

Change Lab



Oasis: A Space for Healing

**A community dedicated to sharing decolonial healing practices
by, for, and with survivors**

Territorial Anchoring and Recognition of Indigenous Knowledge

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge that the Body & Soul project, developed within the Change Lab, took place on Turtle Island, more specifically on the unceded territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation, one of the 11 First Nations in Québec. This ancestral land, known as Tiohtià:ke, means “the place where the currents meet” in the Mohawk language.

As allies to Indigenous decolonial struggles, we recognize the history, heritage, and diversity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as well as their past and present contributions. We also wish to acknowledge the lasting impacts of colonialism on these communities.

We recognize that the gender-based and sexual violence experienced by Indigenous peoples is rooted in structural and systemic inequalities, fueled by discrimination and social norms. These realities disproportionately affect Indigenous girls, women, and Two-Spirit people.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the organization Righting Relations, as well as to the Elders we had the privilege of meeting, for their guidance and for the knowledge they shared throughout our reflection process.

The Body & Soul project was thus developed through an approach grounded in the recognition and valuing of Indigenous knowledge, in connection with culturally safe prevention of gender- and sexuality-based violence.

Project Description

Our project, carried out in partnership with Righting Relations Canada, was designed to create a community of sharing and sisterhood, allowing individuals who have experienced gender-based violence to have their voices and their journeys of resilience heard.

This initiative was intended as an entry point into a community of support and solidarity in response to gender-based violence. By adopting approaches that strengthen agency and value lived knowledge, the project sought to contribute to social change by centering prevention efforts on victims and survivors in an inclusive and responsive way.


Our objectives were the following:

- To develop spaces for discussion and exchange oriented toward healing through storytelling
- To develop a range of activities facilitated by practitioners that highlight alternative and creative approaches to healing
- To reflect on and develop a platform for sharing stories of resilience, accessible to circle participants and, more broadly, to audiences engaged with issues of gender-based violence

About Us

 **Righting Relations Canada** is a national network of adult educators, community organizers, and facilitators working toward decolonization and social change.



 **Éduconnexion** works toward social justice and sustainable civic engagement through a transformative, intersectional, and decolonial approach.

In our work, we are committed to uprooting systems of oppression in all their forms, within ourselves, within our networks, and within society as a whole.

Phase 1

The Shaping of our Oasis

The first phase of the project took shape through a series of workshops, where we had the opportunity to center creative approaches to healing and create spaces for sharing and listening.

Through these workshops, we sought to highlight the voices of those who have experienced violence, while offering a safe space where lived experiences could be expressed, acknowledged, and transformed. By drawing on approaches that strengthen agency and value lived knowledge, these workshops allowed participants to explore different forms of expression and creation, where they could share their journeys, memories, and stories of resilience within a framework of collective healing.

By proposing a transformative approach to post-violence healing, this phase aimed to position personal healing as a lever for broader societal change.

Together, we experienced powerful moments during workshops in art therapy, dance, gardening, talking circles, African percussion, and grounded movement.

