

Quartier Éphémère:
Indeterminate Territories and Curatorial Practice in the Industrial Space
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...trauma and discontinuity are fundamental for memory and history, ruins have come to be necessary for linking creativity to the experience of loss at the individual and collective level. Ruins operate as powerful metaphors for absence or rejection, and hence, as incentives for reflection or restoration.¹

We design our cities, but who will design their decay?²

To live is to leave traces.³

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My inquiry into the relationship between art, architecture and the indeterminate spaces of the city has been inspired by the ways in which artists are adapting and re-using urban space for cultural purposes. In my view, there is no wealth in a city if there is no artistic life in the city. I am aware that expressing the importance of artists in our communities is not innovative thinking. What does bear greater examination and reflection, however, are the diverse ways in which artists are reclaiming urban space and, hence, the role creative interventions play in the transformation of the built environment. In contrast to the transformation of urban space through artistic interventions, economic restructuring and policies that privilege late capitalism have often determined how the city is regulated and planned.

Too often we have witnessed the transformation (or colonization) of urban space through the processes of abandonment, conservation and gentrification.⁴ Too often, case studies surrounding the “revitalization” of urban space will consider the politics and aesthetics of how cultural landscapes are preserved without examining the transformation

of urban space as it relates to the identity of a place and its social history. Too often the process of revitalization and “doing something” with these spaces become a process of both erasure of the past, and homogenization of a city’s cultural landscape. Furthermore, the issue of how artists’ actions help to preserve and transform urban space has gone largely undertheorized.

My interest with the presence of art in the city, and the kinds of interventions that artists are making within the interstices of the urban landscape, also coincides with a number of current trends within larger Canadian cities and a desire to create and live in what is now called a “creative city.”⁵ Most of us in the arts subscribe to this new way of thinking but I remain doubtful we know how to achieve it. What does it mean to live in a “creative city?” Certainly, it implies a (re)construction of relationships between cultural identities and social realities, as well as rethinking how economic and political policies are shaping the cultural landscape of urban space. Throughout many of Canada’s larger cities this desire to live in a “creative city” is often encouraged by the development of “creative hubs.”⁶ These hubs are designed to provide artists with a sustainable work place, such as studio space, rehearsal space, and office space, and are often developed in partnership with corporate sponsorship, and with the intention of *revitalizing* an indeterminate space in the city.⁷ I would argue that the danger of these “creative hubs,” lies in the ghettoization of artistic activity and cultural production within the urban landscape: leaving many artists and creative collectives segregated from the societies in which they live and work.

Another way of interpreting the meaning of “creative city” might be to reconsider the ways in which the cultural worker *inhabits* his or her city, and how their

work is *integrated* into the social fabric of a city. French sociologist Fabrice Raffin, a specialist in artistic practices within urban territories, considers the hidden patterns and diverse ways in which the city is inhabited, and invariably, how these patterns are embedded in the indeterminate space. He writes, “Powerful property developers aside, each citizen discretely and imperceptibly helps shape the urban space, making and unmaking it. Cultural workers are a part of this process, inscribing their activities in physical and symbolic spaces.”⁸

As indicated in the above statement, there is no question that artists (and art) enrich our communities and urban spaces. But how are artistic interventions perceived in contributing to the renewal of a city’s cultural landscape? One misconception about artistic activity is the role it has played in the gentrification of urban neighbourhoods. Sharon Zukin has examined the evolution of artists’ appropriation of industrial warehouse space (in New York’s SoHo and Tribeca district throughout the seventies and eighties) and has argued how the proliferation of artists’ spaces have played a significant role in the gentrification of working class neighbourhoods and the displacement of residents.⁹ Alternatively, urban scholar Ann Markusen, in addressing the perception of artists as “agents of gentrification” states, “[b]laming artists for gentrification seems off the mark. Artists may be used by developers, even willingly, but they are not the architects or supporters of private property and land use practices that favour single site transformations of land use against community wishes.”¹⁰ She also notes that in order to understand the ecology of arts, it is important to recognize that artists’ contribution to society “depend[s] on how the built environment and community development are managed by [city] planners.”¹¹ Either real estate developers view and

use artistic activity as “a vanguard for wholesale neighbourhood turnover,”¹² or they are not interested in collaborating with a community’s artistic initiatives.

Throughout the time that I have been researching the idea of indeterminate territories, and since I began writing this paper, the fate of Montréal’s Griffintown, of the Faubourg des Récollets, and subsequently of Quartier Éphémère, has once again become a highly contested issue. The City of Montréal has very recently given the green light for private developer *Devimco* to move forward with their plans to redevelop the neighbourhood. Through ongoing public debates and protests organized by, among others, the *Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown*,¹³ Devimco was forced to make some changes to their original plans for revitalizing the area. The plans as they exist now were published on the front page of *The Gazette*, Friday April 25th 2008. These revised plans have been described as an “eco-friendly project” and include, among other things, two hotels, a large concert hall, two “big box” stores, four condominium towers ranging from affordable to luxury-priced,¹⁴ and the list goes on.

Indeterminate spaces like Griffintown are saturated with cultural meaning and the marks of urban history. Thus, it bears asking: how does Devimco’s “eco-friendly project” consider what Griffintown risks losing?

With this question in mind, I use the specific case of the Darling Foundry - a contemporary exhibition space located in the heart of Montréal’s post-industrial district - to explore the issues surrounding the regeneration of urban space. The Foundry, a building saved and transformed into a dynamic arts center by Quartier Éphémère, is a prime example of how a city’s historical narratives have been revived through artistic interventions.

