

FIRST MCGILL

CHILDREN'S

CELLPHILM FESTIVAL

REPORT

Description:

This year for the first time, the McGill International Cellphilm Festival launched a new under 8 category, which grew into its own offering; the 1st McGill Children's (8 and Under) Cellphilm Festival. This endeavour was spearheaded by Dr. Joshua Schwab-Cartas and Dr. Prudence Caldairou-Bessette. Academic support was offered by Dr. Claudia Mitchell and administrative/organizational support by Angela MacDonald, Grace Skahan, Celine (Yudan) Wu, and Catherine Zambrano.

This addition to the festival sprung out of research conducted by Caldairou-Bessette and Schwab-Cartas on the use of cellphilm with very young children. Participants in this part of the festival were given a unique prompt: It's Not Fair ("C'est pas juste!" in French) because the organizers felt this was more accessible for children. (see appendix)

The Children's Cellphilm Festival was made possible by the generous financial support and partnership of CODE, a Canadian-based international NGO working to provide equitable, quality education and opportunities for children worldwide.

Background:

The idea of introducing cellphilm to young children arose when Dr. Schwab-Cartas' then three-year-old daughter, Najeli, asked when she could make a cellphilm like her dad. After conducting research with Dr. Caldairou-Bessette on young children's cellphilm, they concluded that there were social and educational benefits, alongside ethical considerations, when allowing young children to create cellphils.[1] Benefits of cellphilm include the amplification of children's voices and perspectives to adult audiences, as well as the presentation of a new avenue for fostering education and dialogue between children and parents. One ethical consideration of cellphilm includes deciding whether children's faces should be shown in the films. This can be addressed by using a "no-faces" approach to filming, or giving children other tools like drawings or using puppets/stuffed animals to communicate their message. Another consideration is how to maintain the child's interpretation and voice if an adult is the one filming and editing the cellphilm.

[1] Caldairou-Bessette, Prudence & Schwab-Cartas, Joshua, "When can I make a cellphilm?: Reflecting and developing cellphilm with young children." Re-Visioning Cellphilm Methodologies Virtual Symposium, Zoom, June 8th, 2022.

Cellphilm Workshops:

In the leadup to the festival, Dr. Caldairou-Besette led two workshops at CME Saint-Louis Daycare and one at a shelter for migrants in Montreal, Foyer du Monde.

When embarking on the brainstorming process in these workshops, the children brought forth many ideas of what they believed to be unfair. Some of their ideas included climate change, racism, and economic inequality.

Participants:

An impressive 11 entries were submitted to the Children's Festival. Since many of the films were created in groups, there were a total of 31 child participants. The Festival also received entries in English, French, and Spanish. The cellphilm focused on an array of important social issues, such as pollution, environment, homelessness, war, parental behaviours, language, racism, sexism, and injustice to animals. This year's films showcased just how much potential there exists in re-imagining the world we inhabit.

Winners:

Wendy Jazmin Ruiz Rosas (Foyer du Monde workshop) won the first prize for her cellphilm “Déjame hablar! (Let me speak!)”. Wendy’s submission was filmed in Spanish and translated into English subtitles by a volunteer. During the festival, she shared her thoughts about making a cellphilm. She said that in the beginning, she felt she “had nothing to say as a little girl” but once she started, realized that she had lots to say.

James, London, Ely, and Arthur on behalf of the CME Saint-Louis Daycare won second place. Their cellphilm “Stop Pollution Now” expressed their urge to protect mother earth. They creatively used stuffed animals to communicate their message.

The third place went to Najeli Schwab for her cellphilm “It’s not fair.” In it she expressed the unfairness she observed in the world, like homelessness and hunger, and explored solutions such as providing access to these necessities.

Community Screenings:

After the festival, a screening event was hosted at CME Saint-Louis Daycare and at Foyer du Monde where the children's cellphims were screened with discussion afterwards. These events were celebrated with popcorn and juice, and the organizers distributed gifts of movie tickets or puppets for the children to create their next cellphim.

