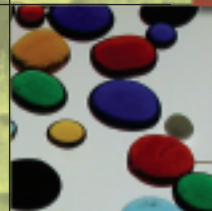
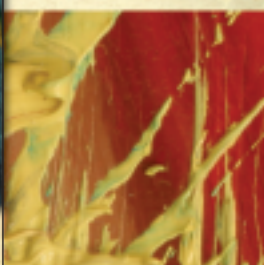
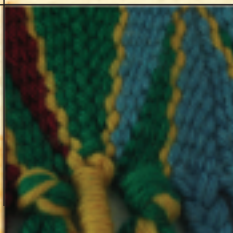
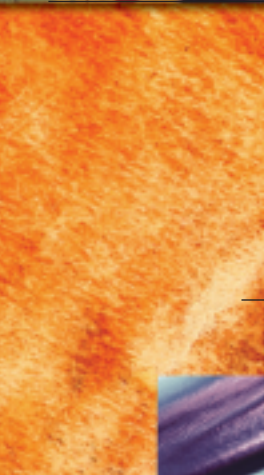
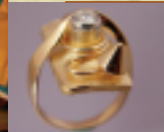
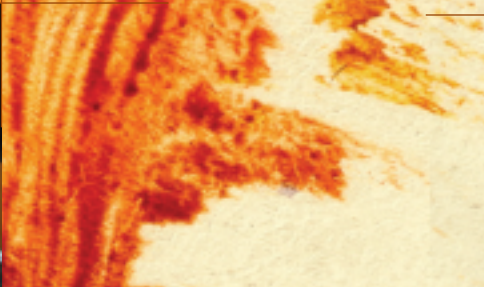


Cultural policy





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Cover :

- 1-Italian majolica, c.1820, Argenteuil Regional Museum Collection
- 2-Column crown, Saint- Philippe Church
- 3-FRANÇOISE DUFRESNE- BOURRET, Argenteuil arrow design
- 4-Beads used to make stained-glass, Artisan glass-maker
- 5-SYLVIE LEGAULT, *Marie-Hélène*, pastel on paper

In this page :

- 1-CAMMAC Musical Center
- 2-*La rue des Petits Bonheurs*, Les Productions la Cour des Miracles
- 3-GILBERT RHÊME, Yellow gold ring with diamonds
- 4-Espace Historique et Culturel Christ Church
- 5-La Route des Arts, Charles Lefebvre Studio
- 6-Filming, Bureau du Cinéma et de la Télévision Argenteuil- Laurentides

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Message from the warden

The passing of the first MRC d'Argenteuil Cultural Policy is a commitment towards the future and a revival for the Argenteuil community, its artists and artisans.

As first MRC of the Laurentians region to adopt a Cultural Policy, the MRC d'Argenteuil is proud to innovate and provide the community with a reference work that will be adapted through time.

The result of research, consideration and consensus building over a period of more than eighteen months, the present Policy represents a tremendous recognition and development tool.

The Guiding Principles, General Directions and Avenues for Action of the Cultural Policy shall govern the future decisions of the MRC d'Argenteuil Council in order to better focus the cultural development of Argenteuil according to the socio-economic identity of the milieu and the available budgets of the municipalities.

We believe that the strength of the cultural sector and its development are closely tied to all other types of development required for the well being of our community.

Thus, the MRC d'Argenteuil wanted to be attentive to the stakeholders of the cultural milieu and agreed to invest time and energy to put forth this first Cultural Policy.


Ronald Tittlit

Message from the president

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We take great pride in presenting to you on this day the result of the work performed by the MRC d'Argenteuil Committee for the Development of a Cultural Policy.

To bring to fruition this imaginative project, the MRC d'Argenteuil formed an encompassing committee of professionals representing each of the cultural sectors of the region to study all of the realities. This committee of volunteers had produced a preliminary study document on the status of the cultural sector in Argenteuil. Therefore, the Cultural Policy closely reflects the present situation and it was achieved by people from the area who are actively involved in the cultural milieu.

The consultations held within the framework of the development of the Policy with the cultural stakeholders and the population, have given us the opportunity to gage the pulse of a region that clearly wishes to diversify and revitalize its cultural influence.

The content of this Policy is primarily based on the richness of the Argenteuil territory which then steadfastly looks to the future for actions that favour the integration of culture in the daily activities of the Argenteuil residents with the ultimate goal of enriching the quality of life of our fellow citizens.

The cultural lifeblood of our community therefore requires an extensive awareness-raising and promotion campaign. The publication of this first Cultural Policy of the MRC d'Argenteuil is an important step in reaching this objective. I therefore readily invite the population of Argenteuil to embrace this Cultural Policy in its daily activities to help us enliven our regional culture.


