

# A new era of Evangeline

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## Three contemporary Acadian artists shine new light in 'In the shadow of Evangeline' at Galerie d'art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen.

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In the pre-morning and early evening dusk, small puffs float above Université de Moncton's Galerie d'art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen.

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Photo: submitted

Part of Stefan St-Laurent's installation for 'In the Shadow of Evangeline,' showing with work by Maryse Arsenault and Jean-Denis Boudreau at Galerie d'art Louise et Reuben-Cohen in the University of Moncton until Oct. 30.

The new venting chimney is part of the latest iteration of the gallery's residency/exhibition program In the Shadow of Evangeline. Initiated by former director Luc Charette in 1997, the

program has been held off and on depending on funding and opportunities.

Unlike previously, this year's program expanded its parameters beyond flat, wall-mounted objects. This opened the door for installation projects from Acadian artists Maryse Arsenault, Stefan St-Laurent and Jean-Denis Boudreau.

"I was really interested In the Shadow of Evangeline as a starting point for thinking about our culture, our history, what we know and don't know and the questions that arise from that," Nisk Imbeault, director of Galerie d'art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen, says. "I didn't really understand the old perimeters, and I wanted to work with artists and let them go beyond that."

And go beyond they did - right up onto the gallery's roof.

Boudreau's chimney combines his contemporary interest in broken communication and lo-fi technology. It will only work if there's zero wind, but the chimney is designed to spurt out a Morse code SOS signal.

"The smoke signal seemed to fit, though I don't think Mi'kmaq used any smoke signals. But since we're already basing all of this on Evangeline, which is fictitious, you can kind of glamour it up how you want," Boudreau says.

Placing his work in an Acadian context is new for Boudreau.

"Maybe it's because I don't know my history. I mean I only learned about 1755 at university. I didn't learn that at school. It's never been something that's been that close, but I'm very much Acadian. It's just not a constant questioning of identity. My questioning is more present day."

Broken communication and ancestry, though, is a current through all three installations in the show. Like Boudreau, both Stefan St-Laurent and Maryse Arsenault explore the concept through the Acadian relationship with First Nation people.

St-Laurent, originally from Moncton and now living in Ottawa, collaborated with the Acadian Museum and Ned Bear for his installation, which incorporates the eight-pointed star and a quilt. Arsenault, a Moncton printmaker/painter, coincidentally also incorporated quilts and the eight-point star.

Arsenault was glad Imbeault changed the format of the project, and believes this allowed them to tap into subjects and formats outside previous examinations of Acadian art legacy. It also offered her the opportunity to learn and discuss the installation format with two artists more experienced in the medium.

"If I would have been painting it would have just been a fun thing. This was more of a challenge to find a good idea with a short period of time," she says. "With printmaking the challenge is to do the installation in a way that's exciting, and these guys had more of that vibe." s

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