

culinary arts

dance

music

literature

The Annual
Humanities Conference

Express Yourself

October 21-25

The Arts and Humanities Alive at Dawson College



Express Yourself: The Arts and Humanities Alive at Dawson College!

Every year the Humanities Department at Dawson College hosts the Humanities & Public Life Conference. This year, the conference is slated for the week of October 21st and the theme will be aesthetics: theories of art, beauty, and performance. Express Yourself: The Arts and Humanities Alive at Dawson College! will feature discussions and performances, in addition to highlighting the creative work of students. We are excited and proud to feature a conference that will unite the disciplines of the college and showcase the creativity of our faculty and students. We can look forward to performances and talks about amenco dancing, tango dancing, blues dancing, Restoration period vocal performance and Celtic music. Artists will elaborate on the 'philosophy' behind their work and performances. We also feature talks about the visual arts and poetry. For example, groundbreaking research on Montreal's black visual artists pre-internet will be shared by eminent scholars of art history. Most talks will be interactive, giving audience members an opportunity to ask questions and share their own perspectives. The conference is open to all students, faculty, and community members. For more information, please contact the Humanities Department at Dawson College. Contact information: (514) 393-2000 ext. 2000 or hla@ Dawson College. Website: www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/hla

Monday

October 21


The Arts and Humanities Alive at Dawson College is a conference conceived around the idea of underlining the importance of humanistic and philosophical concepts to the arts; the art, literature and music that we all love. Visual artists have been using philosophical themes in art since the renaissance for example. Theories of aesthetics have been hotly debated with regard to architecture. We have invited students to submit creative work that incorporates such themes. A panel of teachers will evaluate submissions, and the shortlisted students will be invited to explain to the teacher's panel how their creative work incorporates





Air's Error explores the (im)possibility of translating between dance and poetry. Through an artistic disruption of commercial space, we are interested in thinking about the commodity as both fetish and fossil.

About the speakers

 is an experimental poet. Her second collection, *Because the Sun*, which thinks with and against Camus' extensive notebooks and the iconic outlaw *Im Thelma & Louise*, was published with Coach House Books in April 2021. Her most recent publication is a collaboration with American poet Vi Khi Nao, a long (infinite) poem based on the number pi called *Mechanophony* (wide comedy).


12 pm

Tracie Gemell

The Aesthetics of Baking and Breaking Bread: Tales from Ovens Around the World

The opulence of a French bakery with its vast choice of loaves, the intoxicating of tortilla, pita or roti being made at home - the beauty of baking and breaking bread transcends place and time. What compels us to tear off a piece of perfectly baked sourdough, challah or atbread and pass it around? Why are some of our most memorable meals the shared ones? Come and taste for yourselves! In this 30 minute talk, Tracie Gemmel (Dawson English Department) will look at the symbolism and stories around breaking bread historically and today.

About the speaker

 has taught in Dawson College's English Department for 16 years. In addition to teaching rhetoric and sharing her love of the short story, 19th century American poetry and *Im*, one of her favourite courses she teaches is a food and literature course called *Reading, Writing and Eating*. Tracie is interested in how the ubiquitous nature of food can provide a key to understanding ourselves, our families, and our many local and world-wide communities.

Discussion questions are at your disposal for classroom activities and assignments. Please contact Sean Elliott at selliott@dawsoncollege.qc.ca



The purpose of this presentation is to communicate the history and musical forms of an unique traditional kind of music from Greece known as REMBETIKA or “The GREEK BLUES.”

The five members of our band, *Rembetika*, will take turns explaining the origins of Rembetika; its 9 or 18-beat cycles, the modes and characteristic lyrics, interspersed with frequent performances of the songs and the dance tunes. We will show a power point that explains the timeline, the geography, the instruments, the lyrics (translated) and some of the outstanding artists of this musical tradition.

Rembetika is a Montreal-based quartet that explores the traditional songs Greek or Turkish, accompanied by the gut-strung or /wire-strung harp, the fiddle or mandolin, and the darboukh or frame drum.

It is a song tradition of the dispossessed Greeks, refugees from around Smyrna. Once prosperous farmers, landowners and tradesmen in Turkey, since the 1920s there were waves of persecution when they were driven out. They became impoverished outlaws who settled in the coastal towns of Greece.

