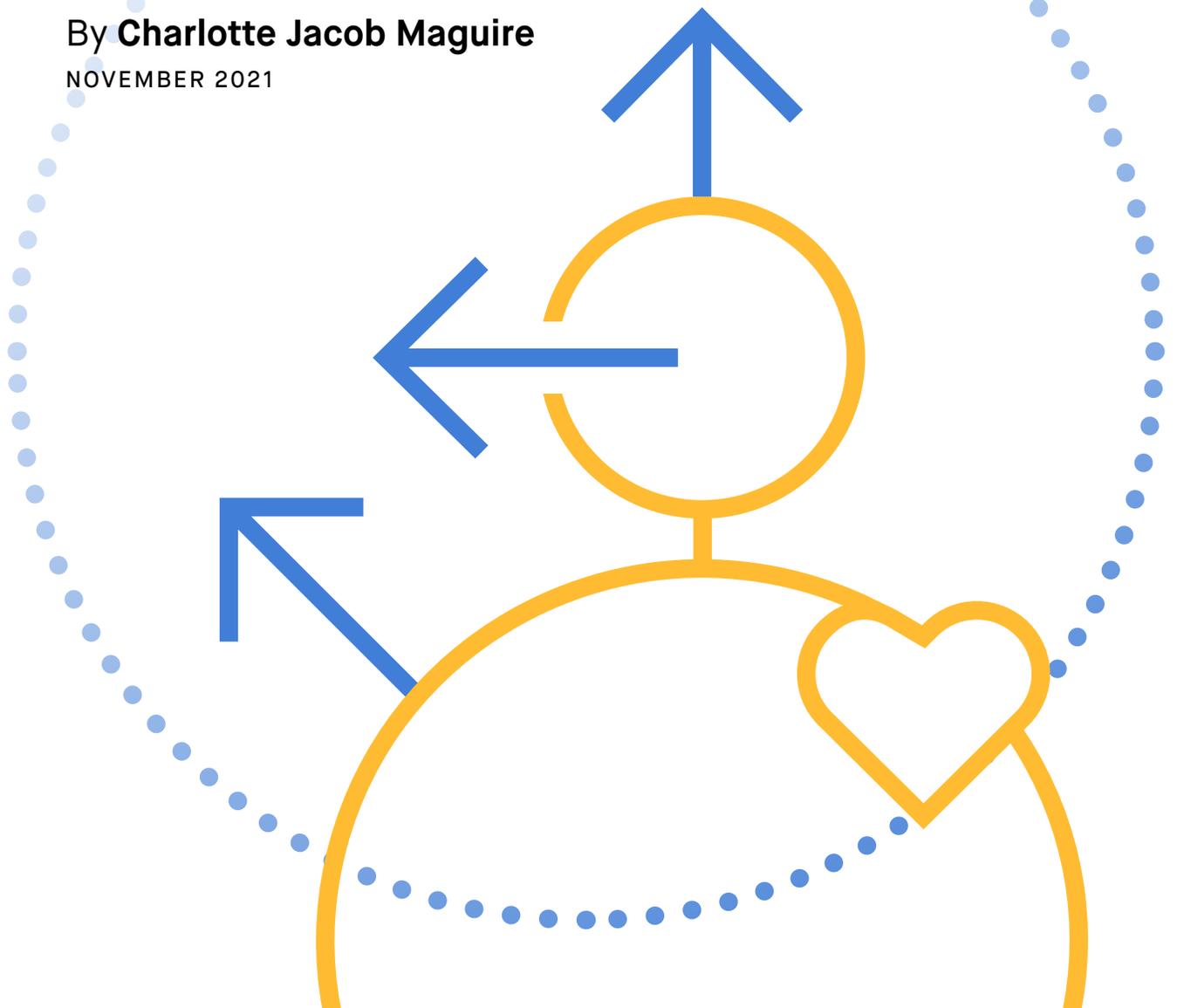




# RECOMMENDATIONS AND TOOLS FOR THE CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL BEST ACCESSIBILITY AND ANTI-ABLEISM PRACTICES IN THE ARTS

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In collaboration with the Conseil des arts  
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# INTRODUCTION

This report and the recommendations it contains are the result of ongoing communication between Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM) staff and the knowledge of Universal Accessibility and Anti-Ableism Committee members.

Invaluable assistance and support was provided by Salomé Viguier, Cultural Advisor—New Artistic Practices, Multidisciplinary, Circus and Street Arts; and Frédéric Côté, Cultural Advisor—Theatre; under the direction of Julien Valmary, Director of Grant Programs and Strategic Initiatives.

