Call for Papers

Research(-)creation, Digital Creativity, and Social Transformations

Applications due for February 20, 2026, sent to mdgagnon@uqac.ca
Symposium in Montréal, QC, May 21 & 22, 2026

The CREAT Chair, in partnership with the Hexagram Network, is issuing a call for papers for a symposium focused on digital creativity and social transformations.

Symposium Theme
This symposium seeks to explore the social transformations associated with digital creativity, in a context where immersive technologies (virtual reality, augmented reality, 360° immersive installations, etc.), video games (commercial, experimental, artistic, etc.), and special effects (animation, compositing, 3D, etc.) occupy an increasingly central place in our cultural practices, imaginaries, and ways of life.

Digital technologies are often developed within commercial and industrial logics that tend to obscure the socio-technical dimensions of how they operate (Okun & Zwerman, 2021; Wood, 2024). Digital environments frequently reproduce norms that marginalize certain voices, particularly with regard to gender and cultural diversity (Kline et al., 2003; Malazita, 2024; Marshall, 2025). These issues are further exacerbated by the digitization of production tools and dissemination spaces—from language models (AI) to the algorithmic determinations of platforms—which affect both digital creation and more "traditional" creative practices (Gillespie, 2024; Lazer, 2015).

Within this context, research-creation (RC) (Bruneau & al., 2017; Paquin, 2018) provides a privileged framework for rethinking digital creativity and its social impacts. It offers a space where creative practices become modes of analysis, where works function as critical devices, and where processes themselves reveal the socio-technical dynamics shaping our digital environments.

However, RC never unfolds in isolation: it is embedded within contexts, infrastructures, communities, and ecosystems that profoundly influence its forms, methods, and effects. We therefore propose to reflect **through** creation, **on** creation, and **for** creation, by articulating practical, theoretical, and embodied forms of knowledge. This symposium is part of the Hexagram Rencontres Interdisciplinaires 2026, a biannual event that brings together approximately one hundred participants and prioritizes dialogue among a wide range of perspectives, practices, and disciplines.

The notions of social transformation and critical approaches are understood here in a broad sense, to better encourage a plurality of perspectives. In this spirit, the symposium welcomes a wide diversity of formats and approaches: traditional academic research occupies a central place alongside experimental approaches, reflections on creative projects, practice-based analyses, exploratory interventions, proposals addressing the relationship between research and creation, as well as contributions rooted in research-creation.

The symposium thus aims to bring together participants who typically operate within very different networks and events—artists, researchers, professionals, students, collectives, and organizations—in order to foster a space for cross-cutting dialogue. The goal is to bring perspectives into conversation, to share practices, and to collectively reflect on the social transformations that digital creativity and research-creation can reveal, support, or provoke.

Participants are invited to situate their proposals within one of the themes outlined below.

Theme 1—Transformative Practices, Devices, and Experiences

This theme welcomes artists and creators who wish to present their works, devices, or practices in digital creativity, as well as research-creation approaches. It emphasizes the ways in which artistic productions—whether interactive, immersive, or performative—contribute to social transformations by reconfiguring cultural practices, regimes of knowledge, sensibilities, and modes of engagement. Proposals may focus either on the presentation of a work or on the reflexive analysis of a creative process.

Examples:
- **Transformations of regimes of knowledge**: production of situated knowledge; access to intimate or otherwise invisible realities.
- **Transformations of sensibilities**: experiences that evoke hope, indignation, or care; the mobilization of new forms of attention.
- **Transformations of ways of life**: devices fostering well-being; artistic practices in therapeutic, community-based, or participatory contexts.
- **Transformations of practices**: cultural mediation; new relationships between creation and reception; redefinitions of institutional frameworks (distribution, authorship, legitimation).

Theme 2—Processes, Tools, and Technologies

This second theme focuses on the mechanisms through which research-creation transforms artistic practices and social contexts. It invites contributors to explore processes of experimentation, postures of self-reflexivity, and material and technological dimensions.

Proposals may address both methods and the material, economic, or political conditions that influence creative practices.

