

Report on the Faculty of Fine Arts Strategic Plan, for the 2023-2024 academic year

[Faculty of Fine Arts 2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#)

What We Aspire Toward: To be a model of excellence in the Fine Arts by collectively developing innovative approaches to learning, research, creation, and work, empowering our community to be agents of positive change.

Our Mission: To foster a vibrant learning, research and creation ecosystem committed to critical engagement with knowledge-making, art practices, and social transformation.

Strategic orientation 1: To prioritize equity practices in how we build community, support students, faculty and staff, and improve diversity and accessibility

Several departments have prioritized faculty hires (CUPFA and CUFA) whose teaching and research focus on accessible practices and pedagogies. Partnering with the [Equity Office](#) on process has been meaningful and impactful. In particular, the **Department of Art Education** has hired two new faculty members, Jessie Beier and David LeRue, who will advance the conversation on building more equitable practices into school and community art education programs. Units and individuals interested in learning more about the Equity Advocates program are invited to contact the Equity Office or Associate Dean, Faculty Development and Inclusion, Haidee Wasson.

The Department of Creative Arts Therapies has developed an accessible syllabus template for all faculty members to use; diffusing inclusive practices across their courses in terms of learning objectives, assignment expectations, and document design. Units and individuals interested in learning more about the accessible syllabus template developed by the member of the Department of Creative Therapies, please contact Department Chair, Cynthia Bruce.

Equity hiring practices for Non-Academic Staff has been a multi-year focus for the **School of Cinema** - with developing guiding principles, workshop, and upcoming codifying of practices in the School's governing documents. The Office the Dean will also be partnering with the innovative work from the School, in collaboration with the

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[Equity Office](#), to bring these practices to all Non-Academic Staff hiring practices across the Faculty. Department Administrator Ria Rombough can be contacted to learn more about the work in the Cinema School.

Physical accessibility has also been a feature this past year, with the **Centre of Digital Arts** adding a **wheelchair-accessible station** to a computer lab, partnering with the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities to use one of our computer labs for midterm exams, and Theatre students and faculty creating **videos demonstrating the accessibility** of the Concordia Theatre, MB Studios, and Oscar Peterson Concert Hall. Contact Toby Wesenberg to learn more about the CDA labs initiatives, and Jen Strahl to learn more about the space accessibility videos.

Topics of equity and diversity were a feature in many of our courses and student outcomes. [Florian Grond's innovative Inclusive and Accessible Design course](#) in Design and Computation Arts which involved **collaborations with external organizations** such as Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal's National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT) and Le Regroupement des aveugles et amblyopes de Montréal métropolitain (RAAMM). The course resulted in notable projects like an accessible backpack and web platform for a blind composer and measuring cups with tactile graphics for visually impaired users; these real-world projects emphasized the importance of **adaptive design, fostering experiential learning and community engagement**. Units and individuals interested in learning more about the course or its outcomes are invited to contact faculty member Florian Grond.

There were a number of **student-led initiatives that also championed inclusion**. For example, Art Education students Katarina Martins, Sara Escobar, and Anna Ignacio [collaborated with the Mackay Centre School](#) to create a vibrant **mural celebrating diversity**. Inspired by their internships at the school, the project incorporated over a hundred drawings from students and teachers, resulting in a 22-metre mural unveiled at the school's Diversity Party. Units and individuals interested in learning more about student initiatives are invited to contact Student Relations Coordinator, Tricia Middleton.

The **Interdisciplinary Studies and Practices in Fine Arts (FFAR)** area is starting [the first year of their new redesign](#), which has included breaking the core required course FFAR 250 into two 3-credit courses (FFAR 248 + 249) while placing emphases on decolonization, anti-racist pedagogy, accessibility, and sustainability. The area has also continued to develop and formalize the [Pedagogy Training Program](#), offering training sessions to our graduate student Tutorial Leaders in the coming year on themes such as cultural safety, navigating boundaries in the classroom, and intra-personal skill-building, while also expanding our web presence. Units and individuals interested in discussing curriculum review, modification, or development are invited to contact Associate Dean Academic Programs and Pedagogy, Elaine Cheasley Paterson.

Strategic orientation 2: To engage with diverse perspectives and with the Indigenous Directions Action Plan to shape our processes and curriculum

Embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in a sustainable fashion continues to be a focus in curriculum. **Design and Computation Arts** is partnering with Donna Goodleaf, Director, Decolonizing Curriculum and Pedagogy and her team on core courses in Computation Arts (CART 210). **Contemporary Dance** also worked with Donna Goodleaf and the CTL, including a full workshop of two courses' delivery, pedagogy, and content (DANC211 and DANC401). Units and individuals interested in discussing curriculum review, modification, or development are invited to contact Associate Dean Academic Programs and Pedagogy, Elaine Cheasley Paterson and Donna Goodleaf, Director, Decolonizing Curriculum and Pedagogy.

