

[Celebrating]

Spaces of Queer Connections

Alexandre Néron
December 15, 2023

In necessarily searching for love—I am searching for consistent community. If I have engaged with you on one of these and it hasn't worked out, it's not you. It's the app. With these qualifications established, I now set out into *terra incognita*. What queer spaces are available to me at McGill?

Much of my information on McGill queer organizations comes from the online-accessible LGBTQA2S+ McGill Student, Faculty, and Staff Activism exhibit, curated in 2022 by McGill Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSFS) assistant professor Alex Ketchum and Jacob Williams (BA '23). Beyond its usefulness to me, it is an excellent jumping-off point for any interested in McGill's queer past and present.

There is, of course, Queer McGill, the university's student-run queer organization. They operate and promote a variety of services across Montreal for McGill's 2SLGBTQIA+ population. "Our communications coordinator, Frida, sends out a weekly newsletter and is also responsible for our social media. They will frequently boost initiatives led by groups with similar mandates to ours," Administrative Coordinator Abe Berglas explained in an interview with *The Tribune*. "Our events coordinators, Isabel,

Where have the queer men gone?

A gay exploration across McGill

By Matt Adelberg, Copy Editor Design By Sofia Stankovic, Design Editor

and Val, are planning a variety of social events so that queer students and community members can congregate. Finally, our office coordinator Anya ensures that our office—room 432 in the SSMU building—is an accessible space for queer folks to visit on campus.

Some faculties have their own queer social clubs, such as OutLaw at McGill, the Law, Queer Engineers for Engineering, and HealthQueer Professionals for Medicine and Dentistry—though unfortunately, there is no such group that I could find in my beloved Arts faculty.

Beyond my definitively social options, there are several academic and activist groups that could bear fruit. The IGSFS facilitates the Gender, Sexuality, Feminism, and Social Justice minor, as well as the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (GSFS)—not to be confused with the GSFS acronym of the minor's major and honours option. These programs provide opportunities to learn about queer history and contemporary theory. However, it would be overly presumptuous to suggest that queer people comprise their student bases to any great degree; to my knowledge, no census exists that breaks down McGill's students by sexuality and department.

The Union for Gender Empowerment (UGE) advocates and gives support to all gender identities, emphasizing trans and non-binary allyship and gender-affirming care. Collaborating with Queer McGill, UGE runs the Trans Patient Union, which champions and assists trans and non-binary patients in their medical care experience in Montreal. While these groups are not necessarily social spaces, they are useful for queer, trans, and non-binary McGillians as resources and involvement opportunities.

I have done all this research into these potential community sites. Logically, I should go to all of their events to see if queer men are actually there, and yet, I find myself immobilized by inertia in my own investigation. Why am I not as enthusiastic about this next step as I feel I should be? Something about my study's setup feels wrong, but I cannot quite place it, so I run it as a thought experiment before I actually embark.

What if none of these events offer the connection I am searching for? Well, then I must start looking for places that are "queer-reflected," in the words of IGSF/Cultural Studies associate professor Alanna Thain: "In the past, many of our queer social spaces are still very much organized by, not every department may be so open around activism, but also art. Art spaces are [...] those kinds of spaces as well that can foster community in connection

with other kinds of community." Thain explained in an interview with *The Tribune*. So maybe I take this next lead and follow it through—I peruse every art space McGill has to offer, I attend every queer activist event I can. What if that doesn't work? Then I'll start going to study spaces, bars, see if they're there. What if I don't find them there either? Or at the next thought? Or the next? How many rocks am I willing to upturn for this? I may seem overly pessimistic. Very well, let us flip the results. Let us say that I find an ideal community of queer men at the very first event. Strangely, this also feels unsatisfactory. Queer men are not hidden objects to be found, their sightings reported in the local paper. I would need to ask countless strangers their sexualities as confirmation—an uncomfortable proposition. How would I even qualify a finding? How many queer men would need to be there, what proportion of the room? Above all, no matter the outcome, it wouldn't address my underlying frustration. I should not—not should anyone, of any identity—have to wait three years, let alone undertake a journalistic investigation, just to find people who share my experiences.

Such negativity crumples the heart. I fear that this investigation is a downward spiral; one I wish to avoid myself, much less report to others. I need to care. Collaborating with Queer McGill, UGE tries to address the root of the problem. Why is it so hard to find queer men at McGill?

From the start, there could be a numbers problem. According to McGill's 2021 enrollment report, our student population is roughly 60 per cent female and 40 per cent male (a side note for all these statistics, the report only discusses gender in terms of "male" and "female"). This disparity holds true for nearly all faculties, with the exceptions of Engineering (67 per cent male) and Music (58 per cent male). My faculty, Arts, is approximately 70 per cent women. For those wishing to commit to this numbers-based approach, you can always switch faculties; alas, my passions lie in my English major, even if the men do not.

Regardless, the stats suggest that at least to some extent, queer men are hard to find at McGill because men are hard to find at McGill. While in my experience, my home department of English does not shy away from discussions of gender and sexuality, not every department may be so open around activism, but also art. Art spaces are [...] those kinds of spaces as well that can foster community in connection

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Canada's LGBTQ2S+ safe spaces are disappearing at the worst possible time



By Heather Yourex-West · Global News

Posted March 2, 2023 8:28 pm · Updated March 5, 2023 10:55 pm

WATCH: There are growing concerns for historic "safe spaces" that are meant for members of Canada's LGBTQ+ community. Places like gay bars and villages are slowly vanishing, especially in the face of gentrification. As Heather Yourex-West reports, the closures couldn't come at a worse time – as the community is increasingly coming under attack – Mar 5, 2023

"We're at a time where there is a new right-wing attack upon especially drag performances but also trans people, queer people, and queer youth in particular," said Kinsmen. "So it's really important for us right now to establish safe spaces for ourselves."