Rembetika features Turkish modes, and 9-beat cycles. The songs are mysterious, seductive, intoxicating – with a lurch at the end of the 9-beat phrase that can be highly addictive. The lyrics speak of love and exile, the allure of a woman’s eyelashes, manly pride and street fights, the solace of hashish and ouzo and playing the baglama.

About the speakers

Christina is a Celtic harpist and singer. She grew up in Athens, Greece listening to Rembetika constantly on the radio, and has adapted the bouzouki music of Rembetika to the folk harp.

Christina is a linguistics scholar and virtuoso singer who collects Turkish, Greek and Balkan songs during her travels.

4 pm

Louise Arsenault

Writing a dramatic monologue: Storyteller or Storytaker? [Workshop]

This workshop will cover the basics of creating a dramatic monologue and will take a hands-on approach to permit students to write their own during the course of the workshop. To begin with, a few varied examples of well-known monologues will be explored and/or performed. Prompts will be given to facilitate the writing process during the workshop, and paper and pencils, fully charged laptops or cell phones, will be the responsibility of the participants.

Not merely a personal rant, the dramatic monologue is often the first intuitive step in developing the voice of a lead character in a larger text or full-length play. It may be comedic, romantic or sarcastic in tone but its process can enable the creative writer to discover through the lens of a fictional character, the essence of her or his personal thematic concerns and essential take on the nature of humanity.

About the speaker

Louise Arsenault is an award-winning playwright and a practicing visual artist. She teaches English literature at Dawson College with a focus on feminist theatre. She has an MA in Creative Writing from Concordia and is a graduate of The National Theatre School in Playwriting. She has worked extensively with Playwrights’ Workshop Montreal who most recently developed her play *Strange Fire*. Her productions include: *Bivouac*, (Imago Theatre) *Innerspeak* (Queen Street Theatre) and *Dating Jesus* (Unwashed Grape). Her most recent plays, *Burning Tongues* and *Strange Fire*, won awards at Innitheatre’s Write-on-Q and received staged readings with audience talkbacks. She is currently working on her new play, *I am a Whirligig*.

Tuesday
October 22

8:30 am

Reza Sedighian

Abstract Aesthetics: From Canvas to Screen

The term “abstract” often implies something vague, difficult to grasp, and not easily understood. However, abstract art doesn’t have to embody these qualities. My upcoming lecture at Dawson College will explore the aesthetics of minimal abstract art and how we can perceive and comprehend it. We will begin by exploring the origins of abstract art. We will focus on the ideas of abstraction put forth by Kazimir Malevich, one of the pioneering abstract painters alongside Kandinsky and Mondrian.

Moreover, we’ll delve into how abstraction has influenced other art forms, such as cinema, a topic I believe will resonate with our audience. We will examine examples from the early 20th century to contemporary works, using specific instances from painting and cinema to define and understand ‘abstract’ aesthetics. This interdisciplinary approach will not only highlight abstract art’s evolution but also its ongoing impact on various creative fields, making complex ideas more accessible and engaging for our audience.

About the speaker

Reza Sedighian is an accomplished artist and educator with a rich background in visual arts. He holds a bachelor’s and master’s in fine arts and is currently pursuing a master of art education at Concordia University. Reza has extensive experience teaching various art courses at several universities in Iran, including drawing, painting, and art theory. Reza’s research interests include image studies, visual culture, art history, philosophy of art, and artists’ books. He has curated exhibitions and published works on artists’ books. His artistic practice has been recognized through numerous residencies and exhibitions worldwide. He was awarded the Institute Française/Cultural Department of the French Embassy in Tehran grant for a three-month residency in Paris and a following five months residency at the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris in 2021.

Improvisation Theater as a Sociocultural Intervention for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

This presentation is double fold; first, a traditional presentation of different theories of identifying gender-based violence and addressing its cultural implications. My focus is to explain how visual arts can contribute to knowledge creation and transfer through bridging personal life experiences with public domain to advocate for social transformation. My theoretical framework is a harmonized mosaic of cultural hybridity, intersectional feminism, and geographies of the self in tandem with theories of public pedagogy and performance studies.