The CAM's consultation process is part of the cultural sector's movement to reflect on how its practices promote inclusion and diversity. The CAM's process is in line with other institutions that have conducted mobilizing consultation processes, such as the symposium *Vibes: Affronter le capacitisme et l'audisme à travers les arts*, held in Montréal in 2018;<sup>1</sup> the draft of the *Charter for an accessible, inclusive and equitable culture*, announced in 2020 and presented by Exeko; and the Canada Council for the Arts' Canada-wide study *Deaf and Disability Arts Practices in Canada*, released in February 2021.

These documents are also available on the Conseil's website:

## DOCUMENTS FOR EXTERNAL PUBLICATION (FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES)

- Glossary—updated with accessibility terms
- Visual timeline of the Conseil des arts de Montréal

## INTERNAL CONSEIL AND ARTS COMMUNITY TOOLS

- Event accessibility
- Resource bank
- Accessibility quotation

1 Critical Disability Studies Working Group, 2018

# MANDATE

In accordance with its 2018–2020 strategic plan, the Conseil des arts de Montréal wishes to identify, acknowledge and support inclusive practices that promote the involvement and engagement of artists, cultural professionals and under-represented, excluded or marginalized audiences.

It is committed to ensuring accessibility for all Montrealers and recognizes that individuals with visible and invisible disabilities and members of the D/deaf community must have the same opportunities to access our programs and services as others do.

To date, the Conseil has led several actions, such as:

## SINCE 2018

- Supporting the establishment of relaxed performances through:
  - training for arts community members in partnership with the British Council;
  - support for seven organizations.

## SINCE 2019

- Launching a pilot program to support inclusive practices that provided financial support to 16 organizations and collectives totalling \$99,000
- Supporting five organizations as they establish relaxed performances
- Holding a consultation with community members (artists, partners, funders) to establish a clear roadmap under the mandate of consultant Daisy Boustany in 2019–2020

## SINCE 2020

- Offering universal accessibility training to supported organizations, presented with AlterGo
- Creating the Support Fund for Accessibility Costs, which has granted a total of \$43,053 to 18 projects since October 2020
- Hiring accessibility consultant Charlotte Jacob-Maguire to implement the 2020 action plan, including creating a universal accessibility and anti-ableism advisory committee

## OVER SEVERAL YEARS

- Providing financial support to the Groupe des onze's Laboratoire Culture Inclusive during the three years of the project, in collaboration with Exeko

Accessibility consultant Charlotte Jacob-Maguire's mandate was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of conducting an audit to improve digital accessibility and inclusive communication practices for all Montréal audiences and artists. The audit had to include an evaluation of the tools used within the Conseil and Maison teams, as well as external communication practices.

The second part, tool research and production, involved researching models and producing various tools to facilitate inclusive practices within the Conseil based on recommendations from the audits conducted.

The mandate ran from January to August 2021.

## METHODOLOGY

This report is the result of a collaboration between the consultant and the Universal Accessibility and Anti-Ableism Advisory Committee created by the CAM and made up of members of the D/deaf community and people living with disabilities.

Three individual contributions, either oral or written, were essential in developing the glossary, the resource bank and the recommendations in this report.

In addition, individual meetings were held between the consultant and various CAM employees.

The recommendations are also based on:

- The Canada Council for the Arts' 2020 study, *Deaf and Disability Arts Practices in Canada*
- Interviews conducted in winter 2021 as part of the Civic Incubator program

## UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY AND ANTI-ABLEISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Universal Accessibility and Anti-Ableism Advisory Committee members are:

Audrey-Anne Bouchard

Catherine Thérout

Gaëtane Cummings

Hodan Youssouf

Lucila Guerrero

Maxime D.-Pomerleau

Menka Nagrani

Paul Tshuma

Roxane Charest-Landry  
accompanied by Cindy Schwartz

Salima Punjani

## EVOLVING TERMINOLOGY

The terminology is constantly evolving. In consultation with the Committee, the Conseil prefers the term "D/deaf and/or living with disabilities."

This term includes people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing or who are living with a mental illness, are neurodivergent, or have a visible or invisible, temporary or permanent, dynamic or stable disability.

See the Glossary section on our web site.