Gay bars are on the decline nationwide according to new study

"In most parts of the country, gay bars are the only public LGBTQ+ place."

By John Russell · Friday, June 10, 2022

"36.6% of gay bar listings disappeared between 2007 and 2019," Mattson tells Chicago's ABC7 News. "So more than a third of gay bars closed in a 12-year period."

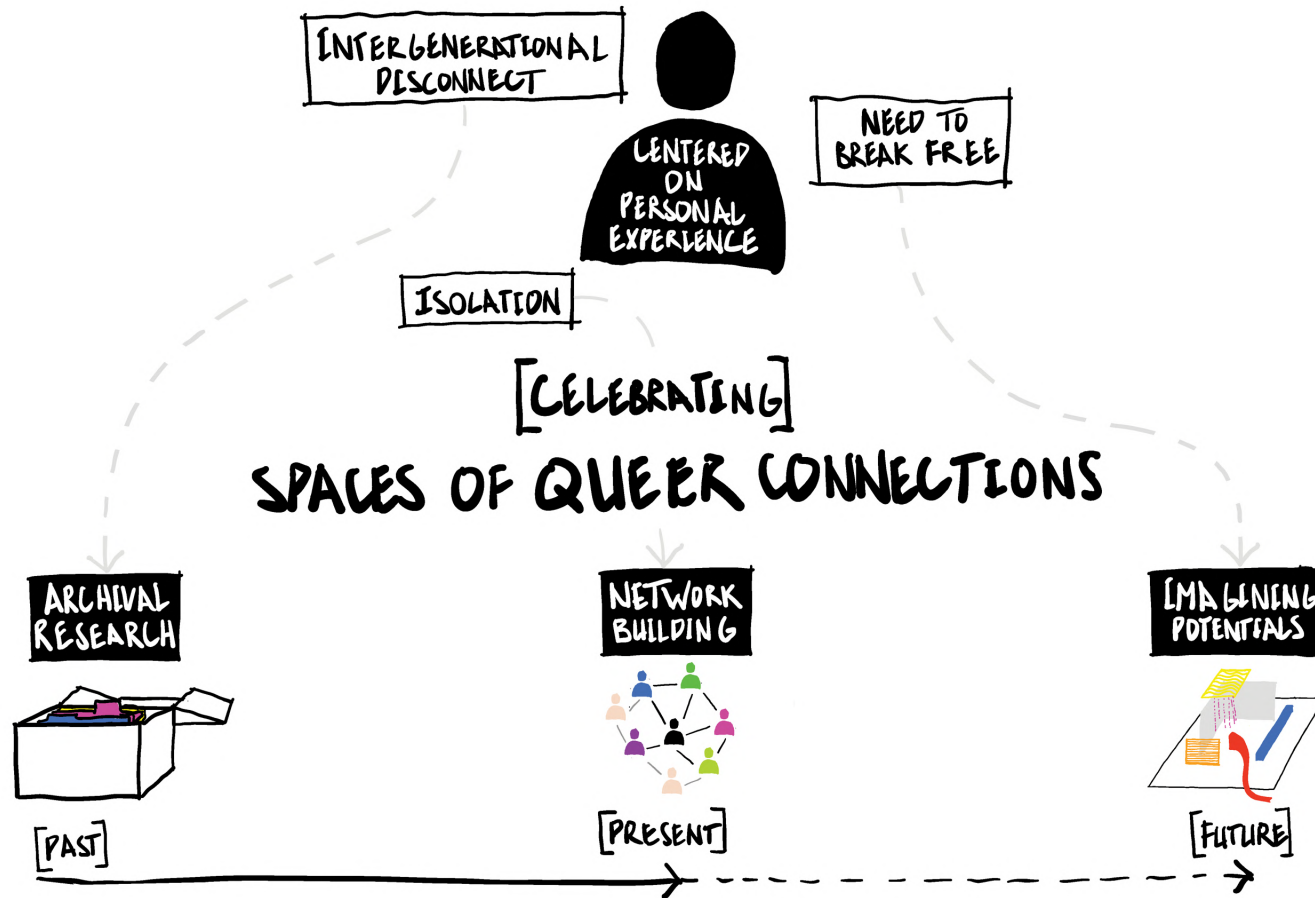
The potential causes for the decline in gay bars around the U.S. cited by Mattson are, on their face, positive. Social equality and greater acceptance of LGBTQ people have led to more welcoming attitudes in bars that don't cater specifically to the community, as well as a greater willingness of queer people to socialize in non-gay venues. There's also the rise of social media and the prevalence of location-based apps like Grindr and Scruff that allow LGBTQ people to meet virtually.