Our spirit decides
where it goes and our
body follows



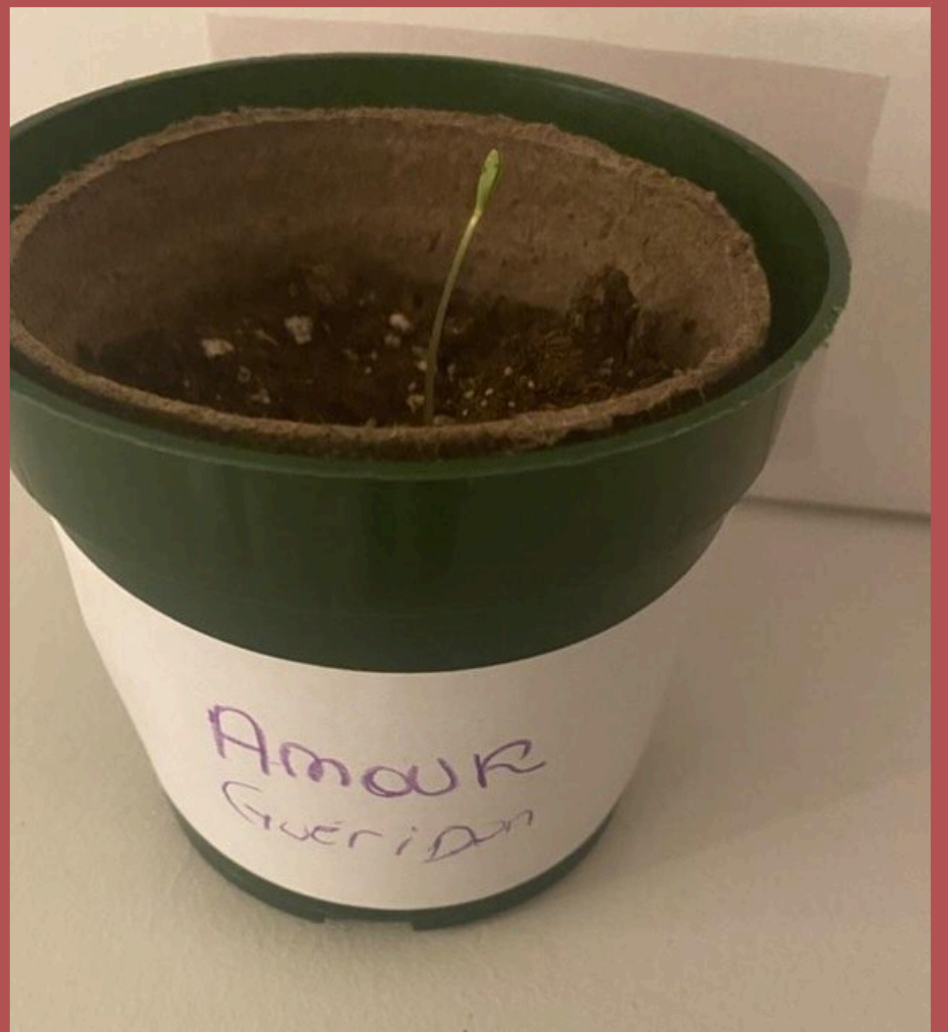
The earth and
nature hold our
memories

Everything is a vibration





Releasing tension in our tongues, hips, and extremities allows us to give voice to our body's silence



