



# **Textiles Trade Time**

**Symposium October 19, 2019  
9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Held at  
Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology, Concordia University  
11th floor, EV Building – 1515 St. Catherine St. W., Montreal, QC  
Metro: Guy**

A daylong series of artists' and scholars' Provocations: 10-minute lightning talks that explore the histories, presents and futures of textiles across many sites, with a focus on Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal as a locus of trade across cultures, nations, fibres and moments. Presenters consider Indigenous textile traditions; the role of textiles in colonialism; discussions of local or global labour and environmental textile implications; artistic and technological innovations in textiles; and speculative spheres.

**TextilesTradeTime** is a collaborative presentation of the Textiles and Materiality Cluster, Milieux Institute, Studio Re-Imagine and Kinawind Lab, with support from the Centre for Sensory Studies, all at Concordia University. [textilestradetime.ca](http://textilestradetime.ca)

We would like to acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

[concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html](http://concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html)

**9:00 Coffee, registration**

**9:30 Symposium opens, welcome**

**SESSION I. 10:00-11:00 a.m. Dynamics of Appropriation**

*Moderator: TBD*

**10-minute provocations followed by open discussion**

**a. Jobene Petonoquot, "Rebellion of my Ancestors"**

*Indigenous practicing artist and BFA Concordia 2012*

I will speak of how Indigenous artists can make use of textile art practices that allude to cultural survival and resilience against the misuse of religion, and also the economic issues brought on by the colonial government. I would like to address specifically that glass seed beads are linked to colonial history themselves, and it is an art form in which Native women have excelled at, which expressed Indigenous identity and ways of knowing the world. Beadwork is integral to Indigenous culture and remains present as a significant symbol of resiliency.

**b. Carmen Gómez Vega, “Re/constructing cultural identity and empowering women with embroidery in Cartago, Colombia”**

*PhD candidate, Art & Design, Bauhaus University, Germany*

Since its arrival as a Spanish textile technique during the height of colonization in the XVI century, hand embroidery in Cartago (Colombia) began displaying Spanish plants that have nowadays evolved to a sort of “anywhere” vegetation based on generic Internet images. My theoretical and practice based artistic research argues for the incorporation of local flora as a way to rebuild a visually representative cultural identity in the hand embroidery of Cartago. By doing so, this study advocates for the importance of cultural diversity through the recognition of Colombian biodiversity in this ancestral practice in times of globalization. Additionally, it addresses gender empowerment of craftswomen and their work.

**c. Skawennati, “Calico & Camouflage” – a video presentation**

*Multimedia artist and co-director, AbTeC: Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace*

Calico & Camouflage is a fashion collection of ResistanceWear designed by Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) artist Skawennati, and exists in both virtual and actual space. It is defined by traditionally-inspired ribbon shirts and cargo-style army pants—two articles of clothing that are intertwined with the history of colonization on Turtle Island. Colourful silk ribbons and floral calico fabric were first introduced to our communities in the 1600s through trade with European settlers and were adopted and adapted by our innovative ancestors. Ribbon shirts and dresses have since become widely-recognized signifiers of traditional Haudenosaunee regalia. In contrast, military garb has been adopted in defiance of the repeated attempts by military forces to eliminate us. From Wounded Knee to the Oka Crisis to Standing Rock, our land- and life-defenders have claimed camouflage cargo clothing for their own to show that we are not afraid to fight.

**11 to 11:15 BREAK**

**SESSION II. 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Trade and Mobilities**

*Moderator: Kelly Thompson, Fibres and Material Practices, Concordia University*

**10-minute provocations followed by open discussion**

**d. Rudi Aker, “Topographies of a homeplace: Counter-cartographic and counter-colonial expressions of home and community”**

*BFA Student, Concordia University*

A presentation of a multimedia research-creation work-in-progress engaging topographical beadwork to explore counter-cartographic mnemonic narratives. This project began in the form of a book, images of the beaded topographies accompanied automatic prose divulging into the memories of spaces near and defined by water, specific to the Wolastoqiyik nation. Since its conception, it has also evolved into a mobile practice of community-building and communal memory making and sharing.

