and changing configurations of public life."

The temporary artwork will not be integrated into the permanent Public Art Collection at the end of the 3 years. The artist will be responsible for removing the artwork from the premises with a sustainable approach.

### We are looking for work that:

- is contemporary and site-specific: referring/responding to the conceptual, historical, social, cultural or formal framework of the site;
- can be of different typologies, durations, and media;
- can take the form of non-traditional mediums such as media art, performances, digital art, sound or light art, virtual, or other forms yet to be identified;
- fosters solidarity and uplifts the voices and presence of Black communities at Concordia and Montreal;
- centers around the experiences of Black communities at Concordia and Montreal;
- engages with communities within and beyond the University during the various phases of the project, such as during the proposal, creation and installation phases;
- is interactive, socially engaged and/or community-based;
- takes into consideration sustainability and environmental impact.

## Commissioning Process

The commissioning process will take place over a year's time and will include 3 stages. The program is chaired by the Public Art Lead and a specially convened Selection Jury of 9 members, composed of practicing artists, art professionals, members of Concordia's Black community, and art consultants. Submissions will be accepted in either French or English.

### Stage 1 – Expression of Interest

#### How to Apply

Fill out an online application form including the following information:

- Artist statement of interest showing relevant experience, ability, and general artistic approach (300 words).  
Please do not include proposal at this stage.
- Artist bio (max 250 words per artist(s))
- Artist(s) CV(s): one for each team member (if applicable)
- Links to website and social media
- Images or videos or audio recordings of recent work

**Details available in the [application form](#)**

<sup>1</sup>Phillips, P. C. (1989). [Temporality and Public Art](#). *Art Journal*, 48(4), 331–335.

## Stage 2 – Shortlisted Artists

Three shortlisted artists will be invited to submit a comprehensive proposal and present it in person to the selection committee. A fee of \$4,500 CAD (+tax if applicable) will be paid to shortlisted artists for this stage.

### Proposal Requirements

- Project Proposal - Written statement on concept – maximum 1,000 words.

### Support Material

- Production of a maquette, or concept sketches, renderings, design details, a plan that indicates location.
- Links to video and/or audio recordings: should the work have a performance or video component, provide a link to a sample.
- Technical specifications on proposed materials and/or feasibility study describing nature of materials, fabrication process and methods.
- Detailed budget – including insurance and contingency.
- A plan for public engagement for the duration of the installation.
- Timeline - including production, installation, programming and public engagement, de-installation.

## Stage 3 – Technical Review and In-Person Presentation to the Jury

Proposals will undergo a technical review that will take two months from the submission deadline. The technical committee will be adapted to the nature of the work proposed.

Artists will receive feedback from the technical committee and then have an additional month to address issues and respond to questions and comments before final submission of proposal and in-person presentation to the Selection Jury.

## Timeline

- July 25, 2023: Artists' Expression of Interest Deadline
- August 14, 2023: Invitation to Selected Shortlisted Artists to submit a proposal
- December 14, 2023: Shortlisted Artists submit proposals for technical evaluation
- February 14, 2024: Technical notes shared with Shortlisted Artists
- March 14, 2024: Artists present their final proposal including technical updates to the Jury
- March 18, 2024: Artists notified of results
- Spring 2024: Announcement of selected artist or team of artists
- March - October 2024: Creation of Artwork
- Spring 2025: Installation/Unveiling/Launch event

## Evaluation Criteria

- relevance of the proposed artwork to the Expression of Interest in that it engages with the experience, past, present and future of Black Concordian's
- artist or team qualifications and ability to produce site-specific artworks
- artist or team capacity to successfully complete their proposal
- the artistic impact of the proposed concept to enhance or activate public space
- capacity of artist or team to work with hired professionals if applicable
- appropriateness of the scale, visibility and/or presence of the artwork
- appropriateness of proposal to the budget, scope and timelines available
- suitability and sustainability of material and maintenance requirements
- general technical feasibility (durability, assembly, safety, accessibility)

## About the Site

Due to its historical relevance to Montreal's Black communities, the Henry F. Hall Building and its surroundings will be the primary site for the installation of the artwork commissioned for the public art program.

This building was the site of Canada's largest student protest against anti-Black racism. In the winter of 1969, more than 200 students occupied the ninth floor of the Henry F. Hall Building at Sir George Williams University (one of Concordia's founding institutions) to protest how complaints of racism made by Black and Caribbean students had been mishandled over many months. On February 11, university leaders called the police, resulting in the arrest of 97 students and long-lasting psychological, physical and social repercussions. This event, known as the Sir George Williams student protest, represents a key moment in Black activism in Montreal and in Canada. In October 2022, the University presented its formal apology for the mishandling of the protest.