Phase 2

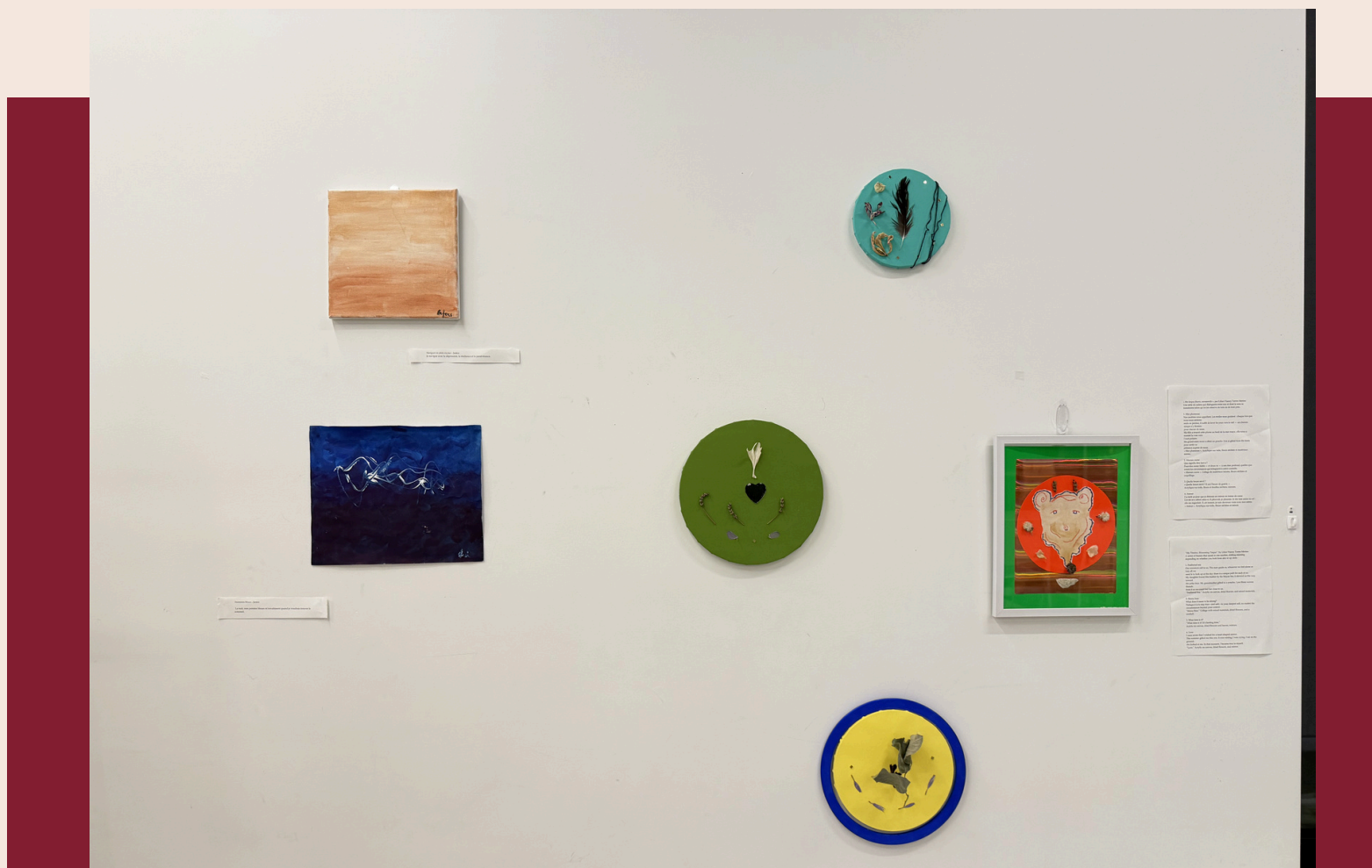
Opening the Oasis

An artistic gallery project that explores the role of storytelling and imagination as therapeutic tools for engaging in healing and amplifying voices, centered on agency and the transformative power of creation.

Our approach was grounded in a process that values the transmission of knowledge, encourages a slow and gentle creative process, supports collective healing, celebrates self-expression, and preserves each participant's artistic freedom.

This phase sought to deepen the artistic engagement initiated in the healing circles through a curated exhibition space that fosters dialogue and recognition.

The Artwork



The Artwork



Naviguer en plein en jour - Janice
Je navigue avec la dépression, la résilience et la persévérance.



Ensemble Mieux - Janice
La nuit, mes pensées Mieux se envahissent quand je voudrais trouver le sommeil.



The Artwork



La Bête
L'artiste
L'œuvre
L'œuvre est une œuvre à forte portée politique. Elle dénonce et se moque de la manière dont les médias et les réseaux sociaux nous font croire que nous sommes des individus uniques et exceptionnels. Elle nous rappelle que nous sommes tous des êtres humains, avec nos propres faiblesses et nos propres secrets. Elle nous invite à nous regarder dans le miroir et à nous accepter tels que nous sommes, sans nous laisser aveugler par les apparences.

Project “Everyday”

As part of the second phase of our project, this component sought to offer a decolonial online space of living memory.

Conceived as a place for weaving together stories and life paths, this space highlighted the narratives of participants, inviting us to rediscover and re-examine the meaning of archives and memory.

It aimed to anchor these memories within both personal and collective journeys, moments of everyday life, movements back and forth, and transformations embedded in paths of healing.

This phase also sought to explore and follow the daily lives and worlds of individuals whose stories reflect how they live while fully embracing their agency and singularities. Through these encounters and shared experiences, the intention was to bring forth living memories, told and carried by those who experienced them firsthand.

Testimony

To recognize that the violence affecting us individually is the same violence that underlies all forms of human oppression and environmental destruction on a global scale

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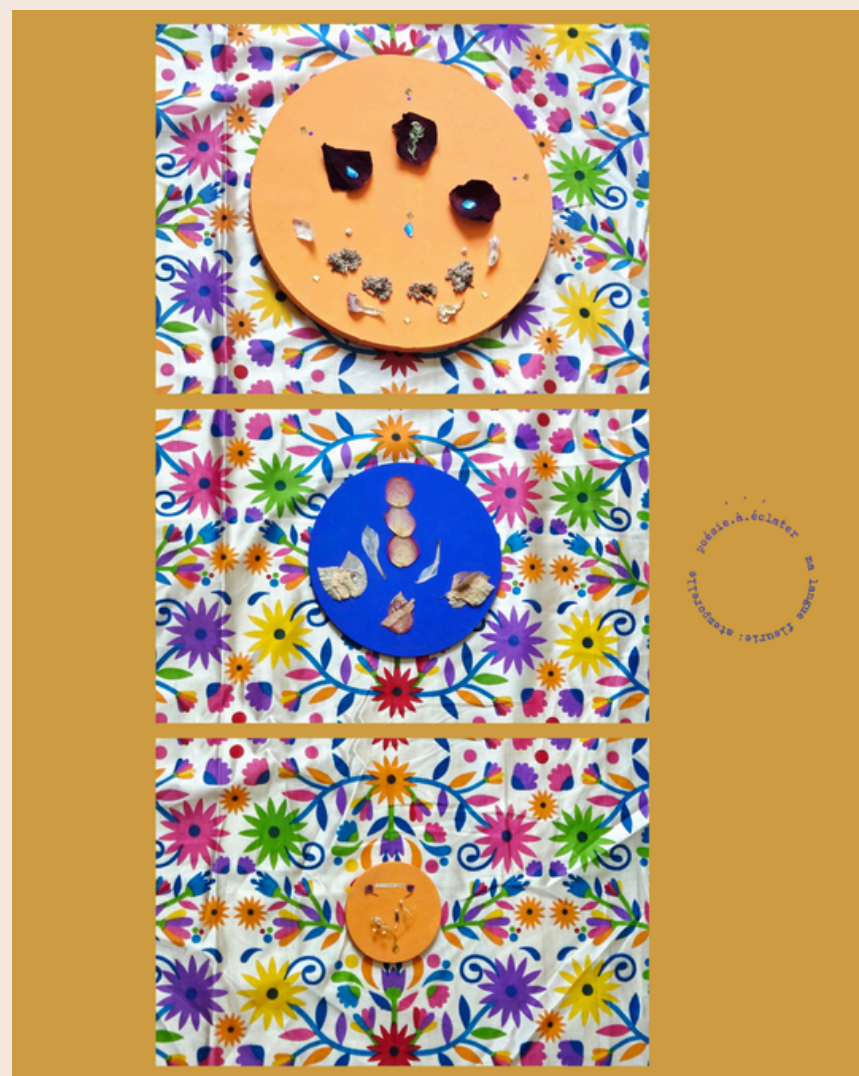
That our healing is also collective and spiritual.