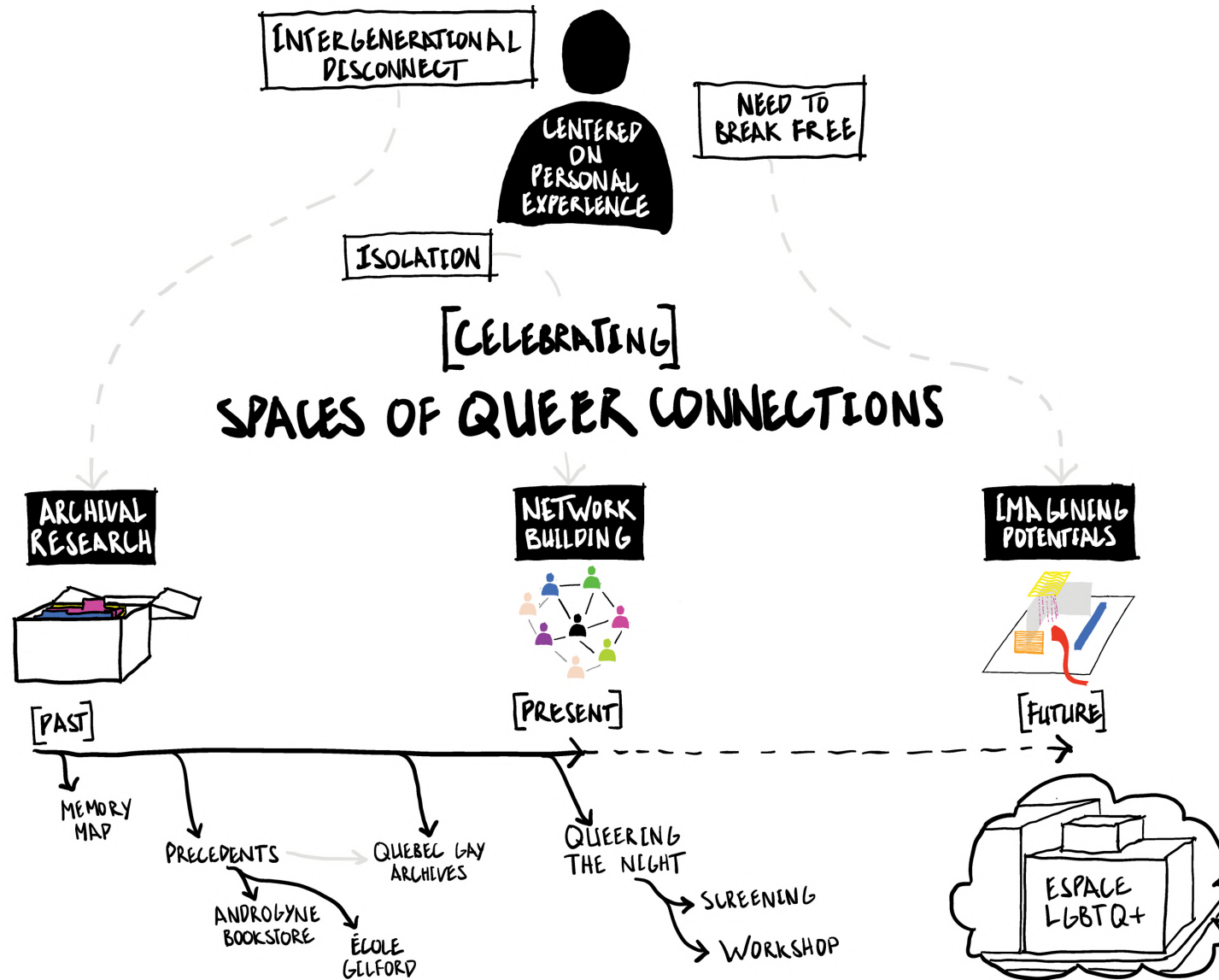
Where do the lesbians go? Diving into the lack of spaces for queer women & people of marginalized genders, and why they're essential

JUNE 7, 2023 / DEVON BANFIELD

Toronto is a city known around the world as a hub of gay culture and Pride. But among the Pride events that happen every June, and the dozens of queer-focused businesses in The Church and Wellesley Village, throughout the GTA, and nationwide, there appear to be no bars dedicated to queer women in Canada.

Sadly, this is not a Canada-centric issue. According to the American campaign and documentary series *The Lesbian Bar Project*, today there are only 27 lesbian bars across the United States. That's down from approximately 200 in the 1980s. This includes spaces for all queer women, as well as transgender and non-binary people.





