

THREE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS (unknown date), unknown artist

This is the second stop on the Public Art, Public Memory tour of Loyola Campus.

In the western corner of the Communications Studies and Journalism Building's Atrium stands a trio of stained-glass windows: an abstract mosaic of blue, green and orange squares, rectangles and circles, bound together by lead ribbings. Suspended in front of a wall of windows overlooking the quad, these three panels are framed and attached by a wiring system. On a sunny day, rays of coloured light beam into the room. Together, the panels measure over three metres high, rising above faculty and students who use the space to have lunch, study, or meet with colleagues.

Though little is known about how or when these works were created or acquired, there is much speculation. The windows were discovered in poor condition in campus storage around 2005. The materials – which were likely imported from France — were restored by a stained-glass expert and installed in the CJ Atrium by the architectural firm Lapointe Magne et associés. Their installation was performed shortly after the building was converted from the Drummond Science Complex to the Communications Studies and Journalism building.

Despite limited information about the pieces' origin, they allow us to see Loyola Campus as one that blends old and new — providing an ideal opportunity to reflect on its history.

Officially inaugurated as Quebec's third English-language public university in 1974, Concordia was formed after the merger of two prior institutions: the secular Sir George Williams University and the Jesuit Loyola College.

First founded in 1896 as an English-language college with some French offerings, Loyola College was established on Drummond Street in downtown Montreal — not far from Concordia's current Sir George Williams Campus. In the 1910s, the college experienced a period of growth and moved to Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in 1916 to its current site to accommodate its growing student population.

Traditional stained-glass windows often depict religious imagery, serving as functional art in churches, chapels and similar religious buildings and conveying religious

narratives. Given Loyola Campus's Jesuit history, one might expect these windows to include Christian iconography. Interestingly, however, they are devoid of any religious imagery. Why might this be the case?

These works likely emerged in the mid-20th century, a period when glass art movements began to move away from traditional figurative and religious motifs. The artist chose an abstract approach, one that echoes the aesthetics of painting and sculpture from the same era. These modern stained-glass windows are a clear departure from tradition. Rather than convey a narrative, they are purely decorative, a reflection of stained glass's evolving role within contemporary art and architecture.

If you recall Eric Wesselow's glass works, which we explored at the previous stop on this tour, they further contemporize stained-glass methods by removing the lead ribbing. How does this change your experience of the work?

In the end, these three stained-glass windows combine the contemporary and the traditional, much like Loyola Campus itself. The pieces offer a glance into the campus's legacy — one which has traces of religious and educational traditions but remains open to a dynamic and contemporary future.

To continue this tour, click on *The Builder* by Jordi Bonet.