**e. Leah Watts | Lynn Park, “Luckenbooth: Two-Heart Treatise”**

*BFA Students, Studio Arts, Concordia University*

Forming the basis of a multi-year project by the Kinawind Lab, Luckenbooth: Two-Heart Treatise investigates the circulation and transformation of the Luckenbooth brooch, a silver Scottish love token featuring crowned intertwined hearts, as a colonial trade item with Indigenous peoples of the Eastern Woodlands during the fur trade era. The research project examines the Luckenbooth’s integration – or lack thereof – into First Nations’ material culture and how its meanings shifted as a result. The opening portion of this scholarly presentation traces the evolution of the brooch within Native, particularly Haudenosaunee, silverwork. The second half examines the recurring heart motif within Northeastern Indigenous textile traditions and its potential link to the Luckenbooth brooch.

**f. Kay Noele, “Stitching Stories of Place with Barefoot College”**

*MA Student, Art Education, Concordia University*

This past winter, a group of solar engineering students at Barefoot College in Rajasthan, India, and an MA student (myself) explored how textiles might bridge language gaps and serve as a catalyst for storytelling, to communicate and (re)imagine geographical and social spaces. I travelled to India for my MA research. My collaborators had many different motivations for why they had travelled to Barefoot College. Together, we stitched stories of place; we shared skills, tools, materials, colours, and techniques from our homes; we left traces of our journey in Rajasthan and returned home with pieces of one another.

**g. Swapnaa Tamhane, ‘The mobilities of Jute’**

*MFA Student, Fibres and Material Practices, Concordia University*

I will speak about my research around the jute industry – both in Dundee, Scotland, and Bengal, India – specifically, about the movement of women from rural to urban centres in both cities, their involvement in the process and manufacture of this material, and whose histories are recorded. I

would like to also talk about jute in its relationship to colonialism (ropes, sails), wars (sandbags), slavery (carrying bails of cotton), and how it may be affected by climate change as jute grows along the delta in India and Bangladesh. My artist's talk will about speak about my artwork in relation to working directly with jute to make handmade paper.

## **LUNCH – 12:15 – 1:30 p.m. CATERED ON SITE**

### **SESSION III. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Infrastructures and Continuities**

*Moderator: Elaine Cheasley Paterson, Art History + Craft Studies, Concordia University*

#### **10-minute provocations followed by open discussion**

#### **h. Lauren Laframboise, “Chabanel, Cité de la Mode: Deindustrialization and (post)-industrial transitions in Montreal’s apparel manufacturing industry”**

*MA Student, History, Concordia University*

This Provocation will present my MA Thesis research on deindustrialization in the textile and apparel manufacturing industry in Montreal. Based in the former Chabanel manufacturing cluster, my work mobilizes oral history testimonies to expose the impacts of deindustrialization on the people who worked in the industry and the spaces that manufacturing activities formerly occupied. My project problematizes the post-industrial transition of former textile and apparel manufacturing spaces, with particular attention to the gendered and racialized impacts of economic change and gentrification.

#### **i. Andrew Rabyński, “About *Untitled (Felt Floor)*”**

*PhD Student, Humanities, Concordia University*

In 2003 Rachel Whiteread collaborated with The Fabric Workshop and Museum to make *Untitled (Felt Floor)*, a white industrial felt sculpture embossed with the texture of a nineteenth-century textile factory floor. During the presentation, I will briefly describe the historical and geographical context the sculpture references to make possible connections to the local concerns. Then I pose the object as a representational index of industrial textile production and trace the spatial and temporal displacements the project embodies. I'm interested in thinking about this project in terms of placement, stillness, and as affecting a remove.

#### **j. Molly-Claire Gillett, “ ‘Gossips and mischief makers’: Lacemakers under inspection in 19th-century Ireland”**

*PhD Candidate, Individualized Program, Department of Art History / School of Irish Studies, Concordia University*

The cottage lace industry flourished in mid-19th century Ireland as a philanthropic venture, securing a livelihood for rural women affected by famine and poverty. These craftswomen and their homes became inextricably tied to the production of 'Irish lace,' even across the Atlantic; the Irish Industries Association 'Irish Village' display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago featured nimble-fingered Irish maidens—one of whom “talks real Irish”—making lace in stage-set ‘cottages,’ “by the turf fire over which the potato-pot is hanging.” This provocation will examine late-19th and early 20th century writings from various stakeholders in the production of Irish lace as they relate to the rural Irish home as a locus for lace production and rural Irish women as lace makers, asking questions about the relationships between ‘good design’ and labour conditions and the control of colonial bodies and spaces.