Secondly, I will display 10 minutes video of a performance piece where I am improvising an ancient Egyptian Ritual of exorcism called Zar. This performance examines the ways visual arts, in particular improvisation theater, can create a liminal space for self-reflexivity and expression to underline personal perceptions of gender-based violence, social exclusion, and marginalization. The performance is a visual example of theories and methodologies in practice through which viewers share reflections around the presentation.

About the speaker

Ranya E. Saad is PhD candidate in Art Education Department, Concordia University and a multimedia artist, community developer and educator. Ranya focuses on community education as effective settings of social inclusion, and citizenship rights.

Saad's research focuses on examining contemporary theatrical approaches as social interventions against gender-based violence. The goal is to investigate the ways artistic interventions can harness progressive representations of cultural and personal identities.

Discussion questions are at your disposal for classroom activities and assignments. Please contact Sean Elliott at selliott@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

Origine et évolution du Flamenco

Cette conférence retrace les origines de cet art et son évolution jusqu'à nos jours, les cultures qui l'ont forgé, ses principaux insignes et représentants, les éléments les plus marquants... nous passerons par un échantillon des principaux rythmes de cette musique polyrythmique et polyphonique : Tangos, Alegrias, Soleá, Seguiriya et Bulerias seront montrés avec le chant et la guitare en direct et une démonstration de danse sur le rythme de Sévillanes aura lieu. À la fin de la conférence, les élèves partiront avec une bonne base sur cet art espagnol si vaste et riche en influences, polyvalence et cadences.

About the speaker

Rocio Vadillo is a flamenco artist, choreographer and actress. Born in Madrid, at a very young age she became interested in flamenco and in performing arts in general. After graduating from the Superior School of Dramatic Art in Cordoba in the specialty of performance, she obtained several scholarships to continue her training at the Cinema School of Madrid and then at the Dance School of Carmen Roche. She also enriched her training by learning other disciplines such as classical, jazz, contemporary and tap. Thus, in Madrid, she began to give dance lessons in the Antón Martín district, cradle of flamenco. In Paris in 2003 Rocio finds a place as a dancer and choreographer on stage for various events, like the Festival Métis'Arts. In June 2010, she presented her creation Deseo with five artists on stage. In March 2014, she presented her creation Trinidad, with seven artists on stage; a journey where poetry, Spanish classical and flamenco mingle to evoke with modesty, strength and emotion the complexity of human relations. In April 2017, she staged her most personal project Vous êtes ici. A poetic show full of emotion where theater, clown, poetry and flamenco meet.

For years, she has combined her artistic activity with teaching. She visits schools to show the theory and practice of flamenco. Since her arrival in Montreal in 2018, she has participated in important projects such as the video clip of the song Par amour by international singer Lara Fabian, the coordination and organization of flamenco shows at the legendary Spanish Club of Quebec, core of the Flamenca community of the city and joined the Cormier Agency as an actress. She recently shot for the TV series L'Empereur I and II, Alertes, Projet Innocence and À cœur battant II. She was choreographer and soloist of the opera Ainadamar for the Opéra de Montréal and for the show Irrésistible España with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. She teaches weekly flamenco dance and singing classes at the Grands Ballets Canadiens Studios and in her own dance school, Flamenco Rocío Vadillo.



For Humanities week 2024, Fine Arts department member Harlan Johnson is pleased to propose a presentation by the group called Black Art Histories of Montreal.


BAHM is a research and archival project dedicated to the recuperation, preservation, recognition, and dissemination of the art and cultural legacies of Black visual artists active in Montreal before 1995. In our contemporary world the internet increasingly shapes our awareness. Our presentation will bring to light a period of our art history that is not internet accessible and hence has been erased from our collective memory.

We propose to share our slideshow revealing the works of Montreal's little known early Black visual artists. Although Montreal's Black community is well known for its innovations in jazz music and other performing arts, the beauties of its' contributions in the field of visual art are little known. Following the slideshow there will be a Q and A session with students, and a panel discussion with artists and scholars from the Black visual arts community. This conversation will shed light on the aesthetics, social relevance and the Black world view that these artists brought to the Montreal art scene in period between 1960-1995.

