



MLC ANNUAL REPORT



NAME AND ADDRESS

Modern Literature and Culture Research Center (MLC)
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MLC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND TEAM

Irene Gammel, PhD, Executive Director
Cintia Cristiá, PhD, Academic Lead
Cigdem A. MacInnis, MFA, MLC Coordinator
Jaclyn Marcus, MA, PhD, Executive Member
Jason Wang, PhD, Executive Member, Space & Technology
Warsan Amin, MA, Communication Consultant
Anna Krentz, MA, Archive and Rare Material Consultant

MLC RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

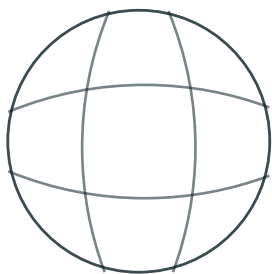
See our website for a listing of research associates.

MLC INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD (SEE PAGE 34)

Silmy Abdullah, J.D., Writer and Lawyer, Toronto
Jonathan P. Eburne, PhD, Professor, Pennsylvania State University
Tsitsi Ella Jaji, PhD, English Department, Duke University
Sarah Milroy, C.M., Chief Curator, McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Joseph Plaster, PhD, Public Humanities, Johns Hopkins University
Victoria Rosner, PhD, Professor and Dean, Gallatin School at New York University

DISRUPTION AND NOTE ON LOCATION:

Because of mold damage in the GER Building, the MLC was asked to move to 415 Yonge Street (YNG-1802) in 2021-2022, though our MLC Gallery has not yet been relocated and we are hoping for the university to provide us with a new Gallery space.



LIFE WRITING IN A SHIFTING WORLD

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



Last summer, during my Obama Fellowship in Germany, I met with colleagues at the universities of Mainz, Germersheim, and Frankfurt. The conversations were frank—about budget cuts, the aftershocks of COVID-19, and the rise of populism. What stood out most, though, was a shared conviction: literary and cultural scholarship matters now more than ever. It offers ways to think critically and creatively, and to remain attentive to lived experience.

That conviction has shaped my work, both during the fellowship and at the Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre (MLC), where **life writing** is central to our mission. Our long-term **SSHRC project, “Telling COVID-19 Stories,”** uses **ethical AI** to examine how people narrate upheaval—not just as crisis, but as a series of creative and daily recalibrations. Life writing stretches language to meet new realities.

My team’s collaborations have included **Threads of History**, a proof-of-concept exhibition of 20 rare World War II quilts at Toronto City Hall, revealing how textiles become witnesses—piecing together overlooked histories of the war.

We have also launched a new partnership with the **International Hemingway Society**, culminating in a successful bid to **host the International Hemingway Conference in Toronto in 2026**, bringing over 250 registered visitors to revisit the author and the city’s literary past.

Research at the Centre has flourished with **23 papers—11 peer-reviewed—and two academic books** now accepted for publication.

We launched a **new internship program** and trained **62 students**, our highest number of HQP yet—some featured on this cover. Their reflections speak about outcomes but also about the value of being part of an intellectually lively community.

In courses like “How to Be a Woman During the Trump Era,” and “Canadian Literatures,” students were able to engage directly with 29 MLC-supported local and global guest speakers to explore personal and political narratives across North America. Topics ranged from the #MeToo movement to layered questions of injustice, refusal, and repair. The conversations were pointed, civil, and necessary.

I hope you’ll enjoy reading this annual report, which highlights the many ways the MLC actively forges strong research partnerships and deeper thinking about memory—literary and cultural, anchored in personal stories. In a climate of rising populism, that work is **more important than ever**.

We are deeply grateful to our partners, donors, and sponsors including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Offices of the Dean of Arts, the Provost and Vice-President Academic, Vice President Research and Innovation, and Toronto Metropolitan University.