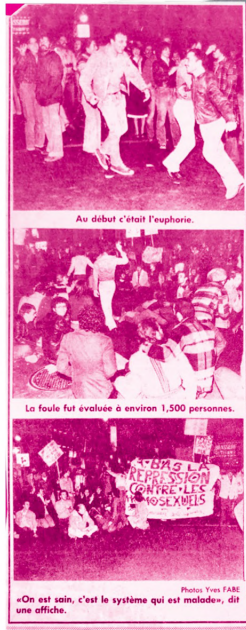
1960-1964
Mount-Royal Police Raids



1958
Men allowed to dance together
for the first time



1977 October
Truax Police Raid



1977 December
Discrimination based on sexual
orientation banned in Quebec



1979
First Pride March



2004
Same-sex marriage
legalized in Quebec



1969
Omnibus Bill
decriminalizes homosexuality



1975-1984
Pre-Olympics
Morality Police Raids

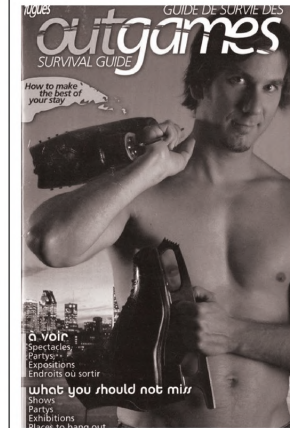
1988
First Image + Nation
film festival



1990
Sex Garage Police Raid



2006
Out Games



VISIBLE

INVISIBLE

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

2020



- 1978
- 1984
- 1985
- 1992



Sortir de L'Ombre | Frank W. Remiggi et Irène Demczuk | 1998

Sherbrooke

Berri

St-Laurent

St-Denis

Berri



- 1981
- 1990
- ⬠ 1995

PRINCIPAUX LIEUX DE RENCONTRE DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ LESBIENNE DE MONTRÉAL, 1973-1995

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 - L'Une et l'Autre (bar) | 26 - Le Kiev (bar) |
| 2 - Chez Madame Arthur (bar) | 27 - Zorro (bar) |
| 3 - Chez Jilly's (bar) | 28 - O'Side (bar) |
| 4 - Face de Bébé (bar) | 29 - La Librairie des femmes d'ici |
| 5 - Chez Baby Face (bar) | 30 - Labyris (bar) |
| 6 - Androgyny Bookstore | 31 - Lilith (bar) |
| 7 - Baby Face Disco | 32 - L'Aube-Epine (librairie) |
| 8 - Gay Women's Centre | 33 - Café Haut Pluriel |
| 9 - A Woman's Place (centre) | 34 - Le Petit Café glacé |
| 10 - Powerhouse Gallery | 35 - Le Boom (bar) |
| 11 - Entre Femmes (café) | 36 - Baby Face (bar) |
| 12 - Librairie L'Androgyne | 37 - La Paryse (restaurant) |
| 13 - Coop-Femmes | 38 - Bilitis (bar) |
| 14 - Women's Information and Referral Centre | 39 - Les Ponts de Paris (bar) |
| 15 - Le Stop (bar) | 40 - Café Clin d'oeil |
| 16 - Le Standing (bar) | 41 - Loubar (bar) |
| 17 - L'Étarte (local communautaire) | 42 - Kaché & K2 (bars) |
| 18 - Labyris (groupe communautaire) | 43 - Sister's (bar) |
| 19 - Le Mix (bar) | 44 - Sky Club (bar) |
| 20 - Au Cap-Pelé (restaurant) | 45 - L'Idem (bar) |
| 21 - L'Exit II (bar) | 46 - L'Audace (bar) |
| 22 - L'Exit (bar) | 47 - La Kahéna (restaurant) |
| 23 - La Librairie des femmes d'ici | 48 - Les Entretiens (café) |
| 24 - L'Essentielle (librairie) | 49 - Au Cap-Pelé (restaurant) |
| 25 - L'Anecdote (restaurant) | 50 - École Gifford (centre communautaire) |