Daniel Beaulieu

On February 11 2004, the Council of Mayors of the MRC d'Argenteuil passed a resolution in order to adopt a Regional Cultural Policy as provided for in its work plan for 2004. A committee of municipal representatives, cultural organizations as well as known artists of the region was formed and directed to weave the web of the future Argenteuil Cultural Policy.

The formalization and establishment objectives of such a policy were numerous and varied, and the following items were identified :

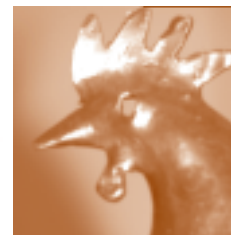
- better define the MRC's cultural identity;
- better understanding of the population, artists and cultural organization expectations and needs;
- offer a range of cultural products suited to the needs identified;
- define a long term vision;
- rationalize resource uses;
- integrate culture into municipal preoccupations.

To reach these objectives, the MRC has called upon the professional resources of the Conseil de la Culture des Laurentides (CCL) to ensure the facilitation of the various stages of reflexion, follow-up of meetings and writing of documents.

The first phase was to obtain an exact portrait of the MRC d'Argenteuil cultural situation. With the help of resource persons and various documents, an inventory of the elements in place and their analysis was performed and written in a first document titled « Status of the Situation ».

Drawing on this first analysis, the committee then turned its attention to the general directions and avenues of action to be favoured.

This document provides a brief portrait of the MRC d'Argenteuil cultural situation followed by the general directions and avenues of action that shall assure the future development of arts and culture on the MRC d'Argenteuil territory.



Geographical portrait

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Located south-west of the Laurentians, the MRC d'Argenteuil is traversed from east to west by a mountain range which marks off the rugged landform and undulating valley of the upper Laurentians to the north and to the south, the flat acres of fertile farmlands of the lower Laurentians.

The agricultural, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors of the MRC are located in the south. To the north, where a plateau resting on the Canadian Shield with an altitude varying from 100 to 300 metres, forestry, tourism and resorts are the main activities.

Dotted with 450 lakes including lake Barron (Gore), Louisa (Wentworth) and MacDonald (Harrington), the MRC d'Argenteuil territory includes three major rivers : to the south, limiting the territory from west to east is the Ottawa river and its tributaries : the North river and the Rouge river.

A local road network of 818 km crosses the 1 270,51 km² territory. Highway 50 provides access to the MRC, as well as the more scenic routes of the 148, 158 and 344 on the east-west axis and routes 327 and 329 on the north-south axis.

The MRC is made up of nine municipalities : Brownsburg-Chatham, Gore, Grenville, Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, Harrington, Lachute, Mille-Isles, Saint-André d'Argenteuil and Wentworth.

Certain municipalities define themselves as village/rural while others are highly urbanized. The Town of Lachute is the central point and along with Brownsburg-Chatham they form the communities where most of the industrial and commercial activities take place.

The MRC's in proximity to Argenteuil are : to the west, Papineau; north, Les Laurentides and Les Pays-d'en-Haut; east, La Rivière-du-Nord, Mirabel and Deux-Montagnes; and finally to the south, Vaudreuil-Soulanges and the Province of Ontario (Hawkesbury), both located on the southern bank of the Ottawa River.



The landscape is lush. Strwn with watercourses and sprinkled with lakes, dense forests give way to peaceful valleys.

Crossing a virgin territory, Indian tribes fought over the Argenteuil territory at the beginning of the XVIII century.

In 1701, the Montréal Great Peace Treaty ended the confrontations and allowed the French colony to take root.

In Argenteuil, land appropriation began along the Ottawa River to finally reached the hinterland where the colony blossomed within the seigniories granted by French authorities.

At the outset, occupied by the French, the Argenteuil territory is rapidly inhabited by cohorts of American colonizers, followed mostly by Scottish immigrants from the British Isles. Later on, the Irish arrived to enrich this new community.

It is around this nucleus of Anglophones that the permanent population of Argenteuil grew thereby permeating the cultural life of the area and building Argenteuil's rich heritage.

Made up mostly of Anglophones until early in the XXth century, the MRC d'Argenteuil is now mainly populated by Francophones and has inherited a rich residential and religious patrimony.

Historical portrait

Argenteuil portrait



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Demography

The population of the MRC d'Argenteuil territory is 29,451. This population is made up of 78% Francophones and 19% Anglophones and is unevenly spread out across the nine municipalities that make up the MRC.