IRENE GAMMEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

RESEARCH FOCI

01

LIFE WRITING AND
COVID-19

02

STORYTELLING, CRISIS,
AND UPHEAVAL

03

ARCHIVES AND
CULTURAL HERITAGE

RESEARCH IMPACT

The Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre advances the university's international reputation through original research, global collaboration, and public engagement. Our SSHRC-funded Telling COVID-19 Stories project generated 150 narratives for an interactive database, capturing lived pandemic experience through ethical AI and life writing. A successful bid secured Toronto and TMU as host of the 2026 International Hemingway Conference, which will draw hundreds of scholars and highlight Hemingway's ties to the Toronto Star. Cross-border collaborations developed through the Obama Fellowship in Germany. Our Threads of History exhibition at Toronto City Hall drew 150+ visitors and launched a new partnership with municipal heritage services. In total, the team secured over \$165,000 in research funding—strengthening the university's leadership in culturally responsive, socially engaged scholarship.

TRAINING IMPACT

The MLC designed, funded, and delivered targeted training for 62 trainees—many with little prior experience—that developed advanced skills in cultural research methods, ethical AI, and life writing. This training went beyond skill-building to foster leadership, shaping a new generation prepared to innovate and contribute meaningfully in their fields. Our internship program empowered undergraduate and graduate students to produce original research and creative work. MLC-supported courses sparked international dialogue and facilitated both critical and industry-focused knowledge exchange. By hosting 29 international scholars—including Pulitzer Prize winner Carlos Lozada and renowned life writing scholar Leigh Gilmore—we expanded the reach and influence of our training culture. These accomplishments reflect the MLC's deep commitment to cultivating talent, advancing knowledge, and generating global impact.

01

MAJOR CONFERENCE
BID SECURED —
HEMINGWAY 2026

02

BOOKS ACCEPTED
FOR PUBLICATION

23

ARTICLES AND
CHAPTERS PUBLISHED
IN TOP-TIER VENUES

29

INTERNATIONAL GUEST
SPEAKERS HOSTED

62

HIGHLY QUALIFIED
PERSONNEL TRAINED

\$165,000

RESEARCH GRANT
FUNDING SECURED

15

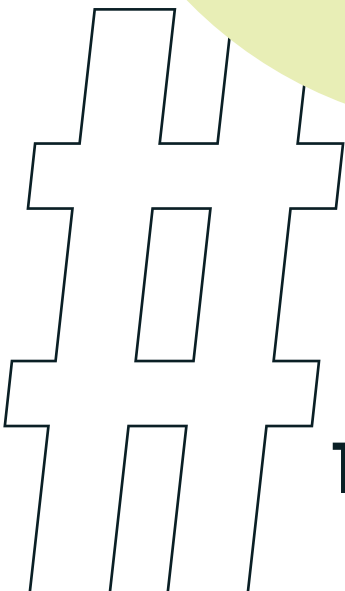
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

10,000

READERS REACHED BY
TOP-PERFORMING
CONVERSATION ARTICLE

18

LOCAL AND GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIPS
FORMED



IMPACT BY NUMBER
THIS IS OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP PUBLICATIONS

2 BOOKS

Gammel, Irene. *Looking for Anne of Green Gables: Lucy Maud Montgomery and her Timeless Heroine*. Sutherland House Books, October 2025. Revised edition with a new prologue and 4 new chapters. i-xiii, 282p. 84 images.
(contract)

Mida, Ingrid. *The New Dress Detective: The Practical Guide to Object-focused Research in Fashion*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming 2026.
(contract)

Gammel, Irene and Jason Wang, ed. *Writing COVID-19 Lives*, London: Routledge, Fall 2026. 74,000 words, 21 images.
(Submitted for peer-review; not counted here)

11 ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

Cristiá, Cintia. "Murray Adaskin's Duo for Viola and Guitar: Issues of Authorship, Guitar, and Performance." *The Vision of Murray Adaskin (1906-2002): His Contributions to the Musical Scene of Canada and Beyond*, Sheila Kreyszig and Walter Kreyszig (eds.), Vienna: Hollitzer Publishing House, Vol. II, Chapter 9, 29 pages.

Gammel, Irene and Christiane Tarantino. "Rouge: The Poetics of Adrian De Leon's Sub/Urban Toronto." *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Routledge), vol 54, n. 4 (2024), 374-87.

Gammel, Irene. "'Perpetual Screw!': The Radical Literary Experiments of Dadaist Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's." *Edinburgh Companion to Women's Experimental Literature, 1900-Present*, edited by Melissa Tanti and Kaye Mitchell. Edinburgh University Press, September 2026 (forthcoming).