The [Henry F. Hall Building](#) is a high-density hub, on Concordia's downtown Sir George Williams Campus. The building was designed in 1966 by architects Ross, Fish, Duschenes & Barrett. Its exterior is made of prefabricated, stressed concrete, a feature of the brutalist movement, often associated with French architect Le Corbusier. The building is located within the protected heritage zone of the nearby Bishop Court apartments. This will impact allowable interventions and require special permits depending on the proposals.

In the Hall Building, there are numerous classrooms, engineering teaching and research labs, the Concordia Theatre (formerly called the D.B. Clarke Theatre), and student spaces, including student associations, the Hive Café, Reggie's Pub and the People's Potato. These high traffic areas will ensure high visibility of the installations.

The Hall Building is currently undergoing major renovations and updating. Renovations and upgrading will run until the end of 2025. This may have an impact on the art program. For more information about the [building](#).

## About Concordia University

Concordia is a next-generation university continually reimagining the future of higher education. Located in the vibrant and multicultural city of Montreal, Concordia is the top-ranked university in North America founded within the last 50 years and annually registers some 51,000 students through its innovative approach to experiential learning and cross-functional research. Concordia's [strategic directions](#) set out a vision for the future and exemplify a daring and transformative approach to some of the most important issues of our time.

Sir George Williams campus is made up of a pastiche of buildings located within the western downtown precinct. In partnership with the city of Montreal, the university has taken an active role in advancing a planning initiative called Quartier Concordia, one of the priorities of which has been the integration of art within the public sphere.

The ongoing [expansion](#) of the institution and its physical impact on two distinct campus neighbourhoods, Loyola and Sir George Williams, have created numerous opportunities to introduce progressive principles of urban planning and community engagement.

## About the Public Art Collection

[Concordia's permanent public art collection](#) was brought to life over 50 years ago with the integration of painted glass windows by Jean McEwen into the newly built mezzanine of the Henry F. Hall building at Sir George Williams University. Today the collection features over 40 artists and is presented across Concordia's two campuses on building facades, city sidewalks, tunnels and atria. The eclectic collection is composed of primarily sculptural and two-dimensional art integrations that have come to the University through donations, private commissions, and through the *1% Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture* program.

## About the Neighbourhood

In 2016, Concordia University, in collaboration with the city of Montreal and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) created the [Zone -Culture](#), with the aim to enhance the role of Montreal as a city of culture and knowledge. Located on Bishop Street between De Maisonneuve Boulevard and Sherbrooke Street, this public open space connects MMFA's Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace to Concordia's Henry F. Hall Building. This collaboration is a testament to Concordia's commitment to democratize art and to bring forth the synergy between art, education, and civic engagement.

## General legal implications

Artists who submit their Expression of Interest and those who are invited to submit a proposal confirm that

- the artist or team of artists has created original work;
- all copyright, and any other intellectual property rights to their artwork are vested in the artist(s);
- they have not assigned, licensed, disposed or otherwise encumbered any of their rights to the artwork
- they have not infringed upon the intellectual property rights of any third party in respect of their artwork; they will indemnify Concordia University against any claims made by third parties in respect of such infringement.

## Reserved rights of Concordia University

Concordia University, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to:

- request clarification or additional information, as it deems necessary to evaluate submissions;
- determine the suitability of the submission and capability of the prospective artist(s);
- select the artist(s) that it deems most appropriate for the project;
- make no selection or cancel this process at any time, and;
- issue public announcements regarding the competition; and,
- use images of the commission for publicity, on its websites and social media

## Confidentiality

All stages of the selection process will be kept entirely confidential.

## Use of Artists' Work

Ownership and copyright of art proposals will remain with the artist(s).

### For more information:

**Sandra Margolian**

Public Art Lead

[s.margolian@concordia.ca](mailto:s.margolian@concordia.ca)















V4 - Exterior ground surface in front of stone wall (location C)

V5 - Exterior ground surface in front of stone wall (location C)



V6 - View of Rue Bishop entrance looking towards Rue Sherbrooke O.

V7 - Rue Bishop exterior facade looking towards Boul. de Maisonneuve O.

V8 - Corner of Rue Bishop and Boul. de Maisonneuve O.