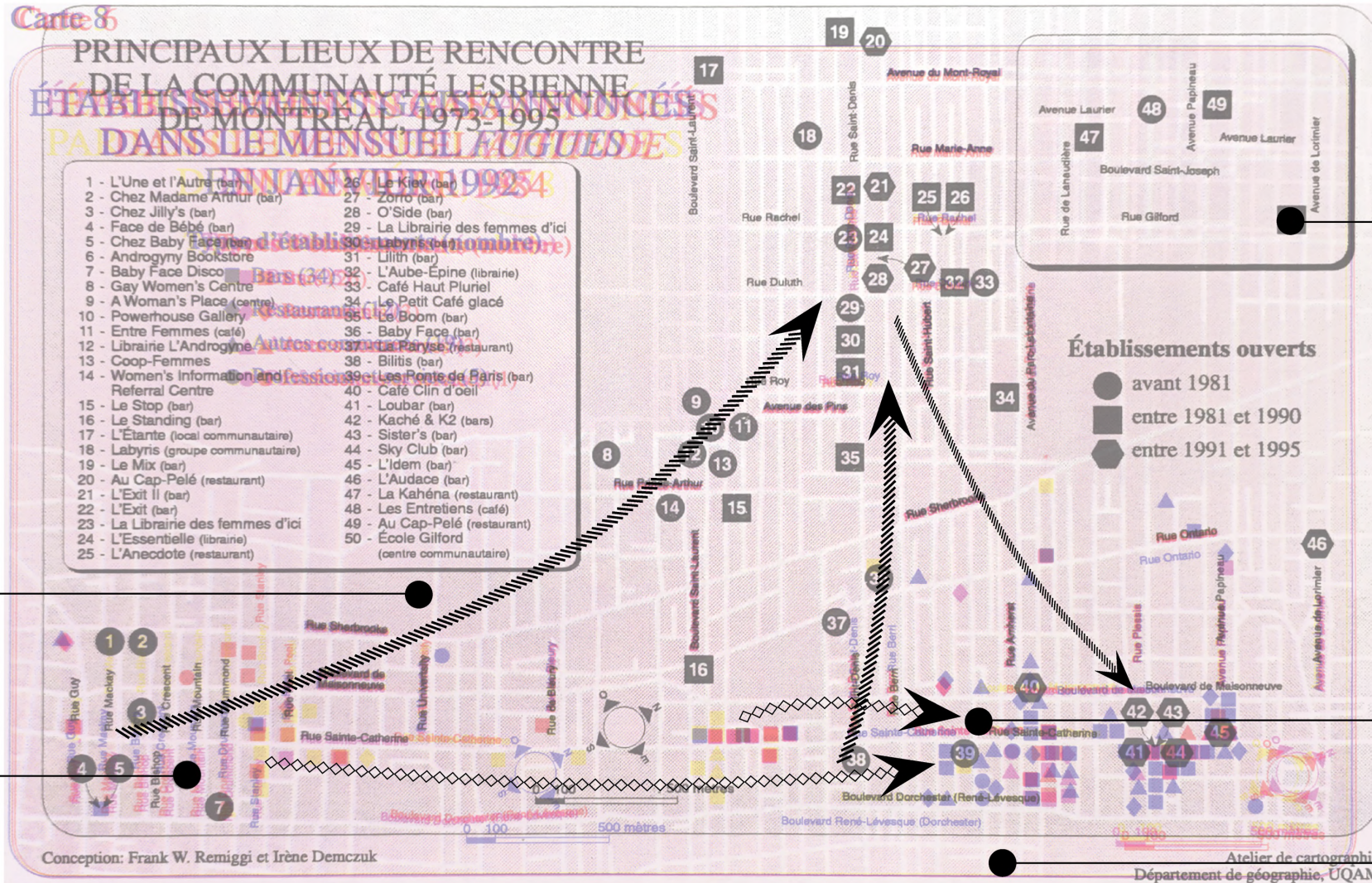
Établissements ouverts

- avant 1981
- entre 1981 et 1990
- ⬠ entre 1991 et 1995

Sherbrooke

Berri

Sortir de L'Ombre | Frank W. Remiggi et Irène Demczuk | 1998



Sortir de L'Ombre | Frank W. Remiggi et Irène Demczuk | 1998



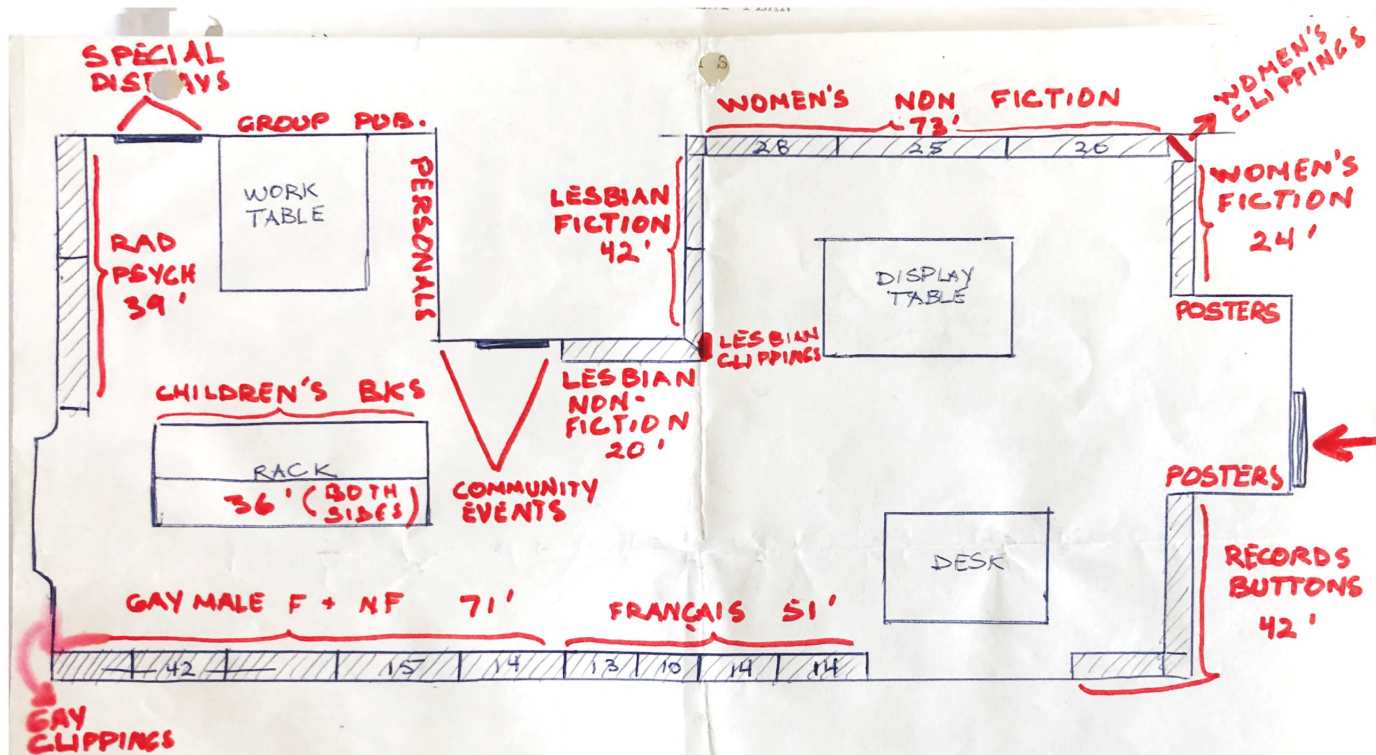
Quebec Gay Archives | Fonds Librairie L'Androgyne (AGQ-F0005)



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Quebec Gay Archives | Fonds Librairie L'Androgyne (AGQ-F0005)



- FIGURES REPRESENT TOTAL AMT OF SHELF SPACE (NUMBER OF SHELVES X LENGTH OF ")
- BOTTOM SHELVES (PERIODICALS) ARE NOT INCLUDED IN TOTAL

Quebec Gay Archives | Fonds Librairie L'Androgyne (AGQ-F0005)

"There is no queer space; There are only spaces used by queers or put to queer use."

George Chauncey,
 Privacy Could Only Be Had In Public : Gay Uses of the Streets, 1996



Frontstore at 1217 Crescent, 1979



Front Desk, 1977



Interior

NEWS FOR THE LESBIAN COMMUNITY *Avril 87*

PROJECT LAVENDER

BULLETIN du PROJET LAVANDE

Vol:1 No:5

NOUVELLES POUR LA COMMUNAUTÉ LESBIENNE

Dépôt légal à la Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec, déc. 86

le salon des tribades

présente
UNE NUIT DE MUSIQUE, DE DANSE, DE POÉSIE

présents
A NIGHT OF MUSIC, OF DANCE AND OF POETRY

le 2 mai/May the 2nd au/at 2025 Gilford

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TRAVELING - HAPPENING

Archives Lesbiennes Traces

SUR L'HISTOIRE DES LESBIENNES

OUVERTURE DES ARCHIVES DE MONT.

14 Nov. '86 au 2025 GILFORD

DE 7 à 9 h, apporter VOTRE BOISSON

♀ **Danse de Résistance** ♀

SAMEDI LE 5 MARS

♀ **À L'ÉCOLE GILFORD!!** ♀

2025 GILFORD

La CECM nous a envoyé un avis d'expulsion
Squattons les lieux lors de cette danse en signe de résistance

DJ à partir de 21 hoo.

Précédé du lancement de la revue 13

PLUSIEURS ESPACES NON-FUMEUSES

LESBO

Sept. 97 Vol. 2 No 1



info

Bulletin mensuel pour les lesbiennes
Monthly Newsletter for Lesbians

L'École Gilford, c'est reparti!

Après avoir été l'objet de plusieurs rumeurs de fermeture, l'école Gilford est encore à notre disposition pour cette année. Toutefois, les problèmes financiers sont bien réels et les responsables souhaitent faire appel à vous.

