



University of  
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release — Wednesday, June 12, 2024

## Fine Arts researchers part of collaborative cross-country project awarded \$2.5 million SSHRC Partnership Grant

A unique cross-country partnership between 10 Canadian post-secondary institutions involving three University of Lethbridge Faculty of Fine Arts researchers has been awarded a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Grant of \$2.5 million.

*Gatherings: Archival and Oral Histories of Performance*, is a multi-institutional project that focuses on archival and oral histories of performance in Canada, emphasizing the ephemeral and immaterial nature of performance and its ability to enrich understandings of the myriad of cultures within Canada. The funding is over seven years.



Department of Drama researchers Drs. Justin Blum and Gabrielle Houle are co-investigators on the project, while Faculty of Fine Arts Dean Dr. Heather Davis-Fisch is a collaborator. Davis-Fisch says the partnership allows for researchers to study the nuances and complexities of performance history and uncover the contributions of groups who have been left out of the conversation altogether.

“Because performance is an embodied practice, it often leaves few documents; often histories of performance exist in oral histories, objects and artifacts, and cultural practices,” says Davis-Fisch. “This is particularly the case for performances like dance, non-theatrical performances, and physical practices, and is exacerbated in the case of performances created and remembered by historically marginalized groups, such as Black, racialized and Indigenous communities, LGBTQ2S+ communities and people with disabilities.”

The project brings together researchers from the University of Victoria, Dalhousie University, MacEwan University, Toronto Metropolitan University, Sheridan College Institute of Technology, University of Toronto, Trent University, Queen's University, Memorial University of Newfoundland and ULEthbridge.

In addition to the academic researchers, the project also involves artists, galleries, libraries, archives, museums and community partners, through support from Canada's Theatre Museum, Playwrights Canada Press and Dance Collection Danse.

Davis-Fisch says the partnership's goals are threefold: promote access to archival performance history research, implement ethical practices in oral history collection and preservation and advance digital humanities scholarship to enhance public access to diverse performance histories.

"The impact of this grant will be significant for the Drama department and the Faculty of Fine Arts, not only for how it will support faculty researchers, but also for the opportunities it creates to involve graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and undergraduate students in research. The project will also support relationships and partnerships with community-based organizations and across disciplines within the university."

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/fine-arts-researchers-part-collaborative-cross-country-project-awarded-25-million-sshr>

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*Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.*