



**Artists, Artificial Intelligence, and Human Rights  
April 1, 2026**

**Program overview**

If you have not registered or have not received the zoom link for the meeting, please register here:

<https://uottawa-ca.zoom.us/meeting/register/CYMsERdtQjqwH3tLHc1UEA#/registration>

If you have any difficulties connecting, please contact Caroline Facher [cfauche2@uottawa.ca](mailto:cfauche2@uottawa.ca)

**All times are EDT**

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|-------------|---|
| 12:00-12:05 | Acknowledgement of unceded Indigenous territories<br><br>Introduction to the series, <i>Arts + Human Rights in Conversation</i> , Viviana Fernandez<br><br>Introduction to this consultation, <i>Artists, Artificial Intelligence, and Human Rights</i> , Oonagh Fitzgerald |
| 12:05-12:30 | Introductions of participants (please identify yourself, give your most important affiliation/identity, and what you do relating to AI-arts-human rights in 90 seconds)   |
| 12:30-12:45 | Question 1. Transdisciplinary possibilities to understand AI  |
| 12:45-13:00 | Question 2. Identity - being cyborg   |
| 13:00-13:15 | Question 3. The arts as a way to access different forms of knowledge about AI   |
| 13:15-13:30 | Question 4. The role of artists in using AI and critiquing the AI techno crisis   |
| 13:30-13:45 | Question 5. Communications to connect the arts, human rights, AI, and community   |
| 13:45-13:55 | Question 6. Next steps  |
| 14:00       | Close of consultation.  |

## Questions for Discussion

### **Question 1. Transdisciplinary possibilities to understand AI:**

- What can we accomplish through multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary interaction about AI?
- Why is AI a human rights issue?
- What has art got to say about AI and human rights?
- What is the power of interdisciplinarity?

### **Question 2. Identity – Being cyborg:**

- Indigenous data sovereignty and collective ownership of data; using AI for Indigenous language revitalization; how AI may deepen unauthorized Indigenous cultural extraction;
- Who owns/controls my data, and my creative works? The impropriety of proprietary rights in AI and the eclipse of human creativity;
- Human rights impacts on vulnerable populations;
- Existential crisis for human rights: Posthumanism and Conscious AI;
- The traumatic intrusion of the machinic in the cultural realm.

### **Question 3. The arts as a way to access different forms of knowledge about AI:**

- How AI enables interactions with other-than-human agents, broadening perspectives on agency, ethics, and posthumanism; exploring artistic creativity and imagination beyond the human; Learning about humanity through AI experimentation;
- Material and embodied understandings and traditions of human-nature continuity and AI;
- Contributions of aesthetics; Deep fakes, truth, authenticity, and humour;
- What social, economic, and cultural conditions are necessary for human creativity to remain dignified, plural, and genuinely participatory?

### **Question 4. The role of artists in using AI and critiquing the AI techno crisis:**

- The power of artists to observe, use research-creation, express and influence;
- Pre-conditions for fair access and participation in the AI revolution;
- How art making helps us access/process/reflect/express different perspectives on AI;
- Are artists being replaced? How AI is reshaping the creative ecosystem and what this means for artistic agency, recognition of creative labour, and the right to participate in cultural life;
- AI in arts education.

### **Question 5. Communications to connect the arts, human rights, AI, and community:**

- How do we encourage informed public conversation around AI to ensure AI serves the public good and enhances our individual and collective lives?
- How can AI-human collaborations be optimized for the public good rather than for corporate/state wealth and power accretion?
- Artistic, research, and educational projects that aim to engage creatively and critically with AI;
- Sparking agency and action about AI that is accessible to everyone.

### **Question 6. Next steps:**

- What outcomes would you like to see from today's conversation?
- Would a multidisciplinary manifesto on the arts, human rights and AI be a worthwhile outcome?

## Confirmed Participants

**Chris Salter** is an artist, Professor / Director of the Immersive Arts Space at the Zurich University of the Arts and Professor Emeritus, Design + Computation Arts, Concordia University, Montreal, QC/CA



- Why is AI so much focused on intelligence when it forgets our bodies?

**Danielle Bobker** is professor of English and fellow of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University, author of *The Closet: The Eighteenth-Century Architecture of Intimacy* (Princeton 2020), and currently completing a SSHRC IDG project called "Ward v. Quebec: A Case for Literary-Critical Humour Studies" (2024-2026).



- key problems and propositions at the intersections of AI, humour, and human rights uncovered over the course of six lively conversations with an interdisciplinary working group that I facilitated this year thanks to funding and support from Concordia's Applied AI Institute.

**David Howes** is Distinguished Research Professor (Anthropology) Concordia University, Montreal, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, researching Ethnography, Law and Society, Culture and Commerce, Art and Aesthetics



- The gross improprieties of proprietary rights in AI and the eclipse of human creativity.

