

## [ arts & culture ]

### SELECTED IMAGES AND COMMENTARY FROM ARTACT QC

*HTTP://ARTACTQC.COM*

In this issue of *Radical Criminology*, we are reprinting a small selection of digital paintings (created using Photoshop and a pen tablet) that were created over 2012-2013 by an anonymous artist(s) operating as “Artact QC” around the height of the student strikes and at a high point of street mobilizations in Quebec. [Permission from their homepage.]

*Production Editor’s note:* We apologize for some translation errors from the (mostly) original French commentaries and can only hope that we’ve preserved some the sarcasm and wit of the original commentaries, which were written in the heat of a very specific historical moment. Further, we apologize for the grey-scale reproductions of very colourful art. If you are viewing this in our print version, please, you really must go check this feature out in colour online at:

**<http://radicalcriminology.org/issue6>**

## On Our Cover: “Priorities” | June 2, 2012.



[ Riot police clash with student demonstrators. The police act in front of--as if defending?--two billboards symbolic of Montreal capital: one depicting a large comedy festival and the other featuring a scantily clad woman watching a race car at the Grand Prix. ]

**Commentary**<sup>1</sup>: Jean Charest, Quebec’s current Prime Minister, said: “Those who were planning to disrupt the Grand Prix, they should rather abstain, out of respect for Quebecers.”

Really? Really? Therefore sit back and allow the police to shoot rubber bullets into a crowd of demonstrators, allow them to throw an incredible amount of CS gas (which may under certain

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<sup>1</sup> This comment came around the time of the public discussion about the Grand Prix held during the student strikes: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012\\_Canadian\\_Grand\\_Prix#Threats\\_from\\_student\\_protest\\_groups](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Canadian_Grand_Prix#Threats_from_student_protest_groups)

conditions cause lung necrosis and second-degree burns) at the crowd, that's all very respectful of Quebecers.

But to allow the demonstrations to interfere with the Grand Prix of Montreal, that highly intellectual "activity" where you can enjoy the incredible opportunity to pay a large sum to be closed in near a circuit where multi-millionaires can break all the traffic laws during an afternoon, no, that is unacceptable. To others who would like to, it is not clear why, enjoy some quiet in one of the few parks of the island of Montreal, well, a solid fuck you very much, because it's a time to hear the wonderful roar of the engines and the subtle smell of wasted gasoline. And if you are not yet total insulted, the multi-millionaires who will arrive first after doing several times around the circle will then sprinkle around lots of expensive champagne jokingly. Hey, FUCK YOU, the poor!

We always ask the same segment of the population to be silent, for the good of the economy, while you shave the boreal [forest] to the root, while quietly privatising the health system, while selling all at discount for the cost of exploitation where the protection of the environment is left to the discretion of foreign companies. And the list is long.

At some point, we can wonder about the psychological integrity of the "silent majority" who not only supports this type of Government by its inaction, but that even worse I'm afraid, is preparing to re-elect him, because his summer of perpetual festivities might be disturbed by the clamor of a social consciousness that takes off.

## “The System” | June 30, 2012.



[Two monstrosities toast with champagne glasses over a barrel of oil and in front of a Quebec flag.]

**Commentary:** A judge has sentenced a young protester to 7 months of prison without parole; the individual has been described as part of a group that would have terrorized downtown Toronto during the G20 summit

in 2010 (think of poor downtown Toronto and especially the poor, poor windows!)<sup>2</sup> Another judge, his eminent splendor François Rolland<sup>3</sup> (“*Birdie*” Frank to his buddies) has determined that an in-depth debate was necessary before weighing the suspension of law 12 (stemming from Special Law 78).<sup>4</sup> Don’t you all feel like “*Big Shots*,” discussing about indentures and terminology like that? Personally, I am so thrilled to know that my life is well regulated by writings that I have never really had the time to read, but have been ruled as valid by tanned golfers with necromancer robes and magical hammers. I am 200% convinced that the judge, immediately after announcing his verdict, headed straight-away towards another room to quickly examine and debate the legality of this law.

