

Upcoming meetings

Project VIHSIBILITÉ Advisory
Committee Reunion
May 4th, 11am to 5pm
Room W-4210

General Assembly
June 4th, 9 :30am to 12 :30pm
Room DS-1950

Newsletter # 4

Testimonial Cultures

22/03/2012

TESTIMONIAL EXAMPLE

Two Women Come Out

Singer-songwriter **ARIANE MOFFATT** opened up publicly for the first time about her homosexuality on the television show *Tout le monde en parle* on February 26th 2012.

To read the article: [CLICK HERE](#)

To see the video: [CLICK HERE](#)

On March 14th 2012, Actor **GILLIAN ANDERSON**, who played Agent Scully in The X Files, told OUT magazine that she had once been in a lesbian relationship. The news spread in various media.

To see the original article: [CLICK HERE](#)



STUDY DAY 2012

"Testimony: Why, How, Under What Conditions ... ? "

It's official! The first study day of *Testimonial Cultures* project will take place in the fall of 2012. The purpose of this activity will be to share our experiences and questions about how testimonials are produced as social and cultural interventions. A consensus emerged out of our recent meetings that this theme would allow us to look at a range of key issues related to testimonials in a transversal way (e.g. pressures to say something and show oneself, content of "competing testimonials", dissemination strategies, types of media used, training and tips from people who have given testimonials, political challenges, benefits, negative repercussions, etc). We'll need to agree on specific objectives and the details of the program at the next General Assembly. In the meantime, various Pre-STUDY DAY activities are underway that will allow us to prepare for this dynamic event.

Pre-STUDY DAY Activities

Within each working committee, a number of activities will be taking place over the next month in relation to a variety of themes and priority issues. Here's an overview :

- ◆ **PLWHA Working Committee:** Research results from the VIHSIBILITÉ project will be shared at a reunion meeting of the VIHSIBILITÉ Advisory Committee. This meeting will allow us to develop some initial conclusions with regards to interviews conducted with 19 HIV-positive people who shared their views on giving testimonials to the media, their perceptions of the risks and consequences, and the experience of public revelation itself including its immediate and longer term impact. On May 4, 2012, from 11 am to 5 pm.
- ◆ **LGBTQI Working Committee :** Discussion activities are planned that will focus on the issues raised by the use of testimonials as intervention strategies (May) and on what people who give testimonials retain and gain from their experiences (September) – exact dates to be announced
- ◆ **Sex Workers Working Committee:** Workshops with sex workers on the use of testimonials as a personal and political strategy (in Montreal and Ottawa in June or August – exact dates to be determined)

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Drafting of the partnership agreement is now finished and we're waiting for confirmation from UQAM's *Service des partenariats et de soutien à l'innovation*. We'll then be making a tour to visit each partner so that everyone can sign the final document.

DROPBOX : A Virtual Workspace for Online Access and Collaboration

You've likely received one or more email messages asking you to share project files on DropBox (www.dropbox.com). We've set up a *Cultures du témoignage* virtual work space that will allow partners and collaborators to use DropBox to consult, download, share, archive, and participate in the development of various project documents. This can include text, photos or videos. For questions or any difficulties in accessing files on DropBox, please contact Julie Marceau or Thomas Haig.

COHDS GUIDED TOURS

Project partners and collaborators are cordially invited to join us for a guided tour of *the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling* (COHDS) at Concordia University that will be led by Associate Director Neal Santamaria. Learn more about the innovative projects and facilities at COHDS that have gained worldwide recognition!

- ◆ **WHEN ?** April 10 (Tuesday) or April 13 (Friday), 2 – 4 pm
- ◆ **WHERE?** Room LB-1042, 1400 de Maisonneuve W. (10th floor), Concordia University (Guy-Concordia metro), 514-848-2424 ext 5465 (<http://storytelling.concordia.ca>).

VIDEO COMPILATIONS : SHARE YOUR IDEAS!

