

**Unsitely! Colloquium**

**Leveraging Design to Improve Urban Construction Sites**

**Summary of Session 1b**

**“Worksites and Culture: Giving the Worksite an Artistic Face”**

By:

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For:

**Bureau du design, Ville de Montréal**

October 8, 2014

Art is very important for a city like Montréal, with its ever-present linguistic duality. It is an excellent language for communicating universal, international or even local messages, a sort of visual Esperanto.

When we consider the integration of art into construction sites, the challenge is primarily one of scale. In megacities like New York or Seoul, the main objective is to create interactions between people and the urban environment. For a city like Montréal, which is already on a more human scale, the desired outcome is a bit different.

The most important lesson to be drawn from the New York and Seoul experiences is the methodology used to introduce art into these urban contexts. The five major steps in transforming Times Square can be applied in different ways to Montréal. We must:

- ensure extensive collaboration between the different stakeholders during the preliminary consultation stage. Public servants and intellectuals at different levels and from different backgrounds must be able to sit down together and give credibility to a worthwhile project on a site that presents all kinds of difficulties;
- be able to overcome the barriers that the different stakeholders often erect around themselves;
- show great sensitivity concerning the project site;
- be able to maintain a convincing dialogue and know how to respond to criticism;
- be highly transparent.

Over the past 15 years, Concordia University has developed a number of buildings on sites that had been neglected for decades. Art has proved to be one of the most effective means of reconnecting these sites with the urban environment. It makes it possible to motivate and rally people and to create icons. These works of art do more than just attract our attention – they are part of the memory of the site.

Although developers proposals' are not always innovative, the efforts to work together by the stakeholder community make it possible to instill ideas that might not naturally have occurred to developers, such as integrating unexpected green spaces in the neighbourhood, introducing works of art or activities in their construction plans, or saluting the history of the site in a new building.



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