In this essay, I investigate the presence of art in the city, the cultural worker and their relationship to historical architecture within the interstitial space of the city. As we have come to “read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space,”¹⁵ how then do past and present, the elements of what is contemporary and what is history converge? How do the collaborations between artists, architects and urban planners contribute to our understanding of urban space, its reinvention, and more precisely, the value of indeterminate territories within the cultural landscape of a city? This paper brings together ideas about the relationship between art and architecture, the notion of the palimpsest and how they bear upon the indeterminate territories of urban space.

Industrial wastelands, ruins, eyesores, voids, silent spaces, derelict, urban deserts, dead zones, landscapes of contempt, and squats,¹⁶ are just a few of the names that have been used to characterize the residue of transformation within our urban spaces. They are terms that refer to spaces such as post-industrial landscapes, abandoned neighbourhoods, and empty spaces in the peripheral parts of a city. Linked to the processes of decay, the terms also refer to the “social and cultural entropy” of our city spaces, their “loss and ruin.”¹⁷ By virtue of their neglect, ruinous state, and marginal place in the urban landscape, recent architectural and urban planning discourse has defined these spaces as “contingent,” “interstitial,”¹⁸ and “spaces of indeterminacy.”¹⁹ Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, many cities have witnessed the disuse of significant industrial landscapes and their eventual abandonment. Urban reservoirs of social, cultural and architectural history, these landscapes of indeterminacy remain a part of the urban palimpsest. My concern with the interstitial spaces of cities lies with how they are inhabited, as well as with the processes by which they are

transformed. Using the metaphor of “city as palimpsest”²⁰ and extending the notion of indeterminate spaces, I explore the nature of contemporary art practices in relation to the transformation of abandoned urban spaces. Although the *re-use* of industrial spaces for cultural production is not a recent phenomenon, my curiosity for these transformations lies within what attracts the cultural labourer to these indeterminate urban spaces, and how creative interventions within the interstices of the city contribute to the renewal of its cultural landscape.

Building on the writings and research of architectural historians, geographers, sociologists, and philosophers who have conceptualized the idea and meaning of indeterminate spaces, I will address the significance of transforming and re-using abandoned industrial space for curatorial practice, and identify the cultural importance of indeterminate territories, as well as their relationship to the city. These ideas will be explored by addressing the significance of in situ projects in abandoned sites, and the relationship between architecture and the practice of contemporary art.

My investigation begins with the Darling Foundry and its transformation from an abandoned industrial factory into a contemporary arts centre. Situated in Montréal’s historic industrial district – the Faubourg des Récollets - the Darling Foundry was discovered by Quartier Éphémère, a not-for-profit contemporary arts organization, whose initiatives seek out opportunities to renew abandoned buildings through in situ projects. Historically, the Faubourg was one of Montréal’s first suburbs and part of a thriving industrial quarter called Griffintown. “Legally demarcated as a historical site,” the architectural features of the Faubourg do not reflect the traditional and monumental architecture typically associated with historical sites (like Montréal’s Vieux Port or

Québec City's historic quarter).²¹ Today, the Faubourg is more commonly referred to as *Cité Multimedia*. The motivation for re-naming this district is worth noting and will be addressed below.

Although the main corpus of this paper has been built on my investigation into the meaning and theoretical discourses on spaces of indeterminacy, I have also relied on the method of oral history. By using oral history as a methodology, I sought to document stories told by the people who were intimately involved and ultimately responsible for the transformation of the Foundry. I had the privilege of meeting with Quartier Éphémère's founder and Artistic Director, Caroline Andrieux and Stéphane Pratte - one of *Atelier In Situ's* three architects - who led the transformation of the site. Documenting what attracted Andrieux and Pratte to the Foundry and how the abandoned site informed their vision of the transformation are important aspects in understanding the significance of the Foundry's new life. As a result of these encounters, excerpts from their stories have also been woven into the narrative of this paper.

How does naming the abandoned landscape 'wasteland,' 'ruin', and 'void' as such, resonate with our daily experience of them? Through its debris the abandoned industrial space bears the physical traces of its past, draws attention to its materiality and disorder, and to the fragility of its history.²² What then attracts the cultural labourer to these abandoned sites? For one, from a purely aesthetic perspective, the former function of the industrial space accommodated industrial production on a large scale. It is the vast interior spaces of the factory that naturally lend themselves to the exhibition and diffusion of diverse forms of contemporary art. Examples of curatorial practice in transformed industrial spaces can be found in the essay "Remembering, Forgetting and

the Industrial Gallery Space,” where Richard Williams examines the origins and proliferation of industrial gallery spaces throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Concerned with how these spaces are adapted and what they signify about the past, he suggests that the history of adapting the industrial space for cultural purposes has come to influence the dominant aesthetic of the contemporary art museum.²³ Surely the example of the industrial gallery space par excellence (that is usually first thought of) is the Tate Modern, London. The former Bankside Power station (designed in two phases between 1947 and 1963 by architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott) was refurbished in 2000 into a world-class modern art gallery by the architectural firm Herzog and de Meuron. Williams also notes that, over time, the proliferation of exhibitions in the industrial gallery space gained the attention of bourgeois institutions of art. No longer seen as a “radical aesthetic” or experimental, these spaces became ideal locations for commercial ventures, whereby the industrial gallery spaces “[were] wholeheartedly appropriated by the establishment.”²⁴ My concern in this paper, however, is to make a distinction between the consumer value and commercial use of those adapted industrial spaces and the kinds of interventions that artists are making within the indeterminate spaces and abandoned sites of the city. In contrast to the aestheticization and conversion of the industrial space into the “white cube”, the Darling Foundry’s transformation into a contemporary arts centre presents a different scenario.