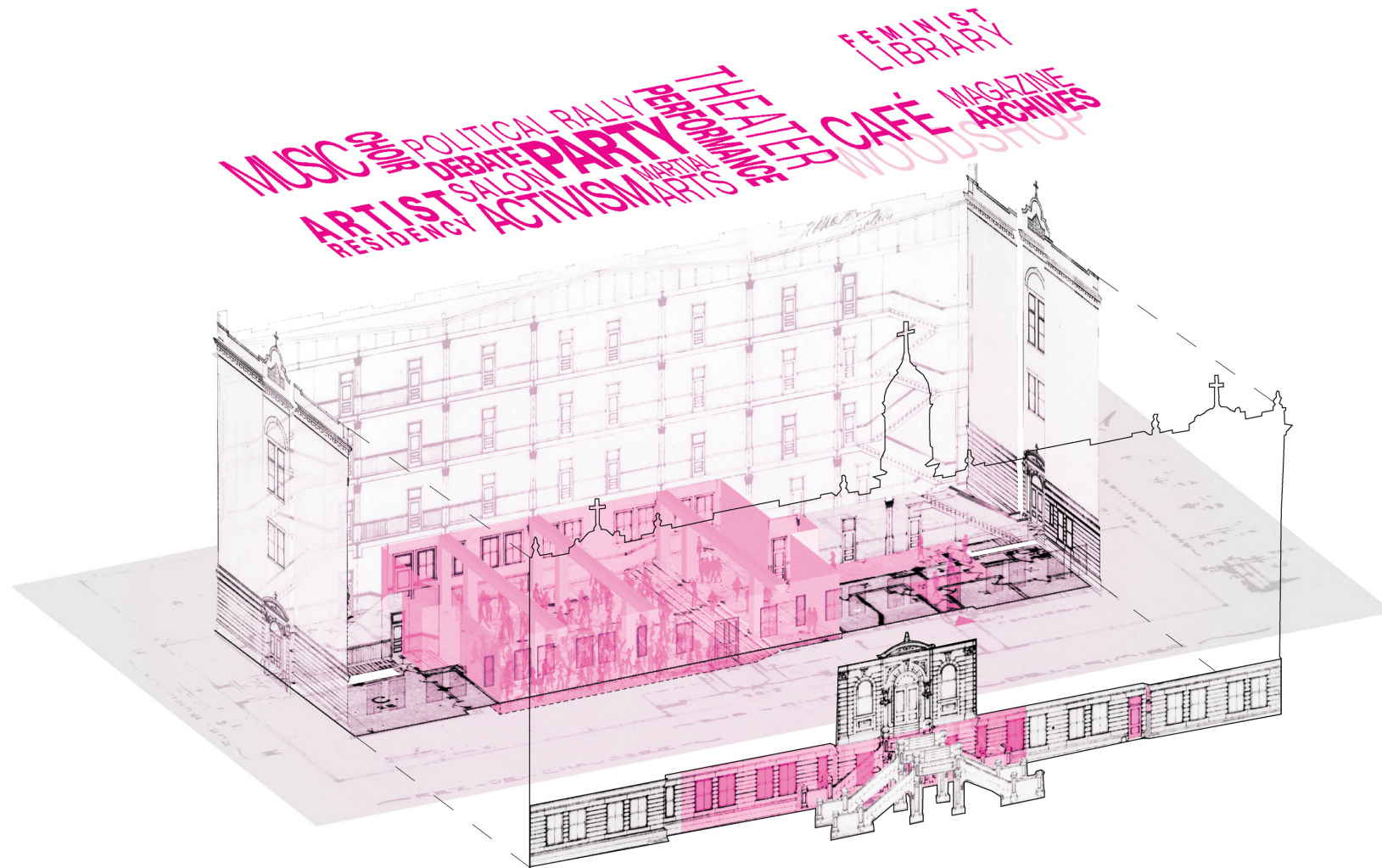
Activités

Le mercredi 4 septembre, de 18 h à 23 h, il y aura une collecte d'objets, de vêtements, de meubles, etc., pour une super vente de garage prévue pour le samedi 7 septembre, de 10 h à 22 h. Il s'agit d'un projet de financement pour l'école.

Une danse est aussi prévue pour le 5 octobre (non confirmée). Si vous êtes intéressées de vous impliquer dans l'une ou l'autre activités, rejoindre Louise-Andrée au 597-0618.

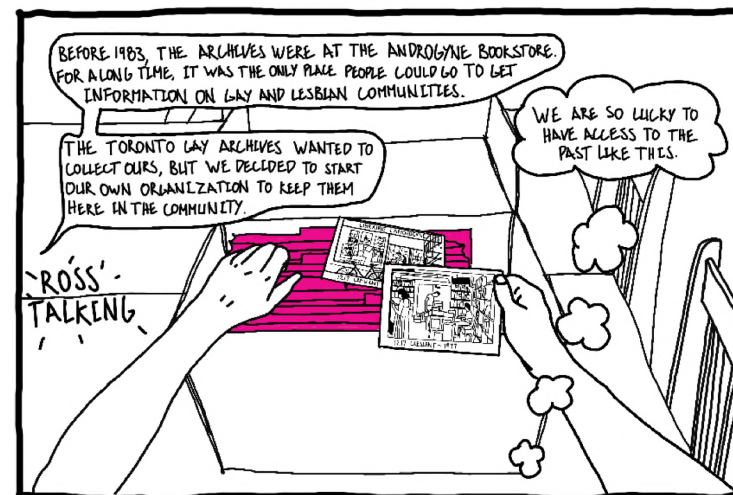


Quebec Lesbian Archives | Fonds Librairie L'Androgyne (AGQ-F0005)



“The architecture appears in the event, or the act. It shows that architecture plays a part in performativity. The architecture of the literary salon is in the move; in the actions of the social scene. Our actions shape the architecture and we, in turn, are shaped by the architecture.”

