

Mural will transport commuters through Valois's history



PETER VARGA, SPECIAL TO THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

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Painters get started on a \$25,000 mural at Valois train station in Pointe-Claire in July 2016. Photo by OLIVIER BOUSQUET *OLIVIER BOUSQUET*

A group of artists is injecting some colour and style into a structure of concrete, steel and glass at the

Valois commuter train station in Pointe-Claire.

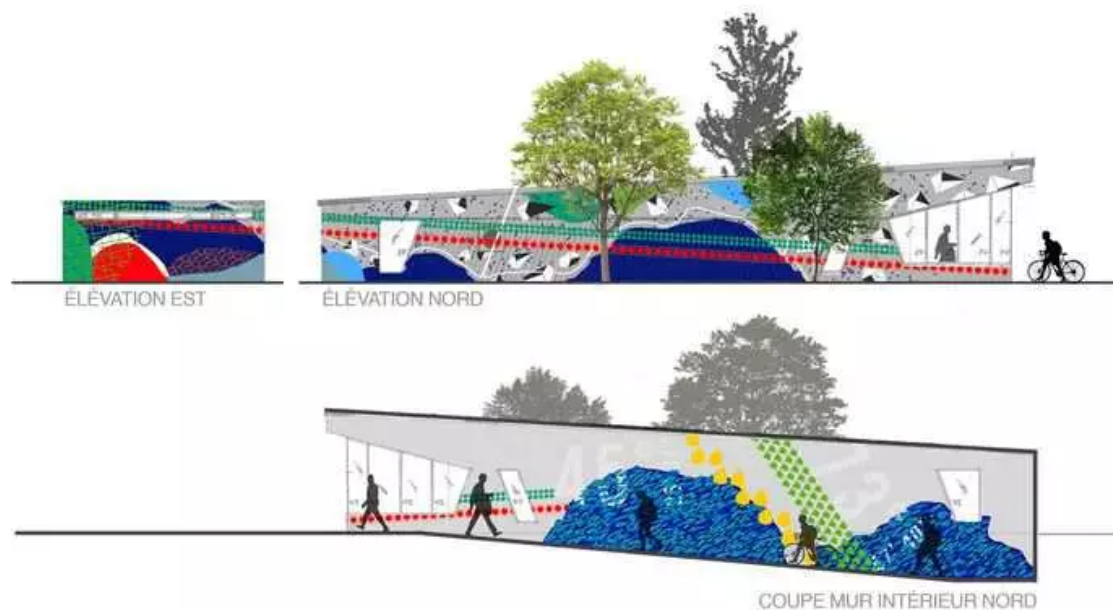
If you're among the hundreds of commuters, walkers and cyclists who use the train station's pedestrian tunnel every day — or the hundreds more who pass by it daily on Valois's thoroughfare, Donegani Ave. — you'll see the artists' work take shape this month on the walls of tunnel's entryway.

The \$25,000 mural they're working on, called L'empreinte de l'homme (Footprints of Mankind) will cover the structure of the entrance with abstract designs that reflect the story of the train station — and Valois village at large — as a passageway for pedestrians, cyclists, trains, automobiles — and planes cruising overhead into and out of the nearby airport.

"I hope it will make the space more dynamic," said Ilana Pichon, who created plans for the mural with the Montreal-based mural-production organization MU.

The mural will cover the outside of the tunnel structure and one interior wall. Map-like forms represent the land and lakeside of Valois Bay, and multi-coloured patterns represent each means of transport in the area.

Pointe-Claire commissioned MU this spring to produce the mural as part of its plan to promote the West Island municipality's cultural and historical heritage.



Valois train station in Pointe-Claire is getting a \$25,000 mural

"The mural will beautify this space that sees heavy traffic from public transit users," Mayor Morris Trudeau said in a statement last week.

"Everyone is invited to come see the artists work and watch the mural take shape."

The project is the second permanent mural the city has commissioned (<http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/pointe-claire-to-commission-more-murals>) since 2013. The first, unveiled at the Pointe-Claire Canoe Club in 2014, covers the club's concrete storage building with realist paintings that portray local plants, animals and paddlers within and around Lake St. Louis.

Valois residents who have seen plans for the mural are "intrigued," said Elizabeth-Ann Doyle, director of MU. "But also, in a very good way, they're pleased to see that it's very subtle and quite elegant as far as design," she said.

Doyle saw that the building's unusual shape called for a muralist with special expertise. Pichon, who is also an architect, immediately came to mind, Doyle said.

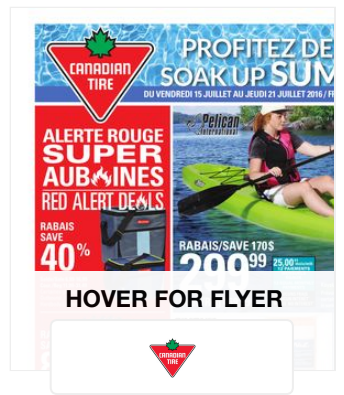
"Every project I do (as a mural artist) is site-specific, it's made for the place," Pichon said. "My inspiration comes from the immediate environment."

Mural art can only be successful so long as it is tailored for the surrounding neighbourhood, she said. Mural production also allows viewers to see work develop and take shape, Pichon said.

"It's fun to have some contact with the public as the work unfolds," said Pichon, who is working with two assistants at the site this month, when weather conditions permit. "I think it's important to reveal and explain art to people."

Pichon and her crew started work June 28. The City of Pointe-Claire will unveil the work in mid-August.

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