Examples:
- **Processes**
  - Experimentation and prototyping as ends in themselves.
  - Documentation and transmission of processes as ways of transforming modes of creation.
  - Self-reflexivity, critical perspectives, and attentiveness to social issues.
- **Materiality**
  - The role of technologies (AI, XR, immersive devices, algorithms, video games) in shaping relationships to the world.
  - Critical exposure and diversion of the ideological and normative frameworks embedded in technological tools.
  - Material conditions of production and dissemination as levers for social transformation (e.g., local hosting of servers or AI models to strengthen cultural autonomy).
  - Discoverability: strategies for making digital works visible in saturated environments; algorithmic and editorial challenges.

Theme 3—Territories, Contexts, and Collective Dynamics

This third theme welcomes contributions that analyze creative practices through their contexts, networks, and institutional dynamics. It is particularly concerned with tensions between regions and major urban centres, issues of discoverability, and the relationships between creation, health, and well-being. It invites participants to consider cultural ecosystems as spaces in which ways of creating, thinking, and acting are transformed, while taking into account social, cultural, ecological, and political dimensions. Moving beyond the study of individual works, this theme addresses infrastructures, territorial and collective dynamics, as well as the living and working conditions that shape all forms of creation.

Examples:
- Analyses of cultural contexts, including their networks, infrastructures, and organizational models.
- Culture in the regions: centralization and decentralization; circulation of works and artists; disparities between centres and peripheries.
- Discoverability: obstacles and strategies for making practices visible, particularly regional practices in environments dominated by major centres.

- Art and health: impacts of creative practices on communities; cultural initiatives in care, therapeutic, or public-health contexts.
- New modes of engagement and participation within networks of practitioners and stakeholders.
- Interdisciplinary partnerships, anchoring within local communities.
- Social transformation as a collective dynamic driven by dialogue and co-creation.
- Research-creation beyond Québec.

Proposed Contributions

We invite 250-word proposals for a variety of presentation formats, including papers, performances, demonstrations, etc. The maximum duration of each intervention must not exceed 30 minutes, including a question period, if desired.

Participants will be strongly encouraged to publish following the symposium, and mentorship and editorial support will be provided to students and early-career researchers.

Additional Information

Participation Guidelines
- 250-word proposals (excluding bibliography), submitted in Word or PDF format.
- Free participation in the symposium.
- In-person event, Montréal (Quartier des spectacles ; exact venue to be confirmed).
- Post-symposium publications strongly encouraged.
- Submissions accepted in French and English.
- Possibility of financial assistance to support travel to Montréal (please contact the organizers).

Timeline
- Proposal submission deadline: February 20, 2026
- Notification of acceptance: March 20, 2026
- Symposium dates: May 21–22, 2026

Organizing Committee & Contact
- Contact: mdgagnon@uqac.ca
- Organizers: Laureline Chiapello (NAD-UQAC) and Maxime Deslongchamps-Gagnon (NAD-UQAC / UQAM)

References

Bruneau, M., Villeneuve, A., & Burns, S. L. (2007). *Traiter de recherche création en art: entre la quête d'un territoire et la singularité des parcours*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

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Lazer, D. (2015). The rise of the social algorithm. *Science, 348*(6239), 1090–1091. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aab1422

Malazita, J. (2024). *Enacting platforms: Feminist technoscience and the Unreal Engine*. MIT Press.

Marshall, K. (2025). Equality in the animation workforce: How close are we to a globally level playing field and how can a new school of digital arts contribute to progress? *Brazilian Creative Industries Journal, 5*(1), 157–187. https://doi.org/10.25112/bcij.v5i1.3687

Okun, J. A., & Zwerman, S. (2021). *The VES handbook of visual effects: Industry standard VFX practices and procedures*. Routledge.

Paquin, L.-C. (2018). *Faire le récit de sa pratique de recherche-création*. École des médias, UQAM.

Wood, A. (2024). *Invisible digital: What animation and games tell us about software and digital culture*. Bloomsbury.