About the speakers

Writing haiku leads to an appreciation of nature and the seasons. Emerging from a Buddhist world view in which nature and human beings were considered equal, the practice of haiku encourages an identification with and concern for the natural world which provides a strong foundation for environmental activism. Because of its brevity and simplicity, haiku, more easily than other forms of poetry, has been able to enter the political discourse and reach a broader audience. It has been used in the past in Japan as part of the discussion of nuclear energy, war and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and today addresses such issues as global warming and climate change.

About the speaker

 is an award-winning haiku poet. Her work has been published in journals and anthologies around the world and she is the author of five full-length poetry collections, most recently Last Summer 0 aj.1d2A.t5-12 (s)-126. EmergintlyLeuckLn be



1 pm

Steve Luxton

“That’s a great poem!”
“You must be kidding.
It’s just plain ro en!”

The famous beatnik American poet Allen Ginsberg with his highly dramatic, verbal reworks was denounced by James Dickey, a writer of the same generation, as a man with only “an ability to write elementary prose and supply it with rather more exclamation points than might normally be called for”! For his part, Ginsberg likely viewed Dickey’s work as academic dry-rot. Right now, however, Ginsberg’s reputation has survived and prospered. Go figure! Is the quality of piece of literary writing, especially when a poem, entirely in the ear or eye of the beholder? The fact of the matter is: aesthetic taste not only differs but broadly, culturally changes! As a young artist who naturally yearns to be appreciated, understand the causes of these shocking shifts in “artistic sensibility” and, where possible, successfully navigate them? Or, is one often doomed to be out of fashion... sometimes before even being in fashion?!

About the speaker

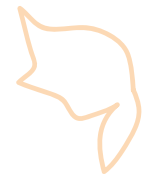
Steve Luxton has an MA in Creative Writing from Syracuse University where he studied under the poets W.D. Snodgrass and Phillip Booth. He has taught literature and creative writing at Champlain, Vanier and John Abbott Colleges, as well as at Bishop’s and Concordia Universities. He has published six volumes of poetry, the most recent of which is entitled *Lift Off the Roof: Harmonica Blues Poems*. In recognition for his energetic support and promotion of English-language literature in Quebec, he was awarded the Quebec Writers’ Federation’s Judy Mappin Community Prize. He lives with his wife the poet Angela Leuck in the Eastern Townships’ town of Coaticook.

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2:30 pm

Angela Lueck

RENGA and the Writing of a Collective Poem to Celebrate the Diversity of Conference Themes, Presenters and Participants



Renga is a form of poetry that emerged in Japan around 700 years ago. It consists of alternating 3- and 2- line verses. What makes renga unique is that it is collaborative: two or more poets take turns writing verses, often under the guidance of a renga master, who establishes the “rules” of the renga and chooses which poems will be included.

I thus propose to conduct a Renga during one of the days of the conference to which all presenters and participants are invited to take part in the writing of a verse. The more poets the better and no previous writing experience is required!

About the speaker

Angela Lueck is an award-winning haiku poet. Her work has been published in journals and anthologies around the world and she is the author of five full-length poetry collections, most recently *Last Summer Pear* and *More Grows in a Crooked Row*. In 2021, she founded Yarrow Press which publishes the popular Yarrow Haiku Series. She is the president of Haiku Canada.

Discussion questions are at your disposal for classroom activities and assignments.
Please contact Sean Elliott at selliott@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

Wood Sculptures: A presentation of works, and an exploration of the narratives that breathe new life into recycled tree-trunks from Cuba. Artist, and Geographer,


Thursday

October 24

Martello Alley is an extraordinary art gallery that redefines traditional spaces with creativity and ingenuity. Nestled in an alleyway in downtown Kingston, this hidden gem transforms an ordinary passage into a vibrant art haven. Martello Alley utilizes the unique setting to create an immersive experience, where visitors can wander through a labyrinth of colorful displays and eclectic artworks. This unconventional

I will be performing three songs in contrasting styles that involve very different states of mind to perform. The first two will deal with creating songs about life events for an infant and for an elderly person, respectively. The third will be a traditional song from a culture with a strict performance practice as to ornamentation and being sung a cappella. I will be singing it however with percussion accompaniment from another culture with its own very different performance aesthetic and I'll be introducing the practice of improvisation with Peter Measroch, the percussionist.