In 2002, Quartier Éphémère collaborated with the architects of *Atelier In Situ* in the restoration of the Darling Foundry into a contemporary art center. In order to understand the significance of this sites rehabilitation and its presence in the Faubourg

des Récollets it is equally important to understand, albeit in broad terms, the industrial history of Montréal as it relates to the site's eventual disuse and abandonment.

With the creation of the Lachine Canal and the industrialization of Montréal's port throughout the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, manufacturers began to settle along the banks of the Faubourg des Récollets. By 1880, the ship building industry was at the height of its production. The Faubourg developed into an industrial mass of buildings comprised of manufacturers, foundries, and warehouses. The *Darling Brothers Ltd.* established themselves as manufacturers of industrial equipment and the foundry became one of the most important in Montréal. By 1918, the company occupied four buildings in the Faubourg, each space dedicated to its own specific function. Quartier Éphémère currently occupies the original foundry site, built in 1888 by architect J.R Gardiner.²⁵ For its time, the construction of this building was an important symbol of Montréal's industrial history.²⁶

With the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1847 - which divided Griffintown and further isolated the Faubourg district - and the impact of the Great Depression (1920s-1930s), the climate of Montréal's industrious port began to shift. By the late 1960's, Griffintown was re-zoned (under Mayor Jean Drapeau's administration) as a light industrial district. During this period, historic row housing in the area was demolished, making this neighbourhood (once populated by Irish settlers and the working class) almost impossible to live in. By 1970, the Lachine Canal was put out of commission, marking the end of Griffintown's industrial role in the city. Economic restructuring ensued, and many industrial manufacturers in the district, including the Darling Foundry, fell into decline. *Sauvons Montréal*, a coalition of community groups

that monitors urban planning and architecture in the city, described the district as “an urban desert of dusty [and] old buildings” and demanded redevelopment for the Faubourg.²⁷ At this time no action by the City of Montréal was taken. Surrounded by the deterioration of neighbouring Griffintown and the detritus of the Lachine Canal, the Faubourg - a district further segregated by the Bonaventure expressway (1965) - developed into a vast expanse of obsolete buildings and empty lots.²⁸ By 1991, the Darling Foundry ceased all operations and the building was abandoned for the next ten years.²⁹

In addressing the meaning of abandonment, it is necessary to look at some of the possible reasons for this urban phenomenon. In his article, “The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression,” Gil Doron explores what he refers to as the “agents” that produce the wasteland or abandoned sites. He explains that the indeterminate space, or what he calls “transgressive zones,” “are not created out of an act of destruction, but by suspension of new plans for an area that is underused or has been abandoned by its formal activities, suspension [being] the act of future planning.”³⁰

Condemned as a derelict urban zone, for nearly twenty years the future of the Faubourg remained uncertain. Throughout this period, the City of Montréal purchased many of the empty lots in the district. At the same time, although the neighbourhood was not perceived to have a community, local artists began to move into the area (most likely contravening city zoning regulations) and appropriated empty warehouse spaces as live/work studios. In 1997 a viable investment for the City of Montréal emerged. Software giant Discreet Logique bought and restored an abandoned shipbuilding warehouse in the Faubourg - for ten million dollars - for its head office space.³¹ This

move triggered the initial revitalization of the Faubourg. The City was able to sell its empty lots at a greater value to the growing number of high-tech software companies who were interested in establishing their business in the area.³²

Caroline Andrieux's residency in Montréal began with establishing Quartier Éphémère's headquarters in the Faubourg in an abandoned warehouse. The Société de Développement de Montréal agreed to lease to Quartier Éphémère the first of two locations in the Faubourg (an empty warehouse located at 16 Prince Street) free of charge in exchange for its temporary occupation and upkeep. For the next five years, Quartier Éphémère cultivated exchanges with Québécois and French artists, organized exhibitions and provided artists with residencies within the warehouse. In 1997 Quartier Éphémère curated an exhibition called *Panique au Faubourg*. The concept for this exhibition was to create an intervention within the post-industrial district and to reveal the potential of the overlooked neighbourhood. Andrieux invited eleven artists from Québec and France to create site-specific installations with the abandoned buildings of the Faubourg. Each work poetically explored the architecture and industrial past of the district. These temporal installations transformed the most non-public spaces of the neighbourhood into images that reflected the symbolic value of the abandoned sites. Exposing each site's architectural, historical and social significance, these in situ projects ranged from industrial themed videos projected onto the exterior of buildings and the projection of Caryatids on Silo no.5³³ to sculptural installations of recycled industrial objects found within the abandoned sites of the Faubourg.³⁴ Both an artistic and social intervention, *Panique au Faubourg* mobilized the growing artistic community

within the district. Placing art in the realm of the urban space, the exhibition became an act of “reclamation” of the Faubourg.³⁵