**David Rokeby** is a Toronto artist who works with digital media to critically explore their impact on contemporary life and is the Director of the BMO Lab for Creative Research in the Arts, Performance, Emerging Technologies, and AI and at the University of Toronto.



- How might we collectively imagine and cultivate a future where AI serves the public good and enhances our individual and collective lives? How do we encourage informed public conversation around AI that does not devolve into doom or utopia, but really addresses the complex and often contradictory relationships and feelings we have about AI and its place and impact on our lives.

**Donna Hewitt** is an Associate Professor of Music (University of New England, Australia), composer, and performer whose research and creative practice examine creativity, technology, and human-AI collaboration.



- How AI is reshaping the creative ecosystem and what this means for artistic agency, recognition of creative labour, and the right to participate in cultural life.

**Dr. Eldad Tsabary**, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Fine Arts, Concordia University. His research program, "The AI Mirror," employs a methodology of "discovery-by-synthesis"—actively building and testing novel AI platforms to reveal deeper truths about human nature.



- Creating an alternate, self-sustaining community with AI.

**Dr. Francesca Ferrando** is an award winning philosopher, author and lecturer, an adjunct Assistant Professor, NYU-Liberal Studies and co-founder of the Global Posthuman Network.



- Posthumanism and Conscious AI.

**Jane Bailey** is a Full Professor at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law where she teaches Cyberfeminism, Technoprudence and Contracts, and co-leads The Rethinking Consent Project, a 4-year SSHRC funded project focused on the inadequacy of the individual informed consent model in an era of AI.



- Art, deepfakes and gender-based violence.

**Jesse McKee** is Head of Digital Strategy at 221A, a Vancouver-based cultural infrastructure organization working at the intersection of cultural assets, AI governance, data sovereignty, and community access to creative spaces and resources. 221A envisions a pluralistic society in which all people have the means to access and make culture.



- Cultural data sovereignty as a human rights framework: how communities can assert collective ownership over their data that trains AI systems shaping their creative and cultural lives.

**Professor John Packer**, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, former Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (2014-2025) and former Neuberger-Jesin Professor of International Conflict Resolution (2018-2025).



- Connecting the arts and human rights.

**Kate Armstrong** is a Vancouver-based artist, writer, and independent curator recognized for her work at the intersections of art, technology, generative systems, and contemporary culture.



- A human-rights approach helps reframe AI and the arts by asking not only who owns creative work, but what social, economic, and cultural conditions are necessary for human creativity to remain dignified, plural, and genuinely participatory.

**Maria del Mar Garcia-Jimenez** is an artist and assistant teacher at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Seville whose work explores the intersections of art, new technologies, the entertainment industry, and photography, with a particular focus on social justice.



- Exploring artistic creativity and imagination beyond the human. How AI enables interactions with other-than-human agents, broadening perspectives on agency, ethics, and posthumanist.

**Nadia Chaney** is an artist, community arts facilitator and citizen-researcher studying the nature of time and temporality.



- Is work made by AI art? Or is it a form survey/collection? Should corporate machine learning products like Claude and ChatGPT be considered artists, and if so what are the consequences?

**Dr. Oonagh E. Fitzgerald**, Senior Fellow at HRREC and President of the International Law Association of Canada, practices transdisciplinary international law-arts research-creation (TILARC) about human rights, humanitarian, technological and the environmental crises.



- TILARC practice relating to technology crisis and being cyborg.

**Dr. Philon (Phil) Nguyen** is an opera composer who uses technology in a dialog with music composition. He holds a PhD in Information Systems Engineering at CIISE and is currently completing a PhD in Fine Arts (INDI) at Concordia University.



- The traumatic intrusion of the machinic in the human realm in early 20th century art and literature.

**Dr. Ramon Blanco-Barrera** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Drawing, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Seville, Spain, and a Fellow Member at the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa, Canada.



- Ramon is intrigued by the evolution of AI use in our time, as it reflects our own evolution. How far will it/we go?

**Richard Lubben** is an Academic Dean at College of the Sequoias with an MFA from Instituto Allende (Mexico), international teaching experience, and recognition as a Visiting Fulbright Research Chair at the University.



- AI in Art Education

**Roland Kuhn**, recently retired from the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) at the level of Principal Research Officer, from 2017-2025 led the Indigenous Languages Technology project at NRC, which worked closely with Indigenous communities on software to assist language revitalization: Canadian Indigenous languages technology project - National Research Council Canada



- Artificial intelligence and Indigenous language revitalization

**Van Armenian** is an SSHRC Doctoral Fellow and PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Research in Music at the University of Ottawa, and a member of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, working at the intersection of human rights and the arts.



- How AI may deepen Indigenous cultural extraction without authority or reciprocity, and how a Human Rights Based Approach can ground accountable artistic practice rather than technological exploitation.