During the student strike some students challenged the decisions of their General Assemblies by asking the courts for temporary injunctions forcing their professors to teach them even if they would be alone in the classroom. By opposition to their counterparts who wore the red square as a symbol of the strike (from the saying “squarely in the red” in reference to being heavily indebted), the

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<sup>2</sup> 1- <http://www.sabotagemedia.anarkhia.org/2012/06/g20-in-saint-gerome-quebec-a-comrade-is-sentenced-to-7%C2%A0months-in-prison/>)

<sup>3</sup> François Rolland is the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec. ([http://www.tribunaux.qc.ca/mjq\\_en/c-superieure/bienvenue.html](http://www.tribunaux.qc.ca/mjq_en/c-superieure/bienvenue.html))

<sup>4</sup> English: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-court-rejects-bill-78-injunction-request-1.1279630>

injunctions students adopted the green square as their emblem and created a group called *Socially Responsible Student Movement of Québec*, a faction against the strike, for the tuition hike, and closely related to the ruling government of Jean Charest (the group was set up by *Young Liberals*). Even if not numerous, the “greens” ended up hindering the justice system with all their injunctions demands.

Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec François Rolland, eventually decided that all student injunctions demands would go through him and he approved every single one of them. Hence, the conflict was not merely political anymore but became judicial as well. Confronted with the fact that his injunctions were not respected by the red students (they blocked the doors of their schools or disturbed classes), Chief Judge Rolland added the threat of harsh penalties to his injunctions (prison up to a year, and fine up to 50 000\$ for anyone who would prevent green students to attend classes). He also ordered involved colleges to use police forces as needed, as well as called upon the Attorney General of Quebec (Jean-Marc Fournier) to enforce the law and make sure that the rights of the green students would be respected.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there were “muscled interventions”, as mainstream media calls it, where police tried by force to break the red students staking lines, for instance at College de Rosemont on

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<sup>5</sup> <http://tvanouvelles.ca/lcn/infos/regional/montreal/archives/2012/05/20120511-072058.html>

May 14 2012<sup>6</sup> and College Lionel-Groulx on May 15th 2012. In this last case, the red students had an additional opponent, a Conservative senator, Claude Carignan, who personally helped the green students obtain their injunctions (two of his children being green students at this college). On May 15th then, the SQ (*Sûreté du Québec*), our provincial police riot squad, showed up in Sainte-Thérèse, a small city north of Montreal, with the mission of liberating a path for those who have been identified by many, as scabs. To be successful, the SQ would have to confront concerned parents who were present forming a line of their own, a group of professors opposed to the hike and the red students who stood by the doors.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Rosemont College May 14th 2012: students have been pepper sprayed, hit with batons and one student suffered a head injury.

<sup>7</sup> SQ at Lionel-Groulx College May 15th 2012 ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_BGel1ltZ8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_BGel1ltZ8)) Also that day, a bus heading towards Cegep Lionel-Groulx (from Montreal) was intercepted by the SQ and the 18 people inside were illegally detained under the Canadian Criminal Code Article 31. For a critique of police use (or misuse) of Article 31 (which was also applied in Victoriaville and at the Formula One event in Montreal), see: English:

(<http://www.quebecprotest.com/post/26562409433/by-order-of-article-31-i-am-placing-you-under-arrest>); for the arrest itself, see: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TQy9FKKVaQ>); for criticism by retired police officer René Forget of this illegal detention as well as other police behavior, see:

Besides the fact that it is ridiculous to give volleyball, theatre, or any kind of course that requires debates between students to a unique individual, the granted injunctions raised the question of the legitimacy of Students General Assemblies as well as the right of this portion of the population to vote a strike. Very quickly in the mainstream media there was a campaign to call the strike a *boycott* instead, proponents claiming that the notion of strike doesn't apply to students under the

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(<http://www.quebecprotest.com/post/23769940349/open-letter-to-police-officers-sent-from-a-retired>)

On May 31st, a collective of professors from Cegep Lionel-Groulx, co-signed an open letter in the newspaper *Le Devoir*. This letter, exposing their side of the story, retraces the events that led to the violence of May 15th, and compares the role played by the direction of the Cegep to the one of the "executive agent manipulated by authority" in the Stanley Milgram experiment. English:

(<http://www.quebecprotest.com/post/24470574512/the-violence-at-lionel-groulx-our-side-of-the-story>); Original in french: (<http://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/351265/violence-a-lionel-groulx-voici-notre-version>). Following the publication of this letter, the direction of Cegep Lionel-Groulx imposed disciplinary measures on the eleven signatory professors who were accused of displaying a lack of loyalty to their institution. Condemning this attack on free speech, a petition is asking for the withdrawal of the disciplinary measures:

([http://www.avaaz.org/fr/petition/Levee\\_dune\\_mesure\\_disciplinaire\\_contre\\_11\\_enseignantes\\_et\\_enseignants\\_du\\_College\\_LionelGroulx/?fiUFRab&pv=1](http://www.avaaz.org/fr/petition/Levee_dune_mesure_disciplinaire_contre_11_enseignantes_et_enseignants_du_College_LionelGroulx/?fiUFRab&pv=1))

law.<sup>8</sup> Clearly a tactic to discredit the student movement and rip them from any kind of leverage.