Panique au Faubourg marked a shift in the cultural identity of the Faubourg. Through art, Quartier Éphémère revealed the heterogeneous characteristics within the abandoned district: *Panique* allowed both the art and architecture to converge, to negotiate their identities, the past and the present, the contemporary and the historical. As a result of the exhibition, Quartier Éphémère discovered the potential of the Darling Foundry as a space for a permanent contemporary art centre. In 1998, the organization initiated the project and in exchange for raising the funds to restore and occupy the Foundry they negotiated a twenty-year lease with the city. The same year, Discreet Logique became a private patron of Quartier Éphémère, and the Québec Government announced its plans to redevelop the Faubourg des Récollets into a *Cité Multimedia*.³⁶ Ironically, in 1999, the City of Montréal evicted Quartier Éphémère from their original headquarters at 16 Prince Street because the lease had expired. (Consequently this warehouse was demolished and a multi-storey office building was redeveloped in its place.) Even so, the eviction from their first home in the Faubourg marked a turning point when Andrieux arranged for Quartier Éphémère to carry out its plans for saving and restoring the Foundry from a construction trailer resurrected within the abandoned Foundry.

Due to budgetary constraints, the transformation of the Darling Foundry, and the subsequent creation of a contemporary art center in the Faubourg, occurred in two phases. The first phase was implemented over an eighteen-month period led by the architectural team of *Atelier In Situ*.³⁷ In the summer of 2002 the restoration of the

14,000 sq. ft. Foundry was completed. The restoration included the creation of two public exhibition spaces the “Cluny artbar”, a reception area, and administrative offices on the second floor.

How did this building’s past inform how it is used now? Originally, the industrial building was designed to satisfy a number of specific needs but primarily it was designed for industrial materials, and to shape the movements of workers. The industrial architect took into consideration the strain of the machinery on the building as well as taking into the natural lighting.³⁸ Presently, the Foundry still conveys the image of its historical function. Key elements of its industrial character are depicted in the windows; the foundation, built from reinforced concrete; and in the principle brick façade.

As an architectural experience, the space is dependent on its condition as a “recycled” historical ruin.³⁹ Viewing the exterior of the main façade at the corner of Ottawa and Prince streets, it hardly appears that any transformation has taken place. Brick walls were preserved, but window panels now extend along the Prince Street wall. Nuanced with graffiti art, the Ottawa street façade now incorporates the main entrance to the gallery, as well as the expanse of large glazed panels allowing in plenty of natural light while also reflecting the exterior sites. Similarly, the interior of the building appears largely unaltered, however, there have been several clear interventions. Over time, heat from the foundry had caused the concrete to fall apart, and in its abandoned state the roof began to leak. As a result the concrete beams began to disintegrate; reinforcements were exposed and began to rust.⁴⁰ Working with a modest budget and burdened by significant damage to the original Foundry, architect Stéphane Pratte explains that everything aesthetic about the rehabilitation of the site had to be left out. He describes how the

process of restoring the Foundry was “restrained” and in many respects was inextricably linked to the memory of the site.⁴¹ He also explains that *Atelier In Situ*’s approach to architectural “interventions” is based on establishing a dialogue between the old and the new. “Our projects,” he explains, “are about working with the memory that exists [...] It’s important [for a city] to keep the density of its history. If we are always starting from scratch we are erasing memories.”⁴² In his essay, “That Place Where: Some Thoughts on Memory and the City,” Barry Curtis echoes Pratte’s engagement with the restoration of the Foundry by suggesting that the creation of a place through the recovery (or uncovering) of the past is inevitably linked to memory as well as “dialectically related to bringing the present into question.”⁴³

In terms of the physical restoration of the site, epoxy cement was combined with concrete to reinforce existing beams. The clearest indication of the building’s industrial character is preserved in the recesses built around the columns of the main gallery space, in the multi-textured interior brick façade, as well as in the ceiling which retains the architecture’s rich patina. Other traces of the Foundry’s past, such as obsolete industrial moulds, have also been preserved and transformed into sculptures by resident and guest artists, offering many tactile encounters throughout the building’s corridors, workshops, and adjoining stairwells.

Phase two of Quartier Éphémère’s project with the Foundry involved the planning and creation of residencies and workspace for artists. The motivation for providing artists with residencies is rooted in Quartier Éphémère’s desire to enable an intimate relationship between the Foundry (the space) and the artist. In 2004, Quartier Éphémère purchased the abandoned building adjacent to the Foundry for \$280,000.00. The residencies were

conceived in 2006 by the Montréal environmental and architectural firm *L'Office de l'eclectisme urbain et fonctionnel (L'OEUF)*. The 2.3 million dollar conversion of this building includes ten artist studios, two international residential studios, and five production workshops. These facilities allow the artists to discover the space, to live with it, by day and by night. Andrieux explains the importance of the residences, the workspaces, and how they also function as links for connecting with the community:

The proximity of the artist studios [to the exhibition space] is important to us because it provides the organization and building with energy. For us it is also a way to show the public how artists work... a way to invite the public to become more sensitive to the working conditions of the artist and the work in the gallery... to demystify the creation process. For me the physical presence of the artist in the community is very important too... artists are like philosophers... they make links in between... they create communities. We need artist residencies because they increase the role of the Darling Foundry in the neighbourhood.⁴⁴

By bringing the presence of artists to the community, as Andrieux suggests, Quartier Éphémère's identity as a positive force in the district will continue to strengthen. Their presence in the neighbourhood also invites connections to be made with contemporary art practice, and vice versa, creative collaborations with the social and historical narratives of the neighbourhood.

