



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2014-15

### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PROJECT

ELAN celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014 and received project funding from the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage for a number of special activities. The first was to feature **trailblazers in building Quebec's current dynamic English-language arts community** from the sparsely populated, marginal scene of the 1970s and 80s. **Three panel discussions** were presented in collaboration with POP Montreal and Expozine: The Montreal Formula: Thinking outside the box for survival in Montreal arts (POP Montreal) with Albert Nerenberg (host; filmmaker and laughologist), Murray Lightburn (the Dears), Krista Muir (Lederhosen Lucil), and visual artist J.C. Little; Literary Legacies: A Montreal Story (POP Montreal) with host Katia Grubisic (writer and translator), Linda Leith, founder of Blue Metropolis Foundation, and Marianne Ackerman, founder of the bilingual theatre company Theatre 1774 and Rover Arts; and Montreal Blooming: From Backwater to Music Hotbed (Expozine) with Howard Bilerman (legendary Montreal producer, former drummer for Arcade Fire), Kevin Komoda (Rational Youth), Ryhna Thompson (Envision Management), and musician Molly Sweeney.

For our 10th anniversary year, ELAN **co-produced Schmoozers** with partners from each of the major artistic disciplines: April in collaboration with the Quebec Writers' Federation; June in collaboration with the St-Ambroise Montreal International Fringe Festival; October in collaboration with the Montreal Film Group; and December at McGill's Schulich School of Music, with a focus on students.

Eastern Bloc was selected as the venue for ELAN's **10th anniversary event** because it is a well-equipped visual and media arts centre. A photo retrospective of ELAN's 10-year history was projected on one wall while the **Wonderwall**, created at three stations where guests were photographed as they arrived, was projected on another. The photos were also uploaded to a website as an online archive.

## DIGITAL SHIFT PROJECT

The **migration from print to online media** has taken a toll on English-language arts and culture coverage. With the disappearance of alternative weekly papers *Hour Community* and the *Montreal Mirror*, and cuts at the CBC and *Montreal Gazette*, arts organizations and artists are fighting for visibility among key audience segments.

In April 2014, ELAN hired Montreal-based freelance journalist Richard Burnett as project manager. A former editor with weekly magazine *Hour* for 16 years, Burnett was chosen because of his familiarity with local artists, publicists and journalists, and his own professional experience bridging the digital shift from old media to new media. Between April and October, ELAN's Digital Shift project **surveyed dozens of artists, arts organizations, publicists and journalists**, and then hosted two **focus group sessions**, to create a report with recommendations to help artists, arts organizations and their audiences adapt to the digital shift. ELAN also worked closely with sister organizations: Quebec Writers' Federation (QWF), Quebec Drama Federation (QDF), the Association of English-language Publishers of Quebec (AELAQ), and Studio 303. The Digital Shift report made five recommendations which suggest solutions requiring key partnerships and significant investment. The full report and the three surveys are archived on ELAN's website:

<http://www.quebec-elan.org/eng/documents/byType/11>

## ARTS ALIVE! QUÉBEC PROJECT (YEAR 1)

ELAN's ACCORD project (2011-13), which stimulated arts and cultural activity in regions as remote as the Gaspé, the Lower North Shore and the Magdalen Islands, reported that the greatest opportunity for long-term development of English-language minority communities in the area of arts and culture was to be found in **six communities** which had already invested in the **development of cultural resources**: Wakefield (West Quebec), Hudson and Huntingdon (Montréal), West Island (Montreal), Eastern Townships, and Quebec City. Our Project Manager (Elsa Bolam) was hired on June 26 (2014) and in early July a detailed work plan based on the grant application was sent to potential partners in all six regions. Preliminary meetings were arranged during July in Wakefield, Hudson, Quebec City, and Huntingdon. On August 6 we met with the Knowlton team and the entire faculty of John Abbott College's Theatre Department. These preliminary meetings identified potential local partners and dates for the **Arts Alive! Québec activities during summer 2015**.

On October 8 a joint planning meeting was held at the Shaar Community Centre in Hudson with 26 leaders from all six regions. The meeting changed some of our priorities and budget

allocations. The regional leaders had clear ideas about their strengths and weaknesses. They felt that media support was a higher priority than extensive workshops. They wanted ELAN to allocate more money to print materials such as posters, postcards and brochures. Rather than a single day of workshops, they wanted ongoing media and admin support, particularly the regions that did not have paid staff to work on budgets and artist contracts.

On January 22 (2015) a second joint planning meeting with 18 leaders from all six communities was held at the Pointe-Claire Holiday Inn. The meeting reviewed the overall PR plan. Most of the regions had already short-listed or selected their headline artists and wanted to talk about contracts, cash flow, and collective and individual promotion. Our Arts Alive! Québec project publicity manager (Barbara Ford) announced that CBC had agreed to be media sponsor. In February and March a series of **skill development workshops** were held in all six regions.