The department of Art History chose to concentrate their decolonizing efforts on graduate studies curriculum, especially through their work on the [MA Handbook](#) and Thesis seminar. These changes will anchor a decolonizing framework and questions to be implemented throughout the intellectual and professional aspects of the graduate program. Department Coordinator Danielle Miles can be contacted to learn more. Music is also supporting master classes and research on decolonizing listening techniques with [Banting post-doc award winner Kristine Dizon](#). Units and individuals interested in learning more about the course or its outcomes are invited to contact Joshua Rager.

New program development and partnerships feature built-in diverse perspectives, including Art Education's development of a 30-credit graduate certificate in teacher training for field-experienced classroom teachers who lack formal qualifications, and Art History's [Graduate Certificate in Curatorial Studies and Practices](#) which will aim to attract students with non-traditional backgrounds and experiment with exhibition concepts that fall outside of the traditional canon. Larissa Yousoubova can be contacted to learn about Art Education's developing program, and Danielle Miles for Art History's certificate (which was approved at Senate in May 2024, and will admit its first cohort in the Fall of 2025).

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Strategic orientation 3: To mobilize expertise across the Faculty in sustainable and collaborative practices for how we create, study and work

The **Sustainability of Fine Arts (SoFA)** subcommittee of Faculty Council led an extensive consultation process with our community. Building on our community's natural strengths and intersecting with the myriad of Sustainability initiatives at the University, this Fall we will launch a 3-year Sustainability Action Plan for the Faculty. The Plan will include material, digital, and social and workload sustainability objectives. One of the student members of the SoFA committee, Carolie Deslisle, was also granted a [Concordia Undergraduate Student Research Award](#) to investigate sustainable resources for the **Department of Theatre**. [The final outcome](#) includes guidelines for each realization shop (costume, scenic and props) and links to excellent Concordia Sustainability resources. Marc Weiser, Principal Director, Advancement can be contacted to learn more about the SoFA Action Plan.

Concordia's **Faculty of Fine Arts** played a pivotal role in [a collaborative public art project last year at Place des Aiguilleurs](#). This initiative, funded by the Réseau express métropolitain (REM) and aligned with the Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement, aimed to incorporate art into urban spaces. Facilitated by a Concordia summer course in public art and sustainability, the project brought together 19 students from Concordia, UQAM, McGill, and Université de Montréal. It marked the inaugural installment of a planned series across the universities. Fannie Gadouas, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Industry Engagement can be reached for more information.

The **FoFA Gallery** received a \$250K grant from the Canada Council's Cultivate program to continue their ongoing work with [sustainable exhibition practices](#). The grant will fund positions for a Curator of Sustainability and Assistant Technician, Sustainability. Together, they will undertake initiatives related to sustainable signage and exhibition design, experimental material labs, training for other art spaces locally and nationally, waste auditing, and a collaboration with the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science to design and prototype a new sign-printing machine. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Gallery Administrator, Nicole Burisch.

Collaboration is at the core of a number of initiatives within the **Academic & Research Facilities** unit, where the atria spaces in EV2, EV5, and EV8 were upgraded with repurposed furniture to create inviting lounge spaces for students. **The Dean's Office** will also form a cross-department committee for FoFA to discuss how to best use our spaces and offices. Our aim will be to use FoFA spaces as key resources in collaboratively meeting the Faculty's objectives, promoting popular student spaces, and

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generating revenue. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Manager, Planning and Academic Facilities, Angela Tsafaras.

The **Performing Arts departments** are emerging as an excellent example of cross-departmental collaborations. In order to maximize our professorial resources and our spaces, while also better responding to prospective students' needs, several departments are developing programs and courses jointly. Some notable examples are the improvisation classes DANC 398/2 G: Special Topics in Dance – Choreography IA (cross-listed with course codes ACTT 498, EAST 398 and 498, MPER 398 and 498) taught for the first time in Fall 2024 as a collaboration between the departments of theatre, music, and contemporary dance. These same departments are also joining forces on the development of a shared MFA in performance/creation. Units and individuals interested in discussing curriculum review, modification, or development are invited to contact Associate Dean Academic Programs and Pedagogy, Elaine Cheasley Paterson.

Several departments are incorporating sustainability initiatives into their respective program curricula. The Faculty is also an active contributor to the new [Sustainability Microprogram](#) which was accepted by Senate in May 2024, and was taught for the very first time in the Summer 2024 semester. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Associate Dean Academic Programs and Pedagogy, Elaine Cheasley Paterson.