By nature of their indeterminacy, it is the future of urban spaces like the Faubourg and Griffintown which are often the actual contested territories and what landscape architect Helen Armstrong cites as "landscapes of contempt".⁴⁵ In her essay "Time, Dereliction and Beauty: an Argument for 'landscapes of Contempt'," Armstrong reflects on the temporal value of indeterminate spaces and is concerned with their disappearance. She argues that the derelict spaces of urban landscapes "are not only contemptuous places" but are also places that "allow for innovative temporary uses,"

which provide “opportunities” to reflect on the fragments of the past.⁴⁶ By revisiting the politics of The Situationists⁴⁷ and their revolutionary relationship to urban space, Armstrong extends the ideas of the Situationist movement by pointing out how the “impact of the hegemonic control of late-capitalism on urban space” contends with spaces of indeterminacy. Perceived to “destabilize” and confront the aesthetically and socially regulated spaces of our cities,⁴⁸ the bureaucratic approach towards what to do with spaces whose use value has disappeared, as was the case with the Faubourg, is to revitalize and colonize these territories into “socially and culturally regulated sites of order.”⁴⁹ Given that the revitalization of Montréal’s Griffintown is currently a contested issue, Alan Knight’s essay “Montréal’s Allegorical Monsters” written in the early 1990s (as part of an exhibition catalogue on Montréal’s architecture), presents a particularly timely argument. In this text Knight explores the idea of the re-use of urban form and the image of the ruin in the contemporary city. Drawing from the work of Walter Benjamin’s correspondences and Charles Baudelaire’s modern allegories he writes:

Montréal as ruin is the emblem of the death of the present architecture rather than the past architecture of allegory. Rebuilding the downtown wasteland in the old city’s faubourgs is a refusal to accept city forms as commodities to be sold by increasingly sophisticated marketing strategies.⁵⁰

Based on this statement, I would argue that too often the contingent territories of the city have been interpreted as dormant, “dead,” undesirable spaces. Tim Edensor, in his book *Industrial Ruins*, also suggests that there is a prevailing capitalist attitude towards the indeterminate space and refers to the concerns of property speculators:

... for those for whom space must have an evident function as productive or as property, such a purposive idea means that ruined space is understood as somewhere in which nothing happens and there is nothing. [Where] dereliction appears as a scar on the landscape composed of

matter out of place, [ruined space] must be erased and then filled in with something more ‘useful’.⁵¹

In *Writings on Cities*, Henri Lefebvre (whose seminal work had a great influence on the Situationist International) reminds us that “use value [was] subordinated for centuries to exchange value” and thus capitalist urban spaces became centers of consumption.⁵² Lefebvre argued that the vision of a true urban reality lies within how space is occupied and appropriated by its “users” and their “oeuvres.”⁵³ In *The Production of Space*, he also points out that “the commodity world brings in its wake certain attitudes towards space, certain actions upon space, even a certain concept of space.”⁵⁴

How then are attitudes toward spaces of urban ruin - where nothing appears to happen - counteracted? The indeterminate space, Edensor notes, is “ripe with transgressive and transcendent possibilities.”⁵⁵ He argues that spaces of urban ruin are evidence of the contemporary city’s “contingent, ineffable, unrepresentable, uncoded, sensual, [and] heterogeneous possibilities.”⁵⁶ Likewise Elizabeth Wilson in her essay, “Against Utopia: The Romance of Indeterminate Spaces,” discusses the ways in which we perceive the “contingent” and unpredictable parts of the city. It is in these indeterminate spaces where, as suggested by Wilson, “creativity occurs” and “facilitates imaginative uses by individuals.”⁵⁷

Quartier Éphémère established itself in the Faubourg in 1994. The origins of this organization, however, began a decade earlier in France. Throughout the early eighties, Andrieux, along with other artists, developed the concept of *Usine Éphémère*. The organization’s mandate focused on the development of in situ projects in abandoned industrial buildings. Temporarily occupying abandoned spaces throughout Paris, the

organization began to curate numerous exhibitions and brought exposure to artists who were not otherwise represented by standard commercial galleries.⁵⁸ By 1992, having gained significant attention, Andrieux was invited by the Ministry of Québec Culture to Montréal. In her initial discovery of the Faubourg des Récollets, Andrieux understood the potential of the historical district.⁵⁹ In her own words, “[w]ho hasn’t pushed open the vulnerable door of an abandoned building, penetrated its interior redolent with the past, sifting through the debris, inventing its history?”⁶⁰

As it relates to the allure of ruined sites, in his discussion of “Materiality in the Ruin: Waste, Excess and Sensuality,” Edensor explains that abandoned spaces possess particular affordances and qualities,⁶¹ and how moving through abandoned space can animate the imagination as well as stimulate a “sensual engagement with ruined matter.”⁶²

Sites of ruin and abandonment are also places bound up with collective memories where meanings, identities and the imagination merge. “Abandoned buildings puncture the urban fabric [and] become the alters of a tribal memory of the city,” write artists Lyne Lapointe and Martha Fleming in their book *Studiolo*.⁶³ It is in this text where Lapointe and Fleming give evocative accounts of their relationship to abandoned sites. What began in the 1980s as an “act of empowerment”, developed into artistic interventions with the vestiges of Montréal’s urban history. Referring to their *in situ* building projects as “memory theatres”, they expressed that their interventions with abandoned architectural spaces were not as artists, nor “as architects or as planners, but as users.”⁶⁴ For Lapointe and Fleming, the history, memory, and experience of a building is just as important an element in the materialization of their projects as is the

intervention itself. In their introduction they write, “each project proposed itself as a reading aloud of the building – including by extension its neighbourhood [and] its community.”⁶⁵