About the speaker

 is a singer-songwriter and choir director known for her dynamic presence as a performer and her rich contributions to the Celtic music scene. Fluent in Gaelic, Linda has been preserving and promoting the vibrant traditions of Celtic music through her innovative projects and collaborations.

She was the original director of the Yellow Door Choir and she later went on to teach choral ensemble at the National Theatre School of Canada. Now, as the

Dans le cadre de mon travail poétique, j'invente parfois des mots pour exprimer certaines émotions, obtenir certains rythmes, embrouiller certaines images. Le langage non-figuratif, c'est-à-dire un langage où les sons de renvoient pas à des concepts clairs (pensons à l'abstraction en contexte pictural) hérite d'une riche tradition à travers la littérature francophone. La conférence explorera la place du non-figuratif dans mon travail poétique son potentiel ludique, pop, dans le contexte de lecture devant public.

About the speaker

 enseigne à Dawson depuis 2019. Il a publié de nombreux recueils de poésie, dont Chasse aux Licornes (2015, éditions de l'Écrou), J'ai appris ça au cirque (2020, éditions de la Courte Échelle), et


2:30 pm

Timothy Slonosky

Space for God: Different approaches to Art and Architecture in Christianity

There are at least 5,000 different Christian denominations. They almost all worship the same God, and follow the same scriptures. Yet the physical spaces they worship in look dramatically different. This talk will use the European Reformation of the sixteenth century to explain the thinking behind these differences, and show how seemingly small disagreements in interpretation can manifest themselves dramatically in the physical world.


About the speaker

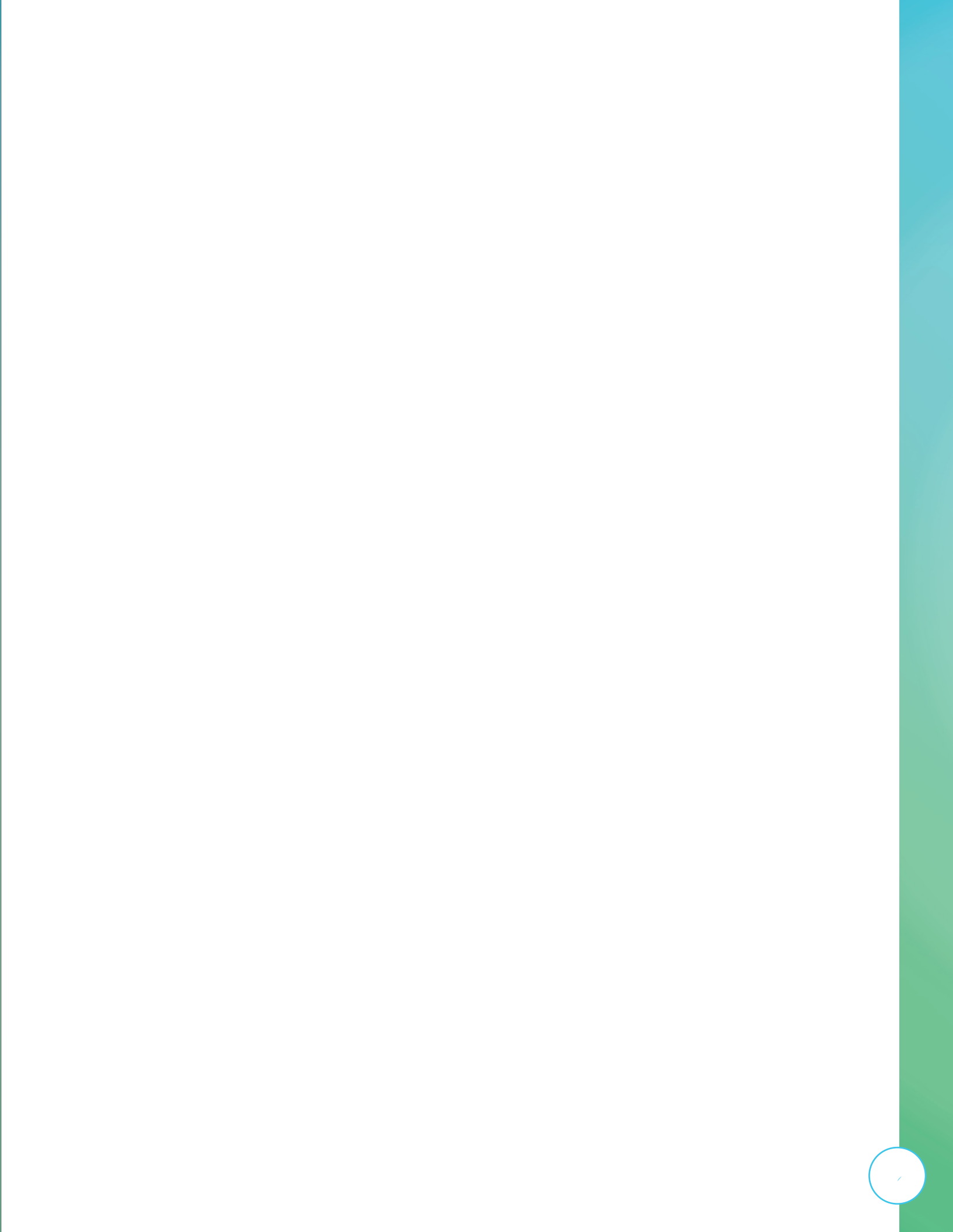
 teaches in Dawson's Humanities Department. He researches the European Reformation, particularly in urban settings. His book, Civic Reformations and Religious Change in Sixteenth Century Scottish Towns, has recently been published by Edinburgh University Press.