Katarina Bonnevier,
 Behind Straight Curtains: Towards a Queer Feminist
 Approach to Architecture, 2007



Night-time Design for/with Marginalized Communities

QUEERING THE NIGHT

SCREENING + WORKSHOP



Queer Space Screening

Join us for a short film screening that explores the history of LGBTQ+ night-time spaces, safety practices, and community building.

Program: *Witness* (2012)
The Lesbian Bar Project (excerpts) (2021)
Passy Palace (2019)

November 28

7 pm— 9 pm

Peel Street Cinema

Student run cinema
McGill University
3475 Peel Street
Montréal, QC, H3A 1W7

Design Workshop

Join us to brainstorm how queer nightlife can continue to thrive safely for those most vulnerable within our community.

November 29

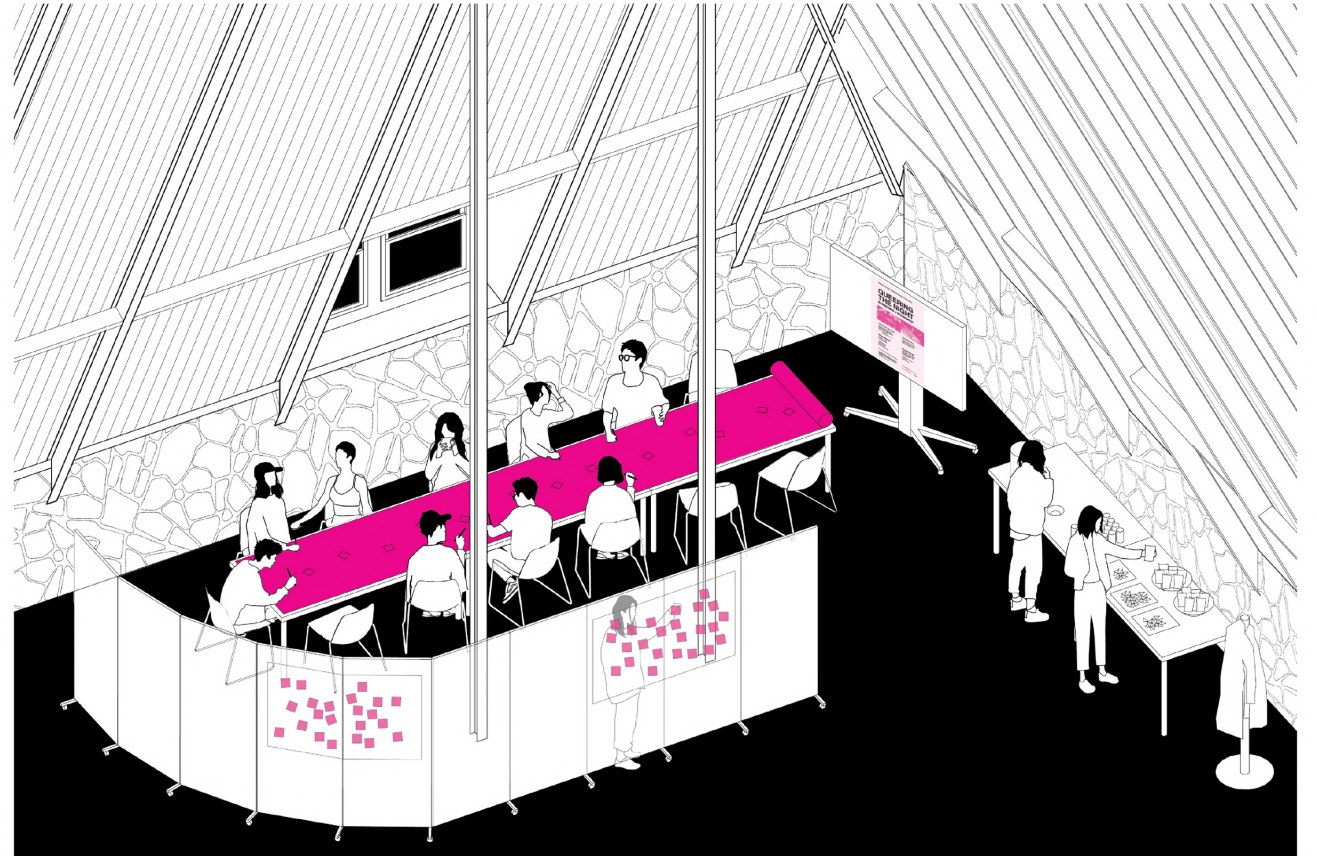
3:30 pm— 5:30 pm

#508, Macdonald Harrington Building (MDHR)

Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture
McGill University

RSVP at nighttime-design.architecture@mcgill.ca

The film screening and workshop are organized in the context of the research project 'Night-time Design for/with Marginalized Communities' funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through the partnership 'Quality of the Built Environment in Canada: Roadmaps to Equity, Social Value, and Sustainability'.
<https://www.mcgill.ca/night-time-design/>





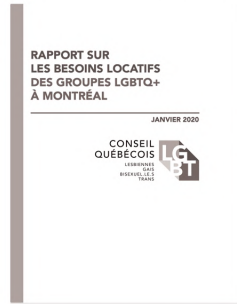
“Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing. [. . .] Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.”

José Esteban Muñoz,
Cruising Utopia : the Then and There of Queer Futurity, 2009

2075 Plessis
 City owned building in disrepair.
 LGBTQ+ organisations
 constantly displaced



LGBTQ+ Community Organisations Consultations
 Needs point to a joined centre to support multiple organisations



“No space is totally queer or completely unqueerable [...]. Queer space is imminent: queer space is space in the process of, literally, taking place, of claiming territory.”