Similarly, photographer Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978) also worked with the materiality of abandoned sites. Temporality was the hallmark of Matta-Clark’s architectural interventions. In many ways, his *détournement*⁶⁶ or appropriation of ruinous urban artifacts could be considered an examination of the social fabric of a city. In their book (published to coincide with the exhibition) *Gordon Matta-Clark: the Space Between*, authors Lisa Le Feuve and James Attlee suggest that by drawing attention to the abandoned and derelict zones in the city, Matta-Clark “was making a critique of the architectural process.”⁶⁷ In his own words Matta-Clark asserts, “the availability of empty and neglected structures [is] a textual reminder of the ongoing fallacy of renewal through modernization.”⁶⁸ Projects like the “building cuts” and the recycling of dis-used elements from the urban landscape do not survive Matta-Clark, nonetheless, his work continues to have a profound influence on many artists and the practice of contemporary art.⁶⁹

In her exploration of collaborative processes within a community, Dolores Hayden emphasizes how art (and artists) are the key to creating new forms in the city that interpret the past in “resonant ways.” Artists, she states, “can work with missing pieces, or erasures of important aspects of history, so as to reestablish missing parts of the story.”⁷⁰

Likewise, Fabrice Raffin also posits the idea of collaboration between creativity and citizenship. He suggests that we are all “cultural actors” and that, perhaps, by

building on the correspondences between creativity and citizenship, new conditions and resources for the cultural labourer would be generated. He writes:

Cultural labour has its own locations: workshops, rehearsal studios, small cramped premises at a gap in the street or the end of a cul-de-sac. Almost hidden, they are spread around the heart of our towns and generally attract little attention. Nevertheless, these enterprises sometimes multiply and group together in certain areas thereby gaining visibility and strength. Premeditated or not, these groupings remind us of the nearness, the continuities and at times the collaborations that link a city to the uncertain world of creation.⁷¹

I see this idea of “collaboration” between art and the city reflected in Alan Knight’s exploration of the writings and “correspondences” of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin. Although their reflections about life in the modern city are vastly different from our experience of “knowing” the city today, Knight has noted similarities (that their correspondences are essentially the same concept) because both Baudelaire and Benjamin used correspondence as an artistic device which can “establish connections between the visible and the invisible world of human experience in the artistic oeuvre.”⁷² Henri Lefebvre has also addressed this notion of correspondences in what he calls the “oeuvre” of a city, suggesting that the practice of art is also a social act, therefore making “the art of living in the city a work of art.”⁷³

The sheer volume and polyvalent characteristics of the Darling Foundry site lend themselves to the curatorial practice of diverse forms of contemporary art. The mandate of Quartier Éphémère invites artists to build a dialogue with the space and to create with the traces of its past. For example, in 2000 Quartier Éphémère curated the exhibition of Andréas Oldörp’s *Le Nénuphar*, an audio and visual installation of glass, gas and fire. *Le Nénuphar* is a particularly strong indication of how contemporary art brings new form to the history of the building: inciting a dialogue between its industrial materials and the

architectural body of the space.⁷⁴ Strategically placed on the north wall of the deserted Foundry's main gallery, this intervention simultaneously manifests itself in the *landscape* of the space and the beauty of its ruin.

Quartier Éphémère's approach to the re-use of abandoned space serves as model for the kinds of collaborations that can occur between a city and its artists, and moreover, its citizens. The rehabilitation of the Darling Foundry is testament to the diverse ways in which the past and the *life* of a building are revived. Thus, the meaning of curatorial practice in the industrial space in some way reveals, perhaps even implies, that spaces of indeterminacy are great terrain for meditating on the dialogue between contemporary art and architecture.

It is also within the contingent spaces of the city where ephemeral gestures resonate, drawing our attention to the residue of the past, enticing us to rediscover their temporal value. And for me at least, ruins, like palimpsests, are traces by which we discover our urban history, and the *soul* of a space. The relationship between the artists and the Darling Foundry suggests that there is a relationship to the architectural history, as well to the memory of the site, and thus, as their interventions bring form to the site's past, they also give form to its soul. Aldo Rossi once expressed that “[t]he soul of a city becomes the city's history.”⁷⁵ Metaphorically speaking, if we consider the city a body, and we understand the “heart” of a city as its centre, might we also say that the *soul* of a city resides in its indeterminate territories or, in other words, interstitial spaces?

Epilogue

'One saw its inner side. One saw at the different storeys the walls of rooms to which the paper still clung, and here and there the join of floor or ceiling [...] But most unforgettable of all were the walls themselves. The stubborn life of these rooms had not let itself be trampled out [...] It was still there; it clung to the nails that had been left, it stood on the remaining handbreadth of flooring, it crouched under the corner joints where there was still a little bit of interior. One could see that it was in the paint, which, year by year, it had slowly altered [...] And from these walls once blue and green and yellow, which were framed by the fracture-tracks of the demolished partitions, the breath of these lives stood out--the clammy, sluggish, musty breath, which no wind had yet scattered.'