Gammel, Irene and Kristina Bhaun. "Postcards from Lockdown: Women's Pandemic Lives in a UK Steel City." *Writing COVID-19 Lives*, London: Routledge, Fall 2026. 22p.

Gammel, Irene and Jason Wang. "'I imagine the circumstances of my death': Life Writing as Radical Absence in Kate Baer's COVID-19 Era Poetry." *Writing COVID-19 Lives*, London: Routledge, Fall 2026. 22p.

Kong, Yifan and Irene Gammel. "Rediscovering West Chinatown: Immersive Game Design Revives Toronto's Chinese Cultural Heritage," *Design for Equality and Justice: INTERACT 2023 IFIP TC 13 Workshops, Revised Selected Papers, Part II*, Lecture Notes in Computer Science series (Volume 14536) published by Springer, July 9, 2024.

MacDonald, Cam. "Dogs, Echoes, and Other Queer Noises." *Routledge Companion to Literature and Sound*, edited by Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen and Maria Engberg, Routledge, 2027 (forthcoming).

MacDonald, Cam. "'A Story that Wasn't in the Words': Music, Mothering, and Minor Figures." *Sing in Me, Oh Muse: New Essays on the Crossroads of Music and Literature*, edited by Kelly Baron and Andrew DuBois, Bloomsbury, 2025 (forthcoming).

MacDonald, Cameron. "The Alien Resonances and Queer Obscurities of Hyperpop's 100 geecs." *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2024, pp. 78-98.

Mida, Ingrid. "Men's Fashion and Satirical Prints in 1799: James Gillray and *Élégance Démocratique*," *Costume* vol. 58 no. 2 (2024), 159-179.

Mida, Ingrid. "Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun: Fashioning and Painting the Self" in *Dress as Biography*, edited by Martin Pel. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming 2026.

2 CREATIVE WRITING – PEER-REVIEWED

MacDonald, Cam. "Transposition of a Balthasar*." *paloma magazine*, no. 19, March 2025.

MacDonald, Cam. "station," "morning," and "sedimental." *Bad Dog Mag*, February 2025.

8 NON-PEER-REVIEWED ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Gammel, Irene and Jason Wang. Review of Eric Schmaltz. *Borderblur Poetics: Intermedia and Avant-Gardism in Canada, 1963-1988*. University of Calgary Press, 2023. 279 pp. *English Studies in Canada*, Submitted July 23, 2024.

Gammel, Irene, and Jason Wang. Review of *The Hours: Stories from a Pandemic* by Bruce Meyer and *Nothing Could Be Further from the Truth* by Christopher Evans. *Canadian Literature*, 3000 words. Submitted 4 May 2022. Forthcoming 2025.

MacDonald, Cameron. Review of *Field Notes on Listening*, written by Kit Dobson. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 93, no. 3, 2024, pp. 414-15.

MacDonald, Cameron. "A Literary (Re)Turn in Sound Studies." Review of *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Sound Studies*, edited by Helen Groth and Julian Murphet. *Sound Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2024, pp. 333-36.

Mida, Ingrid. Exhibition Review: LOVE Fashion: In Search of Myself: The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, September 13–November 24, 2024, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, April 13–June 22, 2025. *Fashion Theory*, 1–13. Published online December 2024.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.torontomu.ca/10.1080/1362704X.2024.2435196>

Tarantino, Christiane. "The Suburban Frontier: Land, Power, and the African Middle-Class." Review of *The Suburban Frontier: Middle-Class Construction in Dar es Salaam* by Claire Mercer. *LSE Review of Books* (London School of Economics), 2025, Forthcoming.

Tarantino, Christiane. "Who Invented Multiculturalism in Canada?" Review of *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* by Daniel R. Meister. *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2025, Forthcoming.

Wang, Jason. "How Donald Trump's Trade War Against Canada Reveals Tensions Inherent in Friendship." *The Conversation*, March 25, 2025. 10,000+ Readers.



"I have really been enjoying my time at the MLC! It has been instrumental in helping me consider my direction for graduate school, and I'm grateful for the insight it has provided."

– **ABIGAIL APALIT, ENGLISH AND HISTORY DOUBLE MAJOR, YEAR 3**

"This internship has been helpful in many ways, providing resources for my development and growth in the artistic field."