In discussions that followed the screenings, children mentioned that they particularly liked the cellphims that suggested solutions to unfair realities. Some children who did not participate in the festival but did attend the screenings expressed wanting to try cellphilm as well, with one group creating a new cellphim that is already ready for next year's festival!

Reflections:

Given that this was a brand new part of the annual cellphilm festival, we are very pleased with the success of this pilot project. This year's endeavour furnished a lot of learning and reflections that we can use to improve the offering for next year. It is promising to have made connections with two organizations that are keen to participate again. Building on this network to expand our reach will be a priority for next year.

It was very exciting that we had submissions in three different languages. However there were some language limitations we encountered. One of the judges wasn't fluent in French and therefore didn't feel comfortable adjudicating the French cellphilms. Similarly, the first place winner was a Spanish film in which a volunteer translated and transcribed the dialogue. Knowing that we will need volunteers to help with translation ahead of time is one improvement we can ensure is in place well in advance of the workshop and filming process.

The children's submissions were certainly some of the most insightful and interesting cellfilms submitted to the festival. At the same time, working with these groups takes a lot of input from the PCL team. Several workshops were held, each having at least three PCL team members there to assist the kids with storyboarding, recording and editing. It will be important to plan how many workshops we can do as a team and who will act as support for running them.

Having a separate prompt for the children's festival also increased the amount of work required in the lead up to the festival. Two versions of all posters and social media posts needed to be created to distinguish between the two themes/prompts. We might consider exploring a theme and prompt that can be used for all age ranges.

Overall, this part of the festival was an exciting new prospect and offered the PCL team a chance to grow the festival in a new direction.

Appendix:

MCGILL'S 1ST CHILDREN 8 AND UNDER CELLPHILM FESTIVAL

Tell us with a cellfilm using the following prompt:

ITS NOT FAIR

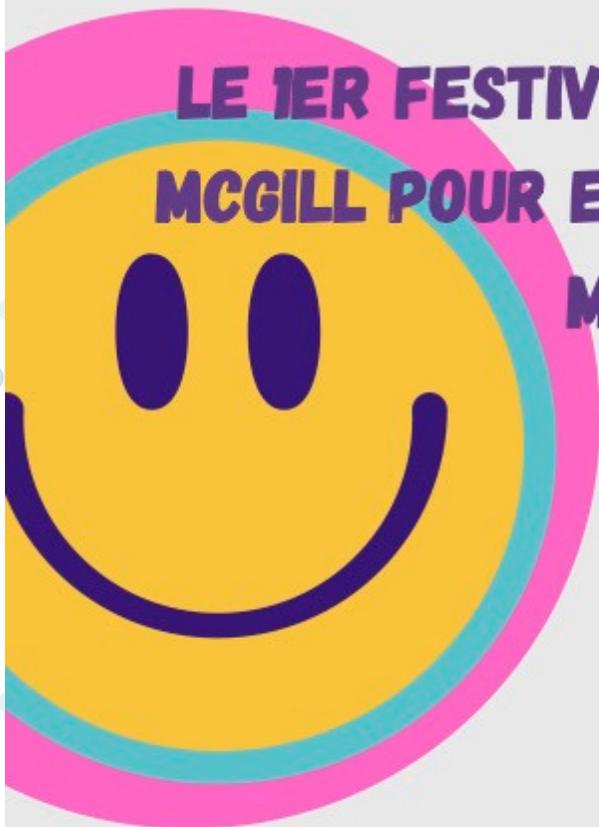
Submit your entry to
<https://internationalcellfilmfestival.com/>
May 20, 2022

Part of McGill's 10th International Cellfilm Festival

Prizes to be won

code McGill UNIVERSITY Participatory Culture iDOW

LE 1ER FESTIVAL CELLPHILM DE MCGILL POUR ENFANTS 8 ANS ET MOINS



**Soumettez votre
candidature**

internationalcellphilmfestival.com

May 20, 2022

Partie du 10e Festival
international de
cellphilm de McGill

**Il y a des prix à
gagner!**