**k. Maria Ezcurra, “D’Étiquette participatory project”**

*Independent Artist and Scholar*

*D’Étiquette* is a participatory performative dress made of hundreds of labels that I cut from my own and others’ garments. It keeps growing longer as I continuously add new labels from the clothing of my friends, my family, and the participants of my public performances. Dress is a recurrent element in my art practice, involving physical, material, visual and conceptual processes that are in constant tension and negotiations with each other. Strongly connected to both tradition and dominant institutions, dress reflects the prevailing and often restricting ideologies of our society. However, dress can also become a site of exchange, learning and resistance, and a tool to negotiate our own identities, affecting our relationship with our context, with others, and with ourselves.

***Symposium attendees are invited to contribute labels of their own to the project and to spend some time in afternoon break stitching them into the D’Étiquette dress.***

**BREAK 2:30 TO 2:45 P.M.**

**SESSION IV. 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. Environment and Change**

*Moderator: Kathleen Vaughan, Art Education, Concordia University*

**10-minute provocations followed by open discussion**

**I. Vanessa Mardirossian, “Behind the scene: Disclosing the invisible materiality of fashion and its impact on health”**

*PhD Student, Individualized Program, Concordia University*

Fashion is one of the most polluting industries. Recycling is lacking: only 1% of clothes are recycled into new clothes mostly because of blended fibres issues and lack of information about their contents. If clothes could

come with an ID, kind of passport holding all the data of each step of its fabrication, it would ease the recycling, improve the circularity of textiles and encourage the making of safer materials. My provocation profiles the sustainable scannable embroideries I am developing as a method to create visual and material narratives of my research, intersecting Chemistry, Engineering and Design.

**m. Shannon Black, “Envisioning labour: Visual and digital media and the organization of work in the North American hand knitting industry”**  
*PhD (ABD), Dept of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto*

Increased visibility relocates knitting work from workshops, shops, studios and homes, to the space of the digital platform. On the platform, the visual becomes a new and central modality of craft-work. Resultantly, the work of knitting is reconfigured from a largely tactile and embodied form of work, to a modality that is highly visual and continuously interactive. Through a process of making craft “visible”, platforms become a space in which craft workers, and their labour, are, to echo Richardson (2018), highly ambivalent - at once affirmed and negated, agentive and commoditized, everywhere and nowhere at all.

**n. Paule Gilbert, An artist’s theorization of warp and weft: *Untitled animation – a video presentation***  
*MFA Student, Fibres and Material Practices, Concordia University*

Among other charged connotations, the grid accounts for western ideas of reason and order. It is also the basic structure of textiles where artists can use the warp and the weft to mirror current critical thinking about verticality and horizontality in social and economic structures. In my practice, from an in-depth exploration of the grid, I have developed different strategies to claim, challenge and disrupt this device. For the Symposium, I will present a playful 2-minute video animation showing a grid made of hand spun paper thread going through a continuous cycle of rise and decline, and discuss my own theorization of the grid.

**SESSION V. Summation (4 to 4:30) and Reception/Open Discussion (4:30 to 5:00)**

**Textiles and the Future: Where to from here?**

## Keynote Speakers

presented in association with CICA – Conversations in Contemporary Art: [concordia.ca/CICA](http://concordia.ca/CICA)



**Crystal (Mikinaak) Migwans**  
“This conversation is an offering of words for water and weavers.”  
**Friday, October 18 at 6 p.m.**



**Ursula Johnson**  
**Friday, November 29 at 6 p.m.**

Both keynote events are in Room VA-114,  
1395 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal, QC  
Metro: Lucien-L'Allier

## Trade-In Exhibition

Symposium attendees and speakers are invited to bring a small (maximum 10 inch by 10 inch) textile or material work, completed or underway, to contribute to the *Trade-in Textiles* exhibition, for reworking by another participant. Works can be in any textile or material form; must be safe for handling, reworking, and installation; and are to be submitted by **9:30 a.m. on October 19**. At noon, submissions will be randomly allocated to those who wish to participate, for reworking in any textile-based practice and return by Monday, November 25.

All returned ‘**Trade-in Textiles**’ will be exhibited starting November 29, and celebrated at the exhibition/vernissage keynote that same evening. At the end of the exhibition, each participant will receive a randomly allocated artwork, extending the ‘trade.’

