

MLC Annual Impact Report

May 16, 2021 -

May 15, 2022

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE

Submitted by Irene Gammel, Director
Compiled by MLC

Name and Address

Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre (MLC):

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Note on location:

Because of irreparable water damage in the GER Building, the MLC was asked to move to 415 Yonge Street (YNG-1802). Much of this past year was consumed transferring our Research operations. The Gallery has not yet been relocated and we are hoping for the university to provide us with a new Gallery space.

MLC Director & Executive Team

Irene Gammel, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Arts, Director

Cintia Cristiá, PhD
Assistant Professor, Creative School, Academic Lead

Jason Wang, PhD
Executive Member, Space & Technology

Renée LeBlanc-Proctor, MA
MLC Coordinator

Jaclyn Marcus, MA, ABD
Executive Member

Anna Krentz, MA
Archive and Rare Material Lead

Warsan Amin, MA,
Communication Lead

MLC Research Associates

See our [website](https://mlc.ryerson.ca/people) for a listing of current research associates who are involved in projects.

<https://mlc.ryerson.ca/people>



A YEAR OF RESILIENCE

From the insurrection riot of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., through the humanitarian turmoil in Afghanistan, to Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion in Ukraine, to the mass disruption of Canada's convoy protest—this past year was marked by dramatic upheavals. Along with the waves of Delta and Omicron infections, the catastrophic wildfires and flooding around the world, these upheavals sorely tested the plasticity of the arts and the humanities in offering solutions. At the MLC Research Centre, our focus has been on creative action and collective dialogue, on developing new ways of communicating and generating unity. Therefore, this past year has involved not only adaptation but the exercise of radical hope in doing things differently.

One concrete result of this effort is *COVID-19 and Creative Resilience: Figuring the Everyday in a Pandemic* (edited by myself and Jason Wang and published by Routledge in March). This book brings together 23 international contributors from as far away as Kazakhstan, Germany, and Sweden, centring creative and humanities-driven approaches in the international forefront of efforts to deal with the non-medical effects of short- and long-term consequences of the pandemic. This MLC Report gives insight into our collective grappling with COVID-19 through the lens of sound, visuality, and writing, which led us to prepare a multi-year SSHRC Insight Grant on "Telling COVID-19 Stories" (\$161,800). As we commemorate the dead and the many COVID-19 losses in the months to come, the stories of individuals will be our focus, putting the contingency of the human body at the forefront of international scholarship.

I am also proud to report that in the face of disruptions, we pioneered strategies for large-scale mobilizations in digital and in-person formats—preparing us for the future. These included *Modernism Inside and Out*, a hybrid conference for 650 international registrants organized by the MLC Research Centre in partnership with the AGO, the McMichael Collection of Canadian Art, and the Canadian Women Artist History Initiative at Concordia University, a critical consideration of the sidelining of Canadian women artists in cultural history on the world stage; and my co-curating (with Heather Anderson) of *The Baroness Elsa Project*, a touring exhibition mounted at the Carleton University Art Gallery in Ontario and the Owens Art Gallery at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, featuring the work of 8 celebrated international artists representing gender, race, and trans perspectives.

And finally, much of the year was spent moving our MLC Research and Archive operation from 111 Gerrard Street to 415 Yonge Street, where the last construction push is taking place while I write these reflections to the accompaniment of the drill sounding from the main room. As we return to our in-person research, training, and archiving mission, our goal for 2022-23 is recreate our MLC Gallery, which is essential as our incubator for scholarly and creative outreach. In this we are grateful to the university, to OVPRI and to the Dean's office for supporting our effort.

With the knowledge we have gained in navigating disruption by drawing on the plasticity and empowerment of our humanities and arts strategies, I look forward to the coming year. I also look forward to commencing my role as the member on the Board of Governors and serving our university community with passion and dedication.



2021-22 SUMMARY ACHIEVEMENTS

Funding

- Infrastructure and Operations: CFI, OVPRI, Faculty of Arts
- Research Projects: SSHRC, Mitacs, UKRI-Globalink

Research Themes and Projects

- Modernism and modernity; multimodal art practices (art, fashion, literatures)
- Creative resilience in a pandemic through arts- and humanities-based approaches
- Operation Canada: Toward a theory of the war diary
- Preserving and exploring creative women's heritage
- Decolonizing the avant-garde
- Archive theory and practice with focus on disability

Research and Training Impact

- Strengthened Toronto Metropolitan University's leadership in the field of creativity and culture, health and wellbeing, and urban innovation through networking with leading universities, scholars, and stakeholders around the world.
- Produced impactful knowledge for stakeholders in Canada and internationally.
- Provided highest level training and mentorship to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and emerging scholars; helping propel recent graduates into their dream jobs.
- Innovated through mobilization activities including hybrid conferences, hybrid exhibitions, and publications using multimodal means of expression.
- Developed and updated a state-of-the-art research centre, through innovative infrastructure and setting best practices with focus on experiential learning, one-on-one mentorship, and digital innovation.

Major Disruptions

There were disruptions of our ongoing operation resulting not only from COVID-19 restrictions, but from the move to 415 Yonge Street. We spent time and resources working with Campus Facilities to adapt the MLC Research and Archive infrastructure at 415 Yonge Street (15 July – 30 November 2021) including mounting the overhead wooden grid (25 April – 5 May 2022). Despite these disruptions, our productivity has been strong.

IMPACT BY NUMBER

2 Books	27 Articles and Chapters Published	24 Conference Papers & Talks
2 Large-scale Mobilization Events	5 Webinar Series Installments	\$161,648 New SSHRC Grant Funding Secured
31 HQP Trained	11,247 Social Media Followers	16 National and International Partners

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