Testimony

To seek ways to reconnect with our bodies, our roots, and our trust in life can lead us toward paths where we encounter a version of ourselves we once believed was lost.

Each person experiences this differently, and the gestures of those who seek to nurture strength in others are far more meaningful than we might realize. Thank you for being here.



Testimony

My community welcomed me during my darkest moments. They respected my choices and the way I dealt with them. They were my rock, my source of comfort, and my path to healing. And even after that, they remain a resource, my source of joy, and my loves.



Phase 3

The Transmission of Lived Memories

As part of our ongoing initiative, this final phase, “Transmission,” is dedicated to the project’s online archiving. It aims to make the entire process accessible and to share this collective commitment to healing, highlighting its importance in the dynamics of social transformation.

This digital archive is intended to be a window, an open portal to others who have experienced gender-based and sexual violence. By providing access to the stories, reflections, and journeys that have emerged from the project, we hope to create a space where people can draw inspiration from the experiences and journeys of the projects' participants.

The goal is to offer paths of hope and to bring forth alternatives that are sensitive to the multiple realities of survivors. Through this process of transmission, we continue and expand our circle of healing. In this way, we contribute to nurturing a community of solidarity and alliances committed to combating gender-based violence and advancing practices of transformative justice.

Righting Relations Change Lab Canada

Righting Relations' Change Labs are collaborative spaces that support change in communities. Between 2022 and 2024, the organization established seven Canada-wide Change Labs led by women, with support from WAGE Canada. These gatherings brought together educators and organizers with lived experience to collectively develop strategies, tools, and resources to foster social transformation. Building on a network of regional hubs and local circles, the Change Labs foster exchange, mutual support, and collective action.

The collaboration with Righting Relations has been invaluable to the development of the Body & Soul Montreal Change Lab. Their heart-led approach inspired the creation of Body & Soul as well as its governance based on anti-oppressive practices. The spaces for reflection, dialogue, and support they created have allowed us to strengthen a vision of work centered on people and on caring for those who care for others.

The feminist and intersectional approaches championed by Righting Relations, which place intergenerational healing at the heart of change, are now central to Body & Soul's mission and practices. Their guidance and generosity have nourished our work and continue to inspire our commitment to more just and supportive communities.

Righting Relations Change Lab Canada

Here are some heartfelt photos from our events with Righting Relations, featuring Evelyne Marchal-Ferriere and Jessica Lachontch in Wolfville (March 2025), Montreal (May 2025), and Tatamagouche (online) (March 2026)



Thank You

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the community partners who supported and participated in this project. Thank you to the facilitators of the healing workshop, *Akinyi Alouch, Danni Okemaw, Misanka Mupesse, Alyah Sol, Laurence from Ethnika Holistique, and Lee Igram*, for their guidance and the safe spaces they created.

A special thank you to Lourdenie Jean, artistic coordinator, as well as to our corporate partners for the tokens of appreciation - *Mimi & August, Healing Resistance Bodywork, Metaphysical Bodywork, Alma Plantes, and Maktaba Bookshop*. Thank you also to *SHIFT* for providing the exhibition space.

And finally, a special thank you to Educonnexion's team who made this project possible: *Stéphanie Germain - Director, Evelyne Marchal-Ferriere, Jessica Lachontch, and Erykah Kangbeya*.

Finally, a special thank you to our partner *Righting Relations* for their support, trust, and the inspiration our collaboration has brought to this project.