Phase two of Arts Alive! Québec took place in summer of 2015.

## **VISUAL ARTS MARKET ACCESS PROJECT**

The Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council for the Arts approached ELAN in January 2014 and asked if we could organize a Market Access project for Quebec's English-speaking artists. Board members Bettina Forget and Yael Filipovic designed a project that would **bring visiting gallerists to Montreal** for three days of studio visits and two evenings of public meetings. Hope Peterson was hired as project manager and worked with three jurors to select a range of 'tour ready' visual artists. The 13 artists were: Geoffrey Jones (sound, sculpture, installation), Daniel Barrow (drawing, video, performance), Dennis Ekstedt (painting), Jeanie Riddle (painting), Jenny Lin (drawing, bookworks, video), Jessica Auer (photography), Jim Holyoak (drawing, performance), Luanne Martineau (fibre arts, drawing), Maskull Laserre (drawing, sculpture), Mary Sui Yee Wong (textile design, media art), Renee Duval (painting), Nikki Forrest (drawing, video, electronics) and Paul Litherland (photography).

On February 25, ELAN held a **panel discussion at OBORO** which was attended by approximately 50 people. Visiting gallerists Scott Zieher, John Thomson, and Camilo Alvarez spoke briefly about their galleries in New York and Boston, and about their experience with the art market in general, then opened up the floor to questions from artists in attendance. A lively discussion followed, mostly about the process of getting exhibitions and strategies for marketing your work, as well as dealer representation and art fairs, which had to be ended after two hours.

On February 26, ELAN held a **public reception at Parisian Laundry**. The gallerists took questions in a structured forum for nearly two hours from interested artists. Estimated attendance was

over 100. Montreal festival Art Souterrain partnered with ELAN at this event to promote their festival launch, contributing to increased access and awareness for artists of both events.

## **MEMBERS' SERVICES**

ELAN's most popular service remains the bi-monthly **Schmoozier**. The **Minute Market** Continued to provide a popular forum for members to promote their latest production, performance, book, or recording, and Minute Marketers donated samples of their work as door prizes. As well as the 10th anniversary co-produced Schmoozier mentioned above, we also held a regional Schmoozier in July in Chelsea (West Quebec) at La Fab cultural centre, and a Schmoozier at Hurleys Irish Pub in February 2015.

**Website and ELANews:** The new Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation reduced ELAN's mailing list by about 24%. By March 31, our mailing list had stabilized at 2,200 recipients and it will start to grow again from this baseline.

**Workshops:** We organized five professional development workshops: a CBC workshop on promotion and media relations; two grant writing workshops in collaboration with YES Montreal and professional artists Krista Muir, Hope Peterson, Avy Loftus and Derek Yapple-Schobert, as well as a career orientation presentation for Concordia students, and a similar career orientation workshop for Bishop's University students.

## **ADVOCACY**

An important part of ELAN's advocacy involves **building bridges with francophone colleagues**. ELAN was elected in 2013 for a second two-year term on Culture Montréal's board of directors, and in 2014 ELAN was invited to sit on the Conseil des arts de Montréal's Diversity Committee.

ELAN worked closely with **Diversité Artistique Montréal (DAM)** to produce an edition of their **TicArtToc** magazine devoted to linguistic diversity in Quebec. The special edition of TicArtToc was called Made au Québec. As a result of this work, ELAN was invited to the Quebec City conference of le Centre inter-universitaire d'études québécoises (CIEQ) to present a paper on ambiguous encounters between English-speakers and Francophones.

**Official language advocacy** is another important part of ELAN's work. In this role ELAN made a presentation to the **Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages** regarding the economy, participated in the annual meeting of National Arts Service organizations, met in Ottawa with a

round table of assistant deputy ministers, and worked with the NFB to create a collaboration agreement.

**Broadcasting** is the third important area of advocacy for ELAN. During the past few years we met with **Vidéotron** on several occasions to make the business case for them to create community content for their English-language subscribers. In 2013 Vidéotron applied to the CRTC for an English-language community TV licence - MYtv. A complaint was subsequently filed against Vidéotron. ELAN has regularly noted Vidéotron's historical shortcomings, but has supported Vidéotron's efforts to make future amends for their past failures. In February 2015, CRTC rendered a decision denying Vidéotron access to additional funds to create an English-language channel. Nonetheless, Vidéotron has decided to allocate 20% of MAtv's resources (airtime and budget) to English-language programming.

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the **Federal Partners Working Group** was held on March 24, 2015. During the preceding year, the co-leaders group was an effective mechanism for maintaining momentum between annual meetings and for achieving concrete results. Co-leaders met individually as pairs between meetings of all co-leaders, in June, September, November, January (2015) and February. ELAN took charge of secretarial work for these meetings. ELAN's project for 2017 - **INSPIREVILLE** - was of considerable interest to community partners and federal institutions.