– **SAIF CHRISTOPHER HILAL, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, YEAR 3**

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience with the Research and Study Internship! As a commuter who struggles to find the time to expand my academics, the RSI has been a pleasure."

– **NOELLE MEYER, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, YEAR 3**

"I have had a wonderful experience with the MLC Research and Study Internship so far. It has truly added such a positive experience to my time in university."

– **KATHERINE PEDRA, PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION, YEAR 5**

"The RSI program at the MLC has been nothing short of amazing."

– **JESSICA REINSMA, ENGLISH, YEAR 4**

"My quality of work and study habits have improved immensely. Since starting the internship I have made the most strides I have all year, writing 3 chapters of my novel since the semester started."

– **AMY TYNAN, PSYCHOLOGY, YEAR 2**

"Discipline begets creativity. Being a part of MLC's RCI has allowed me to build that discipline and strengthen my sense of curiosity."

– **VEDAANT VYAS, ENGLISH, YEAR 3**

MLC STUDENT TRAINEES TESTIMONIALS

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EXPERIENTIAL COURSES SUPPORTED BY MLC



SPRING/SUMMER 2024 – WINTER 2025

OVER THE PAST ACADEMIC YEAR, THE MLC RESEARCH CENTRE POWERED 8 DYNAMIC COURSES—7 UNDERGRADUATE AND 1 GRADUATE—SPANNING ENGLISH, ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES, AND FASHION STUDIES. OUR SUPPORT WENT BEYOND TRADITIONAL RESOURCES, PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES, INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS, INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS, AND PERSONALIZED MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS. THIS ECOSYSTEM ENGAGED OVER 160 STUDENTS, SPARKING CREATIVITY AND DEEPENING CRITICAL INQUIRY ACROSS DISCIPLINES.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE MODERN LITERATURE AND CULTURE (MLC) RESEARCH CENTRE HAS UNDERTAKEN A BROAD RANGE OF OUTWARD-FACING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES—A CORE ELEMENT OF OUR MISSION.

Our outreach began in Germany with the Obama Fellowship, where Irene Gammel participated in July 4th celebrations and met with German scholars, university students, and high schoolers interested in North American studies. This trip also included a round table event engaging MLC team members via Zoom.

Back in Toronto, the team contributed to our City Hall quilt exhibition honouring women's contributions and untold stories related to World War II. Attendees and speakers included Councillor Chris Moise and representatives from the university acknowledging the often-sidelined role of women in Canadian military heritage. We also participated in the City of Toronto's Community Champions Award ceremony, in partnership with United Way Greater Toronto.

In September, the MLC director and her team joined the North American opening of *Buone Nuove (Good News): Women in Architecture*, an exhibition at TMU's Department of Architectural Science highlighting the contributions of women and women-led collectives in design. The MLC also hosted Lisa Landrum, Chair of TMU's Department of Architectural Science, to explore potential collaborations.

In February 2025, the MLC organized a Research Showcase featuring ten projects for the Periodical Program Review site visit of TMU's English Department. The event demonstrated our training initiatives to external evaluators Dr. Eleanor Ty (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Dr. Joshua Schuster (Western University).

In November 2024, Christiane Tarantino and other members represented the MLC for Steve Paikin's interview of Margaret Atwood for "Margaret Atwood: The Art of Democracy" on TVO Today. That same month, they also attended Molly Peacock's launch for *A Widow's Crayon Box*.

In March 2025, they engaged in Toronto Ward Museum and Toronto Metropolitan University's Immigration and Settlement's "Hot Pots & Immigrant Parking Lots: Immigrant Food Businesses In Agincourt," and in May in Librissimi: Toronto Italian Book Festival and Villa Charities.

In May, Irene Gammel participated in the official groundbreaking of TMU's new Student Wellbeing Centre. The MLC has also remained active in ongoing cultural initiatives: Jason Wang contributed to anti-Asian racism programming during Asian Heritage Month; Chris Tarantino participated in Italian Canadian Association events; and research associate Karen Mulhallen continued organizing public poetry readings.

Throughout the year, we welcomed visitors from across campus, the city, and the country—as well as international guests. As a team, we remain deeply engaged in the cultural life of the city.



THANK YOU

MAJOR SPONSORS



STRATEGIC PARTNERS