On another note, as referred in the text above, Chief Judge Rolland didn't seem uneasy to reject an emergency injunction that was requested, this time, by the major student organizations, in collaboration with trade unions and others, against the Special Law 78.<sup>9</sup> The judge is following in the footsteps of the *Quebec Council of Employers* and *The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal*, who have given their support to Bill 78, in tacitly defending the controversial law instead of rallying behind advocates of constitutional and human rights.

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<sup>8</sup> For the opposite position, I suggest: *The student strike is not a simple boycott: history and perspectives* (<http://ajpquebec.org/?p=167>).

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill\\_78](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_78)

## “Spécisme” (“Speciesism”) | June 10, 2012.



A row of pigs with batons blocks entry for two (protesting) young people visibly wearing red squares pinned to their clothes, while the guards part to allow entry to the club district to two other well-heeled patrons.

**Commentary:** Last night I was watching the transmission CUTV (fortunately they exist as I was getting tired of hearing LCN weep over the fate of windshields of police cars). You could see the police restrict access to Crescent Street, ever using their excellent judgment. So we could see some people could enter smoothly, as if they were invisible to our proud peace officers. In just a quick look, you could tell that they let go by a certain physical type (no chance to the bearded with long hair, the exceptional big open brothel that is Crescent Street does not want you), but an in-

cident caught my attention. Two young women were denied the right of way, apparently quite normal. But one of them starts to warm up and scolded the security guard with a delightful verve. And that's when I understood the trick that the gatekeepers use to detect the Communist villain who believed they could deceive their vigilance by not wearing the red square (which makes political profiling work much easier, admittedly): the activists are unable to feign the blank and glassy eyes of passersby who themselves are able to ignore a bloody social crisis in order to go have a drink to the health of billionaires who refuse to pay the bill.

This observation was, in my humble opinion, confirmed when I witnessed a short clip that showed three individuals wearing the red square handcuffed to hurry down the sidewalk, flanked by some showy policemen, and yet these people were ignored by the masses who wandered along safely, protected as they were from this threat embodied by these various "despicable people" with their slogans that invite to see the world from a perspective that is not necessarily to the advantage of established power.

Imagine a world where we should all actually do our “fair share,”<sup>10</sup> not paying, but contributing something valid.

## Le Drame (“The Drama”) | June 11, 2012.



[ A bureaucrat holds up a piece of the broken glass window of an investment corporation. While other suits and the media focus is clearly on the broken window, in the background riot police are bludgeoning student strikers with truncheons and making arrests.]

**Commentary:** “48th night demonstration: broken windows and forceful dispersion.” Thus

<sup>10</sup> The expression “to do its fair share” (*faire sa juste part* in French) is the motto used by media in Quebec to sell the concept known, in Europe and elsewhere, as “austerity measures.” One might note the manipulative quality of this slogan though, implying that nothing unreasonable is asked from the people: far from taking fraudulently from them, austerity policies are simply a contribution portrayed as “equitable”. The focus is therefore diverted from the definition of “fair” to the questioning of the integrity of those who would challenge such a virtuous maxim. [Translator’s note: This footnote explanation of the “fair share” phrase was the artist’s comment provided, in English, on another piece, “Capital” <http://artactqc.com/?p=636> ]

the Press describes the event last night. Further, it was reported that the windows were broken at the *Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec*,<sup>11</sup> where was gathered all the economic upper crust of the province, along with the Governor of the Bank of Canada and the President of the Bank of France. It seems there was a reception inside, but the article does not say what exactly was being celebrated. Anyway, no care about that, what we want to know is how many windows were shattered by the anarcho-communists. Think of the windows, the damn WINDOWS!

The press article also teaches us that a window was broken at the headquarters of the National Bank (heartless band!) And harm was committed on innocent patrol cars and other vehicles.

But here I have a little on my hunger, because the title spoke of forceful dispersion; usually when our extraordinary media uses the euphemism “muscular,” it means that an ambulance left with someone who has received too much love from the brave policemen. And the article does not really mention what happened to the protesters. Ah well, I guess this is incidental compared to the incredible expense we will assume the poor banks have to undertake to replace the windows. Such trouble, but we know who we really have to blame when we will pass on the bill as arbitrary increase in user fees.

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<sup>11</sup> CDPQ is a large pension plan investment and insurance company.

“Dêmokratía” | September 30, 2012.