Christopher Reed,
 Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment, 1996

Carrefour Arc-en-ciel
 Failed attempt at creating a LGBTQ+ community centre



L'Asterisk Founded
 Space that reunites LGBTQ+ youth organisations

Espace LGBTQ+ Founded
 New initiative to unite LGBTQ+ organisations under one roof



Bourbon Project
 LGBTQ+ organisation spaces in condo complex never fulfilled

Espace LGBTQ+ Purchased 929 Ste-Catherine
 At the heart of the Village, it will become the new LGBTQ+ centre



Consultations with Community Organisations
 Entremise plans resource & space sharing strategy between organisations

Architecture Concept and Plans
 Rayside Labossière starts to conceive and draft construction plans.

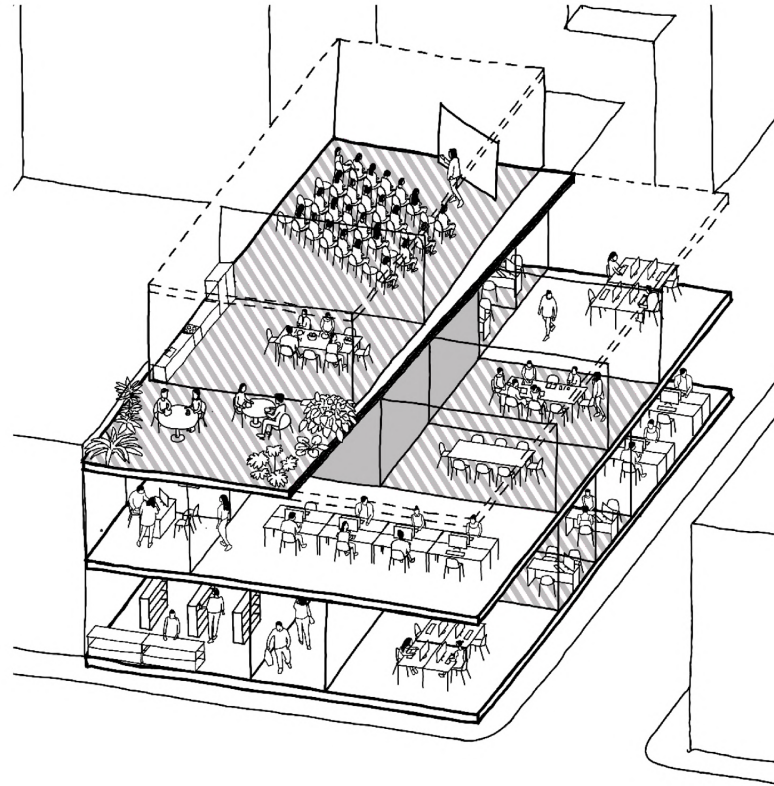
Construction & Renovations



Preliminary Program & Consultations for Financing

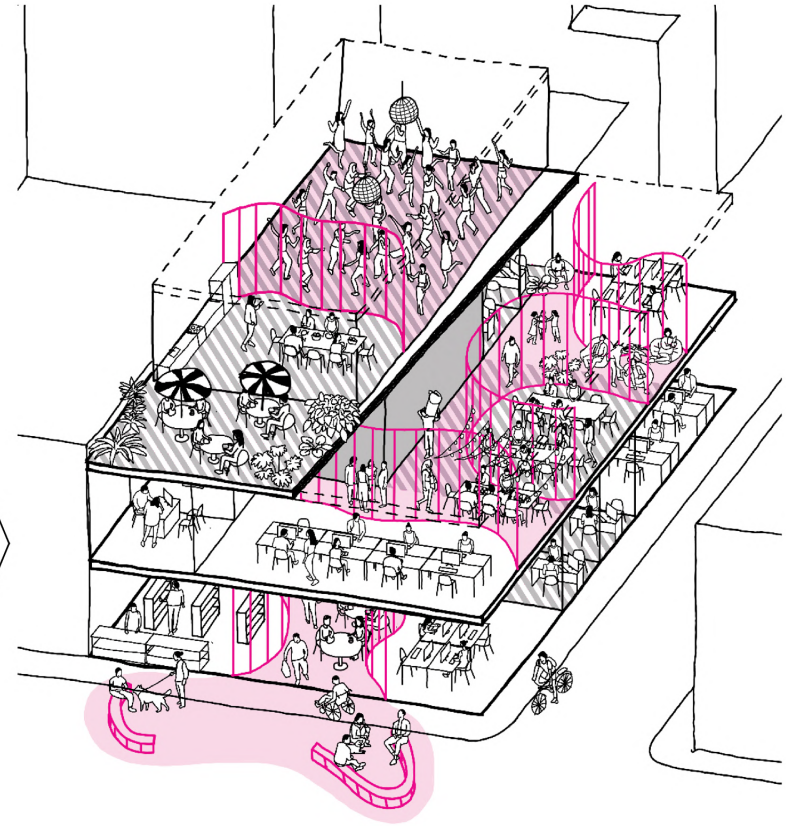
2006 2009 2013 2017 2019 2020 2023 September 2024 January 2024 April 2024 December 2025 December

Opportunity to Recommend Social Spaces in the Project



- Espace LGBTQ+ Objective**
 Sharing resources between organizations
- Coworking
 - Meeting rooms
 - Private consultation rooms
 - Admin resources
 - Facade access

- Spaces of Queer Connections Objectives**
 Sharing with broad LGBTQ+ communities
- Socialization
 - Refuge
 - Freedom & Exploration
 - Belonging
 - Third place
 - Links to community networks



Organizations Consultation
 Entremise, Myself

Purposely Built Spaces of Queer connections
 Shared program between public/organizations
 Entrance/Facade Strategies

Recommendations
 Alex
Sharing Strategy Submission
 Entremise

Prior Research

Precedent Research

Parallel Design

Consultation Preparation Meeting
 Espace LGBTQ+, Entremise,
 Rayside Labossière, Myself

Consultation Preparation

Building Resources Sharing Strategy

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

