SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS
MCAF Anniversary-Conference
Call for Papers

The Montreal Comic Arts Festival (MCAF) and the McGill Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Montreal (CIRM) are pleased to invite you to the Shaking the Foundations Conference in Montreal, from October 28 to 30, 2021. In addition to highlighting the MCAF’s 10th anniversary, this conference will bring together researchers interested in the comic arts and their creators for discussions and presentations of research and field work. Mario Beaulac, professor in comic arts at the École multidisciplinaire de l’image at Université du Québec en Outaouais, will oversee the event as scientific director.

Shaking the Foundations

Metropolis, Gotham City, New York, Berlin, Brussels, even Montreal—be they real or dreamlike, dark citadels or beacons of light, urban landscapes often find their way into the creative universes of comic creators. Through the trials of their protagonists and main characters, the city and its foundations are repeatedly abused, redesigned, and reimagined. Buildings are shattered or used as weapons by superheroes, locked in epic battles with their adversaries in the city. Protagonists commute through the city of the future, whether utopian or dystopian, where the artist has taken the opportunity to draw both the boundaries of the expected city and the attention of critics and readers to urban design and its limits. Other creators may subvert the medium’s conventions or use architectural and urban metaphors to deconstruct their stories. With each stroke of their pen, comic artists shake the foundations of the real and imaginary city, the ways it is represented, and the urban issues it faces.

Which formal or thematic devices do comic artists use to shake these foundations? Proposals may address one or more of the following themes:

1. Shaking the foundations… of the city:
The foundations of the city are disrupted in many ways in comics. Its architecture may be shattered, reduced to dust (fights between superheroes and their opponents, war situations, tales about the creation or dismantling of neighbourhoods, etc.). The founding principles of architecture or urban planning may also be reinvented by utopian or dystopian visions of the city of the future or imagined urban milieus (bringing to mind Winsor McCay, Mœbius, the cathedral skyscrapers of modernity inspired by Hugh Ferris, etc.).
2. **Shaking the foundations… of society:**
   It is also possible for comic artists to question preconceptions of urban societies. By illustrating and addressing some of the concerns experienced in urban centres, comic artists highlight cultural, religious, social, economic, and other disturbances, and thus an established social order that may be criticised at leisure. Consider the works of Guy Delisle (Shenzhen, Pyongyang), Joe Sacco (Palestine, Safe Area Goražde) or Chantal Montellier (Wonder City, Tchernobyl mon amour).

3. **Shaking the foundations… of the comic arts:**
   Finally, creators shake the foundations of the comic arts, namely by using urban or architectural metaphors in order to question their creative processes and storytelling, as does Chris Ware in his *Building Stories* or as François Schuiten and Benoît Peeters also endeavor in their *Les Cités obscures*.

**Call for Papers**

We invite anyone interested in participating in this anniversary-conference to submit a paper presentation—in French or English. Your proposal must be submitted by email to criem-cirm.arts@mcgill.ca. The submission deadline is **April 2, 2021**.

Abstracts should not be longer than 500 words, excluding references, and should be accompanied by a biographical note (150 words maximum) specifying the contributor’s name and affiliation. The presentations should be of approximately 20 minutes in length. A question period will follow the presentations.

Presentations could be published in the conference proceedings.

**Health Measures**

We sincerely hope to welcome you in person, in Montreal in October 2021. However, the organising committee of our anniversary-conference will pay close attention to the evolving health situation and will prepare to hold the event remotely if need be. Additionally, the field activities included in the programming will be adapted to the health measures in place.

**Important Dates**

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About Us

Scientific Committee

Scientific Director
Mario Beaulac, Professor, École multidisciplinaire de l’image, Université du Québec en Outaouais

Members of the Scientific Committee

Johanne Desrochers, General Director, MCAF
Dominique Gazo, Director of Montreal Public Libraries, City of Montreal
Anna Giaufret, Associate Professor, Department of Modern and French Languages and Cultures, University of Genova
Marc-André Goulet, Head of department, Arts and Literature, Grande Bibliothèque (BanQ)
Dominic Hardy, Professor, Department of Art History, University of Quebec in Montreal
Nik Luka, Interim Director, CIRM; Associate Professor, School of Urban Planning and Peter Guo-Hua Fu School of Architecture, McGill University
François Vigneault, Cartoonist

The Montreal Comic Arts Festival

Over the last 10 years, MCAF has served as a space for artists and their audiences to meet and exchange ideas. The MCAF’s yearly springtime event serves to promote Québécois and Canadian comic arts on the local and international levels, while contributing to their development and dissemination of knowledge on comics. Recently, MCAF has also stimulated and supported local comic artists thanks to the MCAF Press.

Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Montreal

Bringing together 69 researchers from over 15 universities in Montreal, Canada, and abroad, CIRM is at the forefront of interdisciplinary research on Montreal. The centre also contributes to the conception, coordination, and dissemination of research-action projects created in tandem with social, economic, cultural, community, and municipal actors in the city

Organizing Committee

Johanne Desrochers, General Director, MCAF
Audray Fontaine, Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator, CIRM
Louise Guillemette-Labory, Board Director, MCAF
Virginie Mont-Reynaud, Programme and Logistics Coordinator, MCAF

Contact

For information concerning the submission of presentation proposals and the conference, please contact the organizers of the event at the following email address: criem-cirm.arts@mcgill.ca.