[ A defiant student demonstrator gives the finger to on-coming riot police threatening baton-beatings. ]

**Commentary:** Well, it's over!? We can go back to our activities and let politicians run our lives? Was it something that not everyone wanted? Because Christmas is coming and you need to

get there early if you want to enjoy the best discounts. Not to mention that the fall timing of succulent Quebec television should begin shortly, “Occupation Double Académie” and “Cooking with Trucmuche.”

Prosperity, in the capitalist system, always comes at the cost of a certain violence outside the area of abundance. This violence must be, as far as possible, on hidden recipients that could, you never know, develop a humanitarian conscience that would drive them to confront the binding system to reorient a certain share of violence usually reserved for “other” in order to eliminate any threat to its survival.

This system, it is us, our laziness, our materialistic desires. We are always looking for the easy solution, and what could be easier than the simple act of scribbling a piece of paper before placing it in a box. Here, the citizen’s duty has been accomplished, say 10 “Hail Mary” and you will be absolved of any responsibility for the next 4 years.

Tomorrow, we exchange the chairs. Handshakes are complicit dinners in the capital too. A smell of rancid ties floats in the air. A suit going on, another will replace fear not.

## “L’Embarras du Choix” (“Spoiled for Choice”) | November 21, 2012.



[After speaking about how the awful the choices in the election were, especially to the poor..]

**Commentary:** ...That sigh of ease in the journalistic sewer, we will be able to return to focus on the erosion of the collective intellect by selling the notion that it will be much better for everyone if we privatize the health system ... We can just afford it, we'd better do as the States, as the American case. It'll just be beneficial to the health insurance department Powercorp, worse for you investors, put your money on it, there is a lot of money to make the denial of human dignity these days.

In my view, democracy has failed because of the human factor, as all political philosophies. It depended too much on the corporate media to inform enough to participate in the process, so that the vote be based on relevant and critical thinking. But it was not counting concentration corrupt media that guides this reflection to the interests of a ruling class. And yet, as with hypnosis, it only works with participants who are willing.

**“Le Sommet de l’Éducation” (“The Education Summit”) | February 10, 2013.**

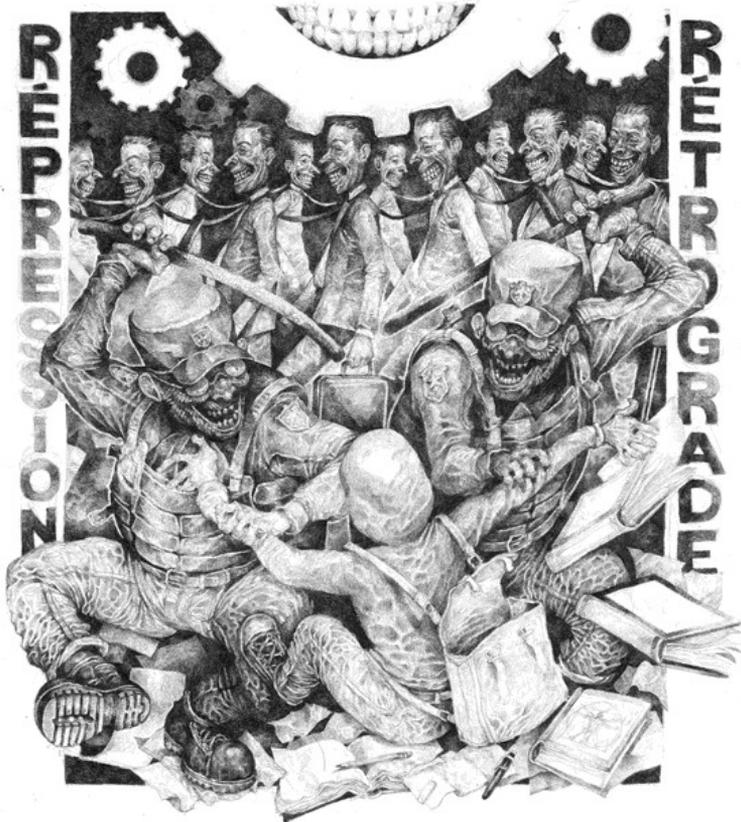


[ In an airy, colourful meeting room filled with skeletons in suits, a couple of students point to a red square placed on the conference table.]