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This presentation is concerned with the ethics of artists working in Nature from the 1970s to the present day. The relationship between industry and ecology is at the forefront of these approaches, as the interaction between these areas has become essential during this time of ecological crisis. With the use of different media and from diverse theoretical approaches, I will give a brief summary of some artistic movements such as American Land Art/Earthworks, British Environmental Art, and Industrial Photography, among others. I will focus on the artists Robert Smithson and Edward Burtynsky, who both contribute to the development of a 'new landscape' and utilize industrial and urban sites as the subject matter and location of their artworks. They enable the possibility of a nature/culture dialogue through their art production that has the capacity to introduce a deeper understanding of environmental concerns from an original perspective. We will explore the ethical concerns of art that represents or directly implicates nature.


About the speaker

 is the Chair of the Fine Arts Department and the Coordinator of the Visual Arts Program at Dawson College, where she also teaches Art History. She has a background in museum education from various institutions including The Museum of Modern Art (New York, USA), the Peggy Guggenheim



In this presentation my brother Nick Veltmeyer and I will sing and also talk about historically informed performance practices: the aesthetic decisions that go into creating a beautiful historically accurate performance and the emotional and intellectual commitments required of a performer and even audience for a successful authentic performance. Looking in particular to the Nova Scotian folk songs collected by Dr. Hellen Creighton that Nick and I grew up singing at home as children, an archive that Nick has spent a large part of his career exploring and creating with, and also looking to seventeenth-century musical settings of metaphysical poetry, which is my scholarly area of expertise, we explore the connections between folk and art song in performance.

About the speakers

 holds a Phd in English Literature from McGill University and is a faculty member of Dawson College in Montreal. Her recently completed (2022) dissertation, "Metaphysical Music," is a s (en-US)231 .m(e explor)tolollegeocqLikmily cas s and contexts m(e e

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research and publlegeocqtions focus mn explor)ions of music, poetry, and religion in Early Modern English culture.





2:30 pm

French Awards Panel and Post Conference Party

The Arts and Humanities Alive at Dawson College is a conference conceived around the idea of underlining the importance of humanistic and philosophical concepts to the arts; the art, literature and music that we all love. Visual artists have been using philosophical themes in art since the renaissance for example. Theories of aesthetics have been hotly debated with regard to architecture. We have invited students to submit creative work that incorporates such themes. A panel of teachers will evaluate submissions, and the shortlisted students will be invited to explain to the teacher's panel how their creative work incorporates concepts from the humanities or philosophy. This panel will feature submissions to the French panel.

Visuals for the conference

by Sacha Santerre

🔼🔼🔼🔼🔼, a 3rd year student in the Graphic Design program, is the artist that brought not only the poster, but also the schedule and this entire document to life.

I would like to graciously thank Sean Elliott for providing this opportunity to Dawson students through this initiative and would also like to encourage future Dawson event organizers to do the same.