*~ Rainer Maria Rilke, before a house in demolition
The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge, 1959*

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¹ Salvator Settis, forward, Irresistable Decay: Ruins Reclaimed, by Michael S. Roth (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997) vii.

² Matthew Goulash, 39 Micro Lectures in Proximity of Performance (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) 190.

³ This quote was taken from Walter Benjamin's "Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century," cited in Sexuality and Space, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992) 74.

⁴ See Mark Crinson and Paul Tyrer, "Clocking off in Ancoats: Time and remembrance in the post industrial city," in Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City, ed. Mark Crinson (New York: Routledge, 2005) 49.

⁵ A number of Canadian cities have adopted the term "creative city" as part of their cultural policies. For more information on the concept of "creative city" and access to conference sites see <http://www.creativecity.ca/> and the Canada Council for the Arts website http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications_e/arts_res_links/.

⁶ For example, *Toronto Artscape*, a not-for-profit arts based service organization, is devoted to community development and "unlocking the creative potential" of urban communities. Since the late 1980s the team at Artscape has been providing "creative hub" workshops and has consulted a number of arts organization on the development and sustainability of their cultural centers. As well as managing their own projects, such as The Distillery District and the Gilbrator Point Center for the Arts, recent projects in development include the conversion of Toronto's Whychwood streetcar repair barn into a creative hub of artist live/work studios. See <http://www.torontoartscape.on.ca/>.

⁷ A significant example of how one Canadian urban neighbourhood was revitalized into a cultural destination can be seen in Toronto's Distillery District. For more information see <http://www.thedistillerydistrict.com/frameset.html>. Currently, the City of Montréal is in the process of building a "Quartier des spectacles" in the lower east part of the City's downtown core. The Government of Canada has deemed the soon to be "cultural precinct" as a funding priority. See <http://www.quartierdesspectacles.com/>.

⁸ Fabrice Raffin, "An Active Venue For The Arts in the Heart of the City," The Artfactories: Conversions for Urban Culture, trans. Leon Sagaru ed. Fazette Bordage (Basel; Berlin; Boston: Birkhauser, 2002) 10.11.

⁹ See Sharon Zukin's Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change (London: The John Hopkins Press Ltd., 1982) 5-6, 132.

¹⁰ Ann Markusen, "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the study of Artists" Environment and Planning A Vol. 38, No. 10 (2006) 25.

¹¹ Ann Markusen, "Artists as Community Developers" Planning Magazine No. 165 (Fall 2005): 1.

¹² Markusen, "Artists as Community Developers," 8.

¹³ For current publications and articles about the redevelopment of Griffintown see <http://csrgriffintown.wordpress.com/> as well as <http://savegriffintown.wordpress.com/category/urbanism/>.

¹⁴ Michelle Lalonde, "Griffintown developers go green with plans," The Gazette. April 25 2008, A1 and A7.

¹⁵ Andreas Huyssen, Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003) 7.

¹⁶ These terms were drawn from a number of sources. For examples see Fazette Bordage's introduction in The Factories: Conversions for Urban Culture, (Basel; Berlin; Boston: Birkhauser, 2002) 4.5., and Gil Doron's writings on "Architecture and Indeterminacy." See <www.field-journal.org> vol.1 (1) (accessed March 26th 2008).

¹⁷ Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, Theatre/Archeology (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) 10.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Wilson, "Against Utopia: The Romance of Indeterminate Spaces," Embodied Utopias: Gender, Social Change and the Modern Metropolis, ed. Amy Bingaman et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) 256.

¹⁹ Gil Doron, "The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression" City, 4, 2. (July 2000): 260.

²⁰ In their essay "Clocking off in Ancoats: Time and remembrance in the post-industrial city," Mark Crinson and Paul Tyrer discuss the temporality of architecture and its embodiment of time. Using the metaphor of the city as palimpsest, they explore the concept of "heritage time" and "developer time." Heritage time is interpreted as a system that preserves the traces of the past and recognizes "the city as a field of inscriptions, some nearly invisible, some newly written, [and] as a spatialised system for recalling the past." Where as in developer time, the city is seen as "a synchronic system that progresses towards the future flattening out the indeterminable." See Mark Crinson and Paul Tyrer, "Clocking off in Ancoats: Time and remembrance in the post industrial city," in Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City ed. Mark Crinson. (New York: Routledge, 2005) 66-67.

²¹ See Dinu Bumbaru's text "The Nazareth Fiefdom, Griffintown, The Faubourg des Récollets or Quartier des Écluses... A District that is more than a simple Side-Dish" in the exhibition catalogue Panique au Faubourg (Montréal: Quartier Éphémère, 1997) 26.

²² Tim Edensor, Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality (New York: Berg, 2005) 97-124.

²³ Richard Williams, "Remembering, Forgetting and the Industrial Gallery Space" in Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City. ed. Mark Crinson. (New York: Routledge, 2005) 122-124.

²⁴ Williams, 122.

²⁵ See the exhibition catalogue Panique au Faubourg (Montréal: Quartier Ephemere, 1997) 31.

²⁶ The Quartiere Éphémère website offers detailed information about the history, restoration and mandate of the Darling Foundry. See "Revitalizing the Darling Foundry," <www.quartierephemere.org/rehabiliter_e/index.html> (accessed January 2008)

²⁷ These historical facts were derived from journalist Philip Preville, "Recycling the Récollets." Montréal Mirror 25 December - 1 January 1998: p10.