**Vincent Cusson** is a PhD student in research-creation in the arts focusing on human-machine co-creation, and a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa School of Music, where they teach music technology from a critical perspective.



- Our research-creation practice

**Viviana Fernandez** is Associate Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC), University of Ottawa.



- Introduction to HRREC

## ANNEX I.

### *Multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary interaction and collaboration<sup>1</sup>*

“What is ‘Transdisciplinary’?”

Transdisciplinary work involves collaborators from multiple disciplines in a co-equal partnership, in which they collectively define and develop new opportunities (conceptual understanding, theoretical models, etc.) that move beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Transdisciplinarity has been described as a practice that transgresses and transcends disciplinary boundaries and has the most potential to respond to new and emerging human problems and opportunities.”

“Seven principles for guidance of transdisciplinary research (TDR):

1. Orientation to societal challenges
2. Grasping the complexity of problems
3. Develop knowledge and practices that promote what is perceived as common good
4. Integrating different perspectives
5. Producing systems, target, and transformation knowledge
6. Science as part of a social learning process
7. Linking abstract and case-specific knowledge.”

### *Connections between the arts and human rights<sup>2</sup>*

(apologies for a not very diverse collection – other suggestions are welcome!)

“My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” – by oral tradition attributed to Louis Riel<sup>3</sup>

“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.” – Edgar Degas

“Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it.” - Bertolt Brecht

“My imagination can picture no fairer happiness than to continue living for art.” – Clara Schumann

“Art is a wound turned into light.”- Georges Braque

“A good picture is equivalent to a good deed.” -Vincent van Gogh

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.” – Aristotle

“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way – things I had no words for.” – Georgia O’Keeffe

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<sup>1</sup> Extracted from: Purdue University, “What is ‘transdisciplinary’?” [https://en.transdisciplinarity.ch/transdisciplinarity/principles-of-transdisciplinary-research/goals-and-principles](https://www.purdue.edu/provost/innovation-hub/what-we-do/why-transdisciplinary/#:~:text=Transdisciplinary%20work%20involves%20collaborators%20from,move%20beyond%20traditional%20disciplinary%20boundaries; Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, “Networks of transdisciplinary research,” <a href=), accessed January 29 2026.

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from two online lists: Center for the Advancement of Well-being, “Famous Quotes on Art and Well-Being,” <https://wellbeing.gmu.edu/famous-quotes-on-art-and-well-being/>; Creativity at Work, “99 Inspiring Quotations on Art, Creativity, Life and Livelihood,” <https://www.creativityatwork.com/quotations-creative-spirit-in-art-and-livelihood/>, accessed January 29 2026.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mmf.mb.ca/louis-riel#:~:text=Louis%20Riel%2C%201885,will%20see%20and%20acknowledge%20it.%22>, accessed February 28 2026.

“Art is the only way to run away without leaving home.” – Twyla Tharp

"My definition of art has always been the same. It is about freedom of expression, a new way of communication. It is never about exhibiting in museums or about hanging it on the wall". - Ai Weiwei

"Art has to be involved with moral, philosophical and intellectual conversations. If you call yourself an artist, this is your responsibility". - Ai Weiwei<sup>4</sup>

***Various quotations about AI*** (accuracy not guaranteed). You may have heard more than enough quotations about the potential positive and negative impact of AI, but in case you need more, here are some links.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Connections between human rights and social activism***<sup>6</sup>

"It means a great deal to those who are oppressed to know that they are not alone. Never let anyone tell you that what you are doing is insignificant."  
Desmond Tutu

“Get up, stand up, Stand up for your rights. Get up, stand up, Don't give up the fight.”  
Bob Marley

“Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.”  
Malala Yousafzai

“We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”<sup>7</sup>  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

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<sup>4</sup> Extracted from: The Vivid Minds, [<sup>5</sup> A variety of quotations about artificial intelligence can be found at these sites:  
<https://spectrum.ieee.org/artificial-intelligence-quotes/particle-4>;  
<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/67780615-artificial-intelligence-a-guide-for-thinking-humans>;  
<https://bernardmarr.com/28-best-quotes-about-artificial-intelligence/>, accessed March 19 2026.](https://thevividminds.com/quotes/ai-weiwei-on-artists-responsibility/#:~:text=Art%20has%20to%20be%20involved,father%20and%20his%20grandfather%20did;and A-Z Quotes, https://www.azquotes.com/author/15453-Ai_Weiwei, accessed March 19 2026.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

<sup>6</sup> Extracted from: Amnesty International UK, “15 inspiring human rights quotes”,  
<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/15-inspiring-human-rights-quotes>, accessed January 29 2026.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution”. Speech given at the National Cathedral, March 31st, 1968: <https://blog.library.si.edu/blog/2015/01/19/the-arc-of-the-moral-universe/>, accessed March 27 2026.