Strategic orientation 4: To improve our capacity to be agile, embrace renewal and lighten administrative burden where possible, in order to focus on our mission

Departments across the faculty continue to refresh administrative processes, develop departmental governance documents, and strengthen collegial governance and equitable distribution of labour. For example, the **Department of Studio Arts** created a pilot project designed to combine the roles of two of their eight area coordinators with UPD and associate-UPD functions as a way to streamline student advising, increase student support, and other tasks. The **School of Cinema** has established a fair and simplified rotation of faculty members through program head roles. **Design and Computation Arts** has been putting a particular effort on transparency and accessibility with digital file systems and standard operating procedures, and departments such as Design, Studio, and the FoFA Gallery are generating governance documents to support transparency, consistency, and ease for repeatable processes. Tristan Khaner, Director Office of the Dean can be contacted if units or individuals have a particular process to renew or simplify.

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FoFA Gallery has implemented a number of administrative enhancements, including running exhibitions for longer in order to reduce workload/administrative burden, and ensuring equitable pay for artists (in line with [CARFAC](#)). The Gallery is also promoting thoughtful dialogue by working on a procedure for addressing complaints raised by exhibition content, while championing artistic freedom and freedom of expression. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Gallery Administrator, Nicole Burisch.

This past year, the **Centre for Digital Arts** completed a major IT upgrade across the faculty, partnering with IITS on sustainable approaches to computer and equipment refresh cycles. The long-overdue \$2.7 million investment enhanced teaching and learning experiences, streamlined administrative tasks, advanced the institution's academic and creative pursuits and facilitated innovation. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Manager, Centre for Digital Arts, Pierre Genest.

As **Academic and Research Facilities** worked towards increasing space usage, they ran a pilot project with the Faculty of Arts and Science for the use of the Oscar Peterson Concert Hall. FAS and FoFA contributed to the purchase of a new projector and Crestron system for the concert hall and will continue the pilot project in Fall and Winter 2024/2025. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Supervisor, Performance Production and Venues, Jen Strahl.

Ongoing work **refining our organizational structure** to balance integration between roles and developing specialized knowledge continues, especially in the face of Concordia's financial situation. Projects for this past year include a pilot to better integrate the Studio-based technician team with the Centre for Digital Arts and Core Technical Centers. Individuals and units with more ideas on organizational structure or lightening administrative burden should contact Tristan Khaner, Director, Office of the Dean.

The University has launched a comprehensive **Strategic Enrolment Management program**, where areas of retention and advising, admissions, recruitment are being reviewed institutionally. The work groups aim to enhance the overall students' experience during their time at Concordia, making our work more efficient and responsive to student needs. Contact Mary Lalotitis, Manager Student Academic Services, for more information.

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Strategic orientation 5: To serve our community by building a culture of reciprocity, accountability, rigor and excellence

The Faculty of Fine Arts continues to develop its deep roots in the community, partnering in innovative ways and collaborating with cultural institutions. Rich internships for our students, meaningful support of the Montreal art and culture ecosystem, and mutually beneficial partnerships are core dimensions of our Faculty. Collaboration with our community and cultural organization continues to be a strong suit of FoFA. **The School of Cinema** and Grandé Studios co-presented a **panel reuniting film industry leaders** during the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), addressing how Quebec cinema industry faces international collaboration opportunities and challenges, content creation, funding strategies, workforce issues, among other themes. The Theatre department collaborated with Montreal's National Circus School and The 7 Fingers (Les 7 Doigts de la main) to design and showcase a [premier performance in the Fall](#). [Wild Talks](#) continued to bring in cultural icons, such as dancer and choreographer Louise Lecavalier. Music was [proud to welcome](#) platinum-selling Quebec artist Ariane Moffat and Polaris Prize-nominator singer-songwriter Ada Lea as instructors for MUSI 263 – Songwriting I.

The **Visual Collections Repository (VCR)** is pleased to support the research of two grant recipients in the field of moving images: Vinicius Sanchez, from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, and Christopher Johnstone, a CALQ recipient. Their research-creation projects make use of and better promote our exceptional celluloid collections and facilities. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact VCR Manager, Pamela Caussy.

The **Art Volt Collection** made its [debut at the Plural Art fair](#) this April, marking a significant milestone for this unique initiative supporting recent alumni of Concordia's Faculty of Fine Arts as they transition into their professional careers. Two artists from the Collection were showcased in the fair's new Pavilion Spaces section, highlighting innovative approaches and visions from emerging galleries across Canada. Units and individuals interested in learning more about this initiative are invited to contact Fannie Gadouas, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Industry Engagement.