Language is a defining factor as to the territorial distribution of the population within the municipalities of the MRC d'Argenteuil. Generally, the northern part of the territory (north-east and north-west) has a high concentration of Anglophones compared to the southern (south-east and south-west) where Francophones form the majority.¹

Lachute, the main centre, and Brownsburg-Chatham are the most populated municipalities.

Over the last few years, demographic data indicate relative stagnant growth but there is a more rapid population growth in the resort areas due to the conversion of secondary homes into main residences.

The MRC d'Argenteuil population is relatively older than that of other MRC's in the Laurentians.

Three factors contribute to the aging of the population : the high unemployment rate sends workers outside, the out-migration of youth wishing to obtain higher education and retired people who transform their secondary homes into main residences.

Concrete measures stemming from a cultural policy could promote a vibrant socio-economic development and play a role in population increase by stimulating the creation of employment, slowing out-migration of youth and inviting outsiders to relocate within the MRC d'Argenteuil.



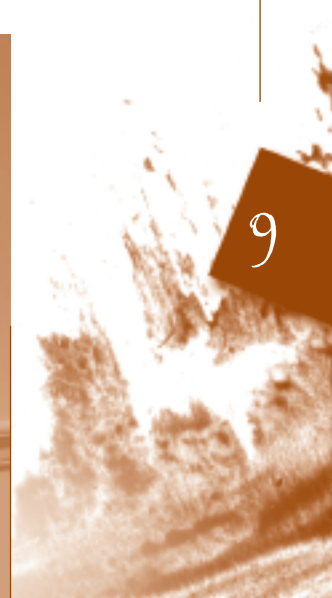
The MRC d'Argenteuil economy relies mostly on the service industry with 5 680 jobs (43%). Followed by the resource industries with 35% of the jobs or 4 595 positions and finally the processing sector with 22% or 2 915 of the jobs on the territory.

According to 2001 records, in the MRC d'Argenteuil, 53,9 % of the labour force was employed compared to 58,9 % in the province. The Argenteuil unemployment rate is near the same level as that of Québec with 8,1 % and 8,2 % respectively while the percentage for the Laurentians region is 7 %.

The total median income of workers aged 15 and up is \$ 18 046 in Argenteuil, or 13 % less than the median income of Quebecers who earn \$ 20 665 and 17,16 % less than the median income of the inhabitants of the Laurentians region which is \$ 21 784.²

According to the document « Connaitre pour agir : portrait de santé de la population du territoire du CLSC d'Argenteuil », the ratio of persons with low-income and those receiving income security is clearly above the regional average.

The unfavourable socio-economic situation of the Argenteuil CLSC territory has a major impact on the physical and psychological well-being of the population, which shows a mortality rate higher than the regional average and a life expectancy below this same average.



Cultural life

Mostly made up of Anglophones up to the first decades of the 1900, the population played an active role in the cultural activities of the region. The heritage buildings of that era reflect this Anglophone culture.

As of 1941, the majority English population shrinks to 36%. Presently, the Argenteuil population is mostly Francophone. The English population is located mainly in the northern section of the territory. Thus, a bicultural life has established itself within the whole of the territory.

The MRC d'Argenteuil cultural life has seen, over time, the emergence of original and enriching initiatives. For instance, the Argenteuil Historical Society established the Argenteuil Regional Museum in 1934, the CAMMAC Musical Centre created in 1953 and still active 50 years later and the Lachute Municipal Library started in the spring of 1959 in the backroom of a small library, the « Carrefour du livre » which took the name of its founder, Mr. Jean-Marc Belzile after its initial start.

Amongst the most recent creations, the Productions La Cour Des Miracles (PCDM) that has brought together young and old over the last six years to interpret songs and dances and the Route des Arts that allows us an intimate visit with a few of the numerous visual arts and craft artists of the area.

These initiatives not only nourish the intellect and imagination of the Argenteuil population they also bring an undeniable economic benefit to the region that is traveled by a large number of visitors and tourists from all parts of Québec, Canada and abroad who are on the lookout for new discoveries.

Natural attractions and talent are not lacking in Argenteuil. The descriptive list of Chapter 2 of the document « Situation Status » reveals its richness.

From this point on, much more needs to be accomplished. The development of an intense and active cultural life in the MRC d'Argenteuil can only have a positive impact on future generations.

The unfolding of culture plays a role in respect to young people by introducing and opening a world that offers various interests, nourishing their curiosity and stimulating their creativity thus using their resourcefulness for the benefit and well-being of the community.



Guiding principles

MRC d'Argenteuil Cultural Policy deals with culture in its broadest sense and encompasses various artistic, environmental, heritage or educational activities.