- Standardize use of the term "ability diversity: people who are D/deaf and/or living with a disability" on your website and in all CAM communications.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL

- Make universal accessibility a priority.
  - Review universal accessibility criteria before undertaking a project (construction, grant creation, website redesign) and communicate criteria to employees and external consultants.
  - Designate an internal resource who will be responsible for universal accessibility during the project. This person may change depending on the responsibilities required by the project.
- Create a universal accessibility and anti-ableism policy at the CAM.
- Integrate people who are D/deaf and/or living with a disability into the equity policy.
- Strengthen affirmative action for people living with disabilities in the project funding selection process.
- Offer an application writing support service provided by staff qualified to apply for artistic practice funding or provide a list of relevant resources.
- Recruit artists and cultural workers who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.
- Continuously identify ability-diverse artistic practices.
- Consult people from the D/deaf and disability communities when establishing programs for artistic practices and research residencies (“Nothing about us without us”).

## THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Increase the size of the street address on the building.
- Place the street address so that the columns do not obstruct it.
- Contact the STM to have an official STM paratransit drop-off zone installed in front of or beside the ramp leading to the CAM building.
- Lobby elected officials to change requirements for heritage buildings. Universal accessibility should take precedence over a building’s heritage status.
- Install push buttons at each door. Heritage status should not take precedence over accessibility.
- Improve accessibility of CAM creation studios for artists who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.
- Refuse any new space that does not meet universal accessibility criteria (for example, steps in front of first-floor washrooms).
- Make emergency exits accessible and contact the fire department to adapt the first aid room (see architectural audit).
- Review architectural audit.
- Work with a specialized company such as Société Logique to make architectural changes.

## TRAINING

- Cultivate connections with the Canada Chairs to provide more in-depth training on art, ableism and audism.
- Offer regular training that can be produced by people living with disabilities to organizations funded by the CAM on welcoming people with disabilities (Kéroul), and on arts curation (Tangled Art + Disability)
- Cultivate connections with the Société des musées du Québec and Kéroul, which already offer joint training on welcoming people with disabilities to cultural venues.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Make all communications available in QSL and ASL on the CAM website.
- Post CAM information on the Creative Users Projects network.
- Publicize communications through “Contact relays for accessibility.”
- Provide a visual summary when introducing yourself, such as: *I am a young white man with blue eyes and I’m wearing a grey sweater.*
  - If you are in a Zoom meeting, briefly describe your surroundings: *There is a bookshelf and a plant in the background.*
- Review “Social Media and Accessible Websites.”

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- For positions, action plans and policies, always consult experts with lived experience (people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities).
- Review universal accessibility criteria before starting a project (construction, grant development, website redesign).
- Create a dedicated position for artistic practices of people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities, such as a project manager for ability diversity (artists and cultural workers who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities).
- Provide an accessibility quotation to anyone who contacts the Conseil des arts de Montréal.
- Invite people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities to fill spots on the Board of Directors.

## INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

- Ensure CAM staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding accessibility. In the interest of fairness, people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities who participate in or organize events should not be responsible for ensuring the event is accessible.
- Add a resource person who can provide the artist or cultural worker with the tools and information they need to assist clients who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.
- Offer an application support service for people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.

- Provide funds so that artists and cultural workers are supported at every stage of the project.
- Provide funds so that artists and cultural workers can have access to a companion or note-taker.
- Ensure that the upstream or reserved support of a companion for artists or cultural workers living with disabilities is subsidized. CARFAC-RAAV's flat rate is \$568 for one full day and \$322 for one half day (less than 4 hours). Financial assistance should reflect these amounts.
- Be attentive to invisible disabilities such as mental illness, chronic fatigue, autism and aphasia and be flexible about deadlines. Provide a range of dates rather than a single date.
- Be aware that some disabilities fluctuate depending on factors such as temperature, time of day, month or events.
- Recruit an artist or cultural worker who is D/deaf and/or living with disabilities to serve on the CAM's Board of Directors.
- Create a position in each discipline for a jury member who is D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.
- Allow D/deaf artists to submit their final reports in sign languages.
- Inform artists about combined funding and the correspondence between CAM grants and the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). Provide required information about combining government grants to assist individuals who are fearful of losing their benefits (e.g., social assistance) if they receive funding for their artistic practice.
- Find ways to avoid taxing creation funds and project access funds from the personal income of artists.

## CREATING GRANTS AND MENTORSHIPS

Providing support, belonging to a group, development and funding practices are necessary to ensure that mad, neurodiverse, disability and D/deaf art is understood, disseminated and discoverable.

### THE PROBLEM

Disability is diversity's blind spot. The problem lies in the fact that disability and deafness are too often invisible in the Montréal arts community. The Universal Accessibility and Anti-Ableism Committee wants greater recognition in Montréal, Quebec and Canada.

Yinka Shonibare, a multidisciplinary British-Nigerian artist, argues that "disability art is the last avant-garde art movement." This artistic movement is innovative and contemporary. It deserves to be seen.