²⁸ Philip Preville, "Recycling the Récollets." p10.

²⁹ "Revitalizing the Darling Foundry." January 2008

³⁰ Doron, 260.

³¹ Preville, p10.

³² Stéphane Pratte, interview with Shauna Janssen, Montréal, 6 March 2008.

³³ Referring to the Caryatids of Acropolis, the architects of *Atelier in situ* projected contemporary Caryatids onto the Silo no. 5 as part of *Panique au Faubourg*. The Silo no. 5, an abandoned grain elevator in the port of Old Montréal, has been the site of many artistic interventions ranging from acoustic projects like *Silophone*, by Montréal artists [The User]: Emmanuel Madan and Thomas McIntosh (<http://www.silophone.net/>), to the photography of Diana Shearwood. Shearwood was commissioned by Quartier Éphémère to document Silo no. 5. This project was subsequently presented at the Darling Foundry in 2003.

³⁴ See the exhibition catalogue “*Panique au Faubourg*,” (Montréal: Quartier Éphémère, 1997).

³⁵ Andrieux, interview, 2008.

³⁶ “Revitalizing the Darling Foundry.”

³⁷ *Atelier In Situ* was responsible for the restoration of the abandoned shipbuilding warehouse at 10 Duke street in the Faubourg des Récollets which is currently occupied by the Montréal software firm Discreet Logique. For more information on *Atelier in situ*'s projects see <www.insitu.qc.ca>.

³⁸ Jean Bélisle, “From Lac à la loutre to the Sainte-Gabriel Locks” in *An Industrial Landscape Observed: The Lachine Canal* (Montréal: Canadian Center for Architecture, 1992) 11-12.

³⁹ Williams, 121.

⁴⁰ Pratte, interview, 2008.

⁴¹ Pratte, interview, 2008.

⁴² Pratte, interview, 2008.

⁴³ Barry Curtis, in *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* eds. Iain Borden et al. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2001) 63-64.

⁴⁴ Andrieux, interview, 2008.

⁴⁵ “Landscapes of contempt” is a term Helen Armstrong borrows from French landscape architect Christophe Girot's text “Vers une Nouvelle Nature” in *Trans-scape* no 11 Zurich: Department of Architecture, ETH publication (November 2004): 40-45.

⁴⁶ Helen Armstrong, “Time, Dereliction and Beauty: an Argument for ‘Landscapes of Contempt’” <<http://www.aila.org.au/online/la/2006/docs/aila%20journal%20armstrong.pdf>>117. (Accessed 25 March 2008).

⁴⁷ Situationism (1957-1972) emerged out of a hybridization of two avant-garde post-war movements: The Letterist International in Paris, and the COBRA Group in Copenhagen and Amsterdam. Attempting to define the city in a new way, the Situationist International, for example, rendered their own maps (i.e. making collages of existing city maps) as a way of mapping and conceiving the “real city” that lay beneath the city constructed by Capitalism. See also Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

⁴⁸ Armstrong, 119.

⁴⁹ Armstrong, 119.

⁵⁰ Alan Knight, "On the re-use of form: Montréal's allegorical monsters," in City Metaphors, Urban Constructs: Urban Architecture in Montréal 1980-1990 (Montréal: Editions du Meridien, 1992) 111.

⁵¹ Edensor, 8.

⁵² Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City" in Writings on Cities, eds and trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 167.

⁵³ Lefebvre, Writings on Cities, 168-169.

⁵⁴ Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 341.

⁵⁵ Edensor, 4.

⁵⁶ Edensor, 19.

⁵⁷ Wilson, 256-258.

⁵⁸ See Keith Marchand's review "Panique in the Streets" in the Montréal Mirror 29 May 1997 <http://www.montrealmirror.com/ARCHIVES/1997/052997/art.html> (accessed February 2008).

⁵⁹ Caroline Andrieux, interview with Shauna Janssen, Montréal, 11 February 2008.

⁶⁰ Caroline Andrieux, exhibition catalogue, Panique au Faubourg (Montréal: Quartier Éphémère, 1997) 6.

⁶¹ Edensor, 98.

⁶² Edensor, 118.

⁶³ Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe, Studiolo (Artexes Editions and The Art Gallery of Windsor, 1997) 28.

⁶⁴ Fleming and Lapointe, 27

⁶⁵ Fleming and Lapointe, 23.

⁶⁶ The term *détournement* used here, which has come to mean appropriation, coined by Guy Debord of the Situationists, to which Matta-Clark's artistic and political interventions with urban space have often been compared.

⁶⁷ James Attlee and Lise Feuve, Gordon Matta-Clark: the Between Space (Glasgow: Nazraeli Press, 2003) 43.

⁶⁸ Gordon Matta-Clark circa 1974, quote cited by James Attlee and Lise Feuve in The Space Between, 43.

⁶⁹ Attlee and Feuve, 43.

⁷⁰ Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History (Cambridge Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1996) 231.

⁷¹ Raffin, 18.19.

⁷² Knight, 108.

⁷³ Lefebvre, Writings on Cities, 173.

⁷⁴ Prior to the restoration of the Foundry, in 2000 Quartier Éphémère curated an exhibition in the space: “Le Nénuphar,” an audio visual installation, created by artist Andréas Oldörp. See a review of the exhibition by Virginie Pringuet in Espace 59 (Spring 2002) 21.

⁷⁵ Aldo Rossi, The Architecture of the City trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman. (Cambridge Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1982) 130.

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