**Commentary:** Is it that you tremble with excitement in anticipation of the education summit, trembling with impatience and salivating at the prospect of many in-depth debates, which will undoubtedly take place between intelligent people who have a vision for the future—and

the rectors accompanied by their supporters of the government and employers? Finally fall silent the evil spirits who said that in Quebec, the elections it was pile-on to determine the mascot who would come stay the course towards the beautiful neo-Liberal society that have planned for us our benevolent masters of finance, with the option to vote for the qsl for those who have difficulty reading the instruction manual. [...]

**“Répression Rétrograde” (“Retrograde Repression”) | February 17, 2013.**



**Commentary:** I watched the documentary “DÉRIVES”<sup>12</sup> this week. What I found more repulsive wasn’t the behaviour of the police, which I considered quite normal in their role as agent of repression (we don’t dress up in killer robot gear to go chat with a crowd disarmed); Neither was it the poisonous rhetoric of the chroniclers disguised as journalists for the occasion, this too was part of a logic of social division which should surprise no one except the most naive and/or stupid of us. No, what shocked me, it was the testimony of women who helped evacuate one seriously injured.

In front of the indifference of “peace officers”, these women carried him off, to avoid being trampled, in a residential street on private land. And here, they tell us that people were out on their balconies screaming at them to leave, that the demonstrators in rout had no business here. Ah, the beautiful example of depth of soul of these good people that teem in Quebec, these people who, instead of stopping to inquire about the state of health of the victim, are worried about their beautiful lawn decorations. City boy, you’re guaranteed a good future well prosperous. You’ve a level of humanity enough to be functional, but not high enough to make a difference. It’s nice to see that bloom in the spring, the trees in blossom, so well it serves your children. And since most of the mass media are supporting this individualistic approach, we don’t have to feel even the little shame usually relevant to such a cowardly act; after all, we pay our taxes, we consume, we close our mouth,

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<sup>12</sup> By 99% Media: <https://youtu.be/9iZdAdczrGk>

why do we have to have more to worry about who's next, especially that he was probably looking for it, they are all like that the "artistic Christs of cheapskate guitars and red squares." You're my Adonis, I can't even say I hate you. I don't even despise you either. It just gives me a profound discouragement, to know that you and your clones probably form the majority of the public in the province. Makes me well aware that I'm part of a minority, an aberration in this well oiled system. But it's not my fault, I feel it viscerally, when I see these images of brutality and of (from my point of view completely stupid) injustice, I have a surge of adrenaline and a blind rage that burns in my belly. I know I'll require a few Prozac pills in order to find it quite awesome your world.

“Chatons de Saule” (“PussyWillows,”  
February 17, 2013)



[ Two young people carrying black flags—one with a red bandana, the other’s black—hold hands and stand defiantly against a sea of riot police.]

**Commentary:** I took a quick pass over a Jean-Jacques Samson column, one of the great chroniclers of the fabulous *Journal de Montréal*, the newspaper which one reads while snacking on a nice plate of junk food (with the advantage

of being able to wipe our shiny fat fingers without fear of losing the thread of the narrative). It put forward an intriguing good title: “Parasites of the ASSE.”<sup>13</sup> [...]

It reminded me of reading in an American alternative newspaper an article about what the author called an eliminationist speech (the belief that a political opponent would be the equivalent of a cancer that should be eradicated). Whenever I read an article which generalizes the “red square,” I think that it is not so far from that. Rarely would one use the term “parasite” to refer to a valid interlocutor. In fact, a parasite is something that one has no remorse to crush, to kill, to eradicate under a big shiny riot cop boot. Ah, it was something last year to see the media treatment of the events; It was still streamlining police brutality (poor sprouts, they were insulting, they were tired at some point to be there like idiots every night without being able to romp on something), then they invited retired police officers to give another point of view when the images were too difficult to justify. Even better, it spoke simply.

In the end, there were elections and democracy has survived narrowly, but this latent hatred of those who think differently remains. But you, who is delighted to see a hairy student to be abuse by a group of police officers: if one day your child, your daughter, say, was found in one of these events, because she has friends, because she is young, because she has a heart still beating while yours is dried by years; and if your daughter was wounded in the head, if she

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<sup>13</sup> Striking students union.

lost an eye, if a police officer had a little fiddling of breasts while arresting her; and if you were told by way of explanation that you had only to better educate him, that she didn't have to be there, if there is nothing wrong, if it only happens to us, it's nothing. Will you be among those who will add to the reproaches, or will you come to share my anger?

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Please visit <http://artactqc.com> to see these pieces and many more in vivid, searing colour. (For example, once you take a peek at their rendition of the Queen getting off her toilet, found @ <http://artactqc.com/?p=1171>, you'll know you cannot un-see this artwork.) Or visit: <http://facebook.com/ArtactQc2.0>