Artists who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities account for 15.1% of the artist population, yet they receive 0.7% of arts funding.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly some barriers remain:

- Obstacles to instruction and professionalization
- Issues related to accessibility of cultural venues
- The cultural community's lack of knowledge about artistic practices
- Ableism and audism

Notwithstanding these challenges, the CAM is strongly committed to ensuring universal accessibility through its inclusive practices. The CAM has carried out several actions so far, which you will find on page 4.

### TARGETED USERS

The targeted users are artists and cultural workers who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities or neurodiverse.

It is therefore necessary to establish project creation and dissemination grants for artists and cultural workers who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities or neurodiverse. These grants could be used to:

- **support research and creation by artists and collective members who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities, through an exclusive program;**
- **support a cohort** of artists and cultural workers who are neurodivergent, D/deaf or living with disabilities over two years by offering them a **grant** to devote themselves to their **practice** and by providing support within the Montréal cultural community so that they can become recognized as professional artists or cultural workers.

<sup>2</sup> Leduc, Véro, Mouloud Boukala, Joëlle Rouleau, Aimee Louw, Ashley McAskill, Catherine Thérout, Sarah Heussaff, Line Grenier, Mélina Bernier, Shandi Bouscatier, Élodie Marcelli, Laurence Parent, Darren Saunders, Tamar Tembeck, Olivier Angrignon-Girouard, Carolyne Grimard, 2020. *Les pratiques artistiques des personnes sourdes ou handicapées au Canada*. Research report. Montréal: Canada Council for the Arts, p. 26.

The Conseil des arts de Montréal **will select four** in total. There will be some flexibility in the selection process regarding the number of artists and the number of cultural workers selected.<sup>3</sup>

In practical terms, the CAM would have to **release \$100,000** for grants of \$25,000 per person per year over one year.

### A UNIQUE SOLUTION

- The first major grants in Quebec for artists and cultural workers who are neurodiverse, living with disabilities and/or D/deaf.
- Professional experience recognized by peers.
- Position Montréal as one of the major cities stimulating innovation and creativity (Montréal's strategic plan for 2030: "Stimulating innovation and creativity" and "Strengthening solidarity, equity and inclusion").

### OTHER INITIATIVES

- Create a research fund or grant that would support cultural workers' research in the field of disability and D/deaf art in partnership with a cultural institution:
  - a museum;
  - National Theatre School;
  - an arts centre (maison de la culture);
  - MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels)
- Create networking days to connect cultural programmers with artists and cultural workers, with a focus on inviting artists who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.
- Create a Mentors in Residence program.
- Partner with a Canada Chair and a cultural venue to do some background work and write a document on this topic for artists in Montréal who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> Grants for artists: cohort, support, funding of artistic practices, cultural networking with a cultural advisor with whom the artist will assess their needs, contact with professionals who can meet the artist's needs, procurement of a residency in Montréal and development of a cultural mediation activity related to it.

Grants for cultural workers: cohort; support as part of an institution; research funding and the possibility of attending lectures, conferences and classes; cultural networking with a cultural advisor with whom the cultural worker will assess their needs; contact with professionals (editor-in-chief, curator, institution representative) who can meet the cultural worker's needs; procurement of an accessible research residency that could accommodate a companion.

## ORGANIZATIONS FUNDED BY THE CAM

- Add universal accessibility criteria to operational applications and CAM Touring Program applications. In an operating application, 10% of the budget would be allocated to access fees. Examples include Quebec Sign Language interpreters, American Sign Language interpreters, transcribers, audio describers, note-takers, funds to create a visual timeline, etc.
- Make it mandatory for organizations funded by the CAM, the CAM Touring Program and the Art Out in the Open Program to provide information on programming accessibility or inaccessibility.
- Add a section on jobs held by people who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities by CAM-funded organizations in accountability mechanisms.
- Fund the cultural, architectural and communications accessibility of arts and culture communities.

## AWARDS

- Do not create an award for ability diversity. However, review this measure in three years.
- Improve scoring on applications from artists who are D/deaf and/or living with disabilities for all juries.
- Create an “Inclusive Practices” award for CAM-funded organizations. In the criteria, focus on programming and hiring experts with lived experience.

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## OPEN SOURCE

- Make all resources created by the CAM available to applicants through an open source policy and post resources on the CAM website.

## CONCLUSION

The D/deaf community and disability community feel that the time for consultation has passed; they are ready for concrete action.

Implementing measures such as the accessibility resource bank, the accessibility quotation, the visual timeline of the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the 2021 Glossary are necessary steps to make inclusive practices an integral part of the CAM.