

Feature writers

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How to map your city, Filling in the blanks

By Sevan Injejikian

What would you do if you were handed an outline of Sherbrooke and asked to fill it in? Would you pick a theme, such as food, and map your culinary experiences by rating the best- or perhaps worst - restaurants in town? Would you map the places where you have loved and lost, sketch your childhood stomping grounds or relay your local history? Perhaps you would reorganize the city's layout, shift physical and social borders, or propose an alternative use of space by adding a dash of green here and a community garden there. And what if you were new to the region? How would you map a place that is still unknown to you?

As the Assistant Curator of the Community Art Lab, I had the opportunity to ask visitors to the Foreman Art Gallery to map Sherbrooke as part of a multi-city, participatory mapping project that began under the sponsorship of AREA Chicago in 2005. For weeks people followed me down to the Community Art Lab, 'the place where all the magic happens' as my colleague likes to put it, and sat at our large table to individually or collectively produce a map. Students, teachers, community members, children and adults alike interpreted the project in a variety of ways, made it their own, and set out to render their version of, and sometimes vision for, Sherbrooke.

Notes for a People's Atlas, as the project is called, was part of the international exhibition Experimental Geography which was co-presented by the Foreman Art Gallery and Sporobol, centre en art actuel from January 28th to March 19th, 2011. Organized by

ICI (Independent Curators International) and curated by Nato Thompson, the exhibition explored the distinctions between the field of geography and current artistic practices, as well as where they intersect.

Notes for a People's Atlas promoted the creation of subjective and non-traditional maps of the city by inviting participants to fill in the blank outline of Sherbrooke. Given the participatory nature of the AREA Chicago project, Notes for a People's Atlas was taken out of the gallery context and instead placed in the Community Art Lab, a space where maps could be produced as well as displayed. Participants were encouraged to map where they live, work, and play and to think of how they experience the city - their daily routines, familiar sites, and usual haunts. Their maps quickly covered the Art Lab's walls and became a repository for a collective pool of knowledge, memories, and histories of Sherbrooke, allowing individuals to share with others what otherwise might be lost.

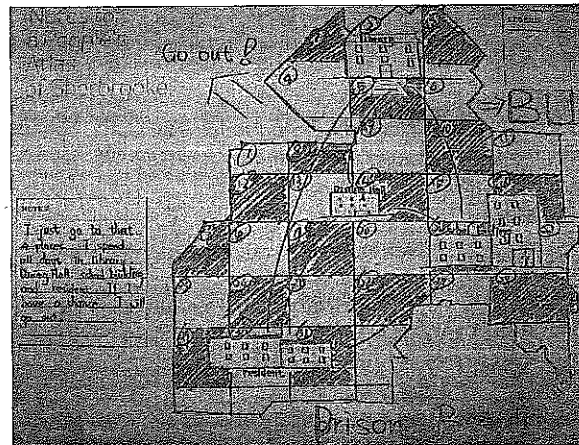
The maps, which will also be displayed on the Gallery's website later this spring, cover a range of topics, from local schools to language barriers.

One map in particular stood out for me. It was made by a Bishop's University student who had recently arrived in Sherbrooke. Both visually and conceptually compelling, it superimposed the chequered grid of a calendar page onto the outline of the city, temporally and geographically marking her 30 days here.

While she was only beginning to chronicle her time in the region, my stay was coming to an end. This in part might explain my affinity with her map: days numbered, I've been crossing off dates and to-do

lists while reflecting on the time I've spent here at the Foreman Art Gallery and how my contract is nearly over. As a final note, I would like to invite everyone to think of their time in Sherbrooke, reach for a pen, and map.

Sevan Injejikian holds an MA in Art History from McGill University and a BA in Creative Writing and Photography from Concordia University (Montreal). Interested in trauma and postcolonial theory, her work as a photographer and writer explores notions of home, Diaspora, displacement and memory. In September 2010, she was hired as the Assistant Curator of the Community Art Lab of the Foreman Art Gallery at Bishop's University. This unique opportunity allowed her to combine her interests in community related issues with art



COURTESY

What am I thinking!?

By William Hogg

As we roll on towards an election campaign, I wanted the opportunity NOT to speak about the reasons for the campaign, or why one party is better than another. Rather, I want to speak about WHAT a candidate is feeling at this very moment. Here are some of the emotions that we'll be dealing with over the next 40 or so days:

Stress: You know that feeling, where you've got a knot about the size of a baseball in your stomach? That's what I've been dealing with for the past week. I hope it doesn't cause permanent damage, or add to my grey hairs...

Anxiety: Do I have enough volunteers? Do I have enough posters? Do I have enough money (a campaign needs money to succeed, and, frankly, there's not much out there)? Will voters listen to me? Will they listen to the leader? Will they read the platform? Does it connect????

Expectation: The writ has dropped and the election has started! Race around, find the best telephone pole to put your poster on, find the best location for your office, send out the press releases, and prepare for your debates! All in the same, oh, 10 minutes!

Excitement: Hey, I just convinced someone to change their vote! I met someone who stands out as a community leader! I've spoken about a policy we're offering and someone realises that, yes, it can make a difference! I made a witty remark in the debate, one point for me!

Pride: Yes, you folks have seen me in the paper often over the past three years. An election campaign is the culminating point of all those events - and a candidate who has been present, active and engaged in their community will feel pride through bringing it all together.

Anticipation: Will the weather be good on voting day? How will the leaders do in their debates (you know, 80% of voters vote based on the leader or the platform, and NOT me)? Is voter turnout good? Is it good in the right places?

Relief: When all is said and done, after a campaign is over, one can only feel a sense of relief, after putting in thousands of kilometres on the car, shaking thousands of hands, and speaking to thousands of people. I can go back to spending more time with the kids, enjoying spring, and getting ready for summer.

That is, unless I get elected...

Letter

DEAR EDITOR,

I would like to take the time to say a big thank-you to Mable Hastings and to you, the editor of The Record for including some amazing articles on Potton and its citizens. We have received countless, positive comments on Mable's articles, and participation to our community events are skyrocketing.

Recently, Mable wrote an article honouring our First Responders in Potton and announced our FREE CPR courses that were delivered by the First Responders themselves. The very day the article was released, we received over 25 new registrations, which were followed by donations to the Potton unit.

We are fortunate that Mable is always ready and eager to write about Potton. Her articles are written with love for the area in which she was raised, for its natural beauty and most of all its citizens.

Many thanks to you both.

TRISH WOOD
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