Work is underway on the production of two brand new DVD compilations. We're putting together a growing list of testimonials in film and video by people living with HIV and by people with sex work experience. The list of titles identified thus far can be found on DropBox in the "Témoignages PUBLIC / Compilations DVD" folder. For the compilations, we're specifically looking for:

- ◆ excerpts from Canadian films and videos
- ◆ works either made by an HIV-positive person or that include an HIV-positive person speaking in the first person, produced between 2000 and 2012
- ◆ works either made by a person with sex work experience or that include a sex worker speaking in the first person, produced from 1980 onward

If you have favorites or know of key films and videos that you think should be included, send your suggestions to Vero Leduc: vero.leduc.x@gmail.com

ETHICAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES REGARDING TESTIMONIALS

Nouvelle pratiques sociales is a well-known journal at UQAM that is publishing a special issue on [participatory research](#). We'll be using this as an opportunity to write an article about our project, tentatively called "Mobilizing Knowledge About Testimonial Cultures: Political Challenges and Ethical Issues for Multi-Sector Interdisciplinary Research with Sexual and Gender Minorities." An outline for the article can be found on DropBox in "PUBLIC / ARTICLE pour revue NPS". You are welcome to participate in co-writing the article, or you can share your ideas, suggestions or comments by adding your own document(s) to this folder. What are the most important ethical issues and political challenges for our project? In your view, what are the key characteristics of the research we are doing on testimonial cultures?

Article submission deadline: April 15, 2012

BLOGS

Fred Chabot, who is a member of POWER, came up with the idea of drafting a list of blogs that inspire her and shared "Fred's Picks" with others in the group. Ken Monteith from COCQ-SIDA recently sent around the link to his own [blog: Talk to the Hump](#). Testimonials in blog format are quite interesting and they are interactive!!! Are there blogs written by sex workers, PLWHA or people who identify as LGBTQI that you like to read? Do you yourself write a blog? Send us the links!

MONTREAL LIFE STORIES EVENTS

Montreal Life Stories is a project at COHDS focused on the stories of Montrealers displaced by war, genocide and other human rights violations. During the month of March 2012, over 40 panels, screenings and performances will be presented in various locations across Montreal, drawing on the 500 life stories collected over five years as part of this project. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity! For the full program and more details: <http://www.lifestoriesmontreal.ca/>

PROJECT TEAM : WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Our team is growing fast! We're pleased to welcome the new people who have joined the project team UQAM. Here's an overview of who we are and what each of us is working on.



Thomas Haig, haig.thomas@uqam.ca is the research coordinator for the project and one of the co-investigators. His interests include participatory and community-based research methods and the use of testimonials in social media, and he's thrilled to be working with such a range of amazing individuals and groups.



Maryka Henry, calypsso@msn.com is doing her MA in Sociology. She is a research assistant for the project and is currently undertaking a literature review on testimonials by sexual and gender minorities. Her interests are focused on the impact of LGBTQI representations in Quebec public spaces.



Julie Châteauvert, juchateauvert@gmail.com is doing her PhD in Art Studies and Practices. Within this framework, she is interested in the articulation of art and politics. Member of various feminist collectives, her work focuses on issues related to intimacy and eroticism. As a research assistant for the project, she is helping to identify creative ideas coming out of testimonials by HIV positive women. She will also be coordinating the organization of the Study Day in the fall of 2012.



Julie Marceau, juliemarceauuqam@gmail.com is doing her MA in Sexology. She works as a research assistant for the project and is a liaison between project partners, researchers, and other collaborators. She is especially interested in how stigma serves as a tool for the social control of sexualities.



Véro Leduc, vero.leduc.x@gmail.com is doing her PhD in Communications, and is also president of Stella. She is in charge of producing the two DVD compilations on testimonials of PLWHA and sex workers. Her interests include the use of artistic media such as video to make the voices of those who are less heard in our society more audible.

THIS NEWSLETTER was prepared by Julie Marceau, Maria Nengeh Mensah et Thomas Haig.