The MRC d'Argenteuil draws on the following principles, which are the basis of its Cultural Policy :

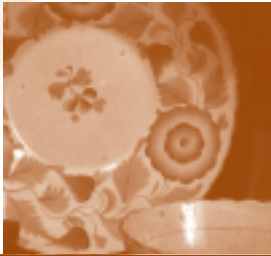
- Cultural education must be a deeply rooted preoccupation of the entire community;
- Culture adds to the quality of life by fostering expression, and the development and well-being of its citizens;
- Culture is an essential and deciding factor in the social and economic development of the region;
- The cultural identity and energy of the MRC d'Argenteuil implies recognizing the importance of creators;
- All heritage (landscapes, material and non-material) is an integral part of the collective wealth and the regional identity. Its retention and enhancement must be included in a sustainable development perspective.



General directions

major concerns

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Preoccupied by its future and considering that culture is a valuable asset that must be recognized, disseminated and made available to its population and visitors, the MRC d'Argenteuil and its municipalities, with respect to their individual prerogatives, agree to :

- **Encourage and nurture** access to culture for all citizens;
- **Foster** development of the cultural identity of the community;
- **Improve** the cultural component of the lives of citizens;
- **Encourage and support** professional artists, professional workers in culture and cultural organizations in the territory;
- **Promote and encourage** the development of both material and non-material heritage;
- **Encourage and support** municipalities that would like to develop a Cultural Policy.



Considering the cultural potential of the region including the strengths and weaknesses of each sector, the MRC d'Argenteuil, in partnership with its municipalities and in relation to the orientations listed above, sees the following paths for action :

Encourage and nurture access to culture for all citizens

- Mobilize citizens in relation to the cultural life of their locality and of their MRC;
- Provide citizens with the opportunity to become familiar with the cultural life of their locality and of their MRC - to be engaged in it and to participate in it;
- Promote the creation, advertising and promotion of cultural activities;
- Maintain and increase the support offered for all cultural activities for citizens of all ages and cultures;
- Encourage municipalities to develop consolidated information tools pertaining to cultural activities or events in their locality and in their MRC.

Foster development of the cultural identity of the community

- Participate in increasing awareness of the cultural identity of the MRC and its municipalities;
- Recognize and support biculturalism in the MRC territory.



Improve the cultural component of the lives of citizens

- Encourage consensus building within the MRC and develop partnerships with the municipalities in the MRC, surrounding MRC's, cultural organizations, educational institutions and any other pertinent organization;
- Suggest a marketing strategy for the territory covered by the municipalities in order to raise awareness about the importance of the role of libraries and the services offered by them in the MRC;
- Foster the creation or renovation of facilities and proper equipment for cultural activities.

Encourage and support professional artists, professional workers in culture and cultural organizations in the territory

- Ensure the presence of a support person mandated to implement the Cultural Policy;
- Put in place a policy to purchase artistic works and encourage the municipalities to do the same;
- Maintain and increase support for professional artists, cultural organizations and culture professionals;
- Integrate local creators into events and activities that take place outside the MRC.



Avenues for action objectives

Promote and encourage the development of both material and non-material heritage

- Encourage recognition of the values of heritage landscapes, buildings, furniture and history;
- Promote the reuse of heritage and religious buildings for public needs;
- Encourage the owners of heritage residences to be aware of the importance of saving the distinct characteristics of their buildings;
- Encourage the passing of municipal bylaws that protect buildings with heritage character from being demolished and landscapes from damage;
- Encourage the transmission of history, knowledge and traditional know-how by using communications tools already in place such as the local radio station, public access television, local weeklies, municipal information bulletins, exhibits, Internet sites, etc.

Encourage and support municipalities that would like to develop a Cultural Policy

- Create awareness among the municipalities concerning the importance of adopting a Cultural Policy.

Conclusion

In its Cultural Policy, the MRC d'Argenteuil confirms its intent to develop and actively maintain the cultural identity of the region.

This Cultural Policy derives from the uniqueness of the Argenteuil culture and draws an up to date picture of the situation. This document will provide guidance to the Mayor's Council as to the measures to implement in the cultural landscape for the coming years. As a framework, it can be referenced by the education milieu, organizations of various sectors and the population as a whole. Together for the same goals!

Once this document has been adopted, the MRC d'Argenteuil shall develop a concrete plan of action for the future and maintain the application and follow up of the stated goals.

The Mayor's Council of the MRC d'Argenteuil wishes to thank the artists, organizations and persons who, in one way or another, contributed to the formulation of this cultural policy

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Mayor of Saint-André d'Argenteuil
and Committee President

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Conseil de la Culture des Laurentides :

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Representatives from the Arts and Culture milieu :

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