

Alyson Champ

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About the Artist

Alyson Champ is a multidisciplinary artist known for her paintings, drawings, collages, found-object assemblages, sculptures, and installations. While she has a deep appreciation for traditional art techniques, Alyson often combines them in unconventional ways.

Born and raised in the Chateauguay Valley, Alyson draws creative inspiration from her vibrant rural community. Her work explores themes of land use and value, the loss of biodiversity in nature and agriculture, and the encroachment of suburban sprawl on agricultural land. Alyson aims to highlight these pressing issues through her art, sparking meaningful conversations by bringing locally relevant projects directly to her community.

Alyson received her artistic training at the Saidye Bronfman School and Concordia University in Montréal. She regularly exhibits her work in solo and group exhibitions in galleries, artist-run spaces, and regional museums both in Canada and internationally. She has been awarded several grants by the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Beyond her visual art practice, Alyson is a classically trained violinist with an academic background in philosophy and art history. She teaches art classes for adults and children and writes about art for the regional newspaper, *The Gleaner*. Alyson lives and works in Saint-Chrysostome.

About This Project

“Étalement” (“Sprawl”) is an installation project that visually explores the impact of urban development on farmland within the Montérégie-Ouest region of Quebec. It was made possible with support from the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* (CALQ), the *Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing* (MAMH), the MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent, The Livestock Breeders Association, and other private donors.

Only 2% of Québec’s territory is farmland. The Montérégie-Ouest contains some of the best farmland in the province, along with several growing municipalities. While agricultural land is protected, land policy merely slows the pace of development.

Housing costs and lifestyle preferences have contributed to the flight of residents from urban centers. Simultaneously, struggling rural towns seek expansion through population growth and business investment to survive.

Sprawl drives both biodiversity loss and increased carbon emissions. Climate change has made food production more precarious. We cannot predict how much arable land will be needed in the future or what the conditions for farming will be. Once farmland is gone, it is almost impossible to reclaim.

Land Acknowledgement

“Étalement” explores land use in the Montérégie-Ouest from a settler perspective. The artist respectfully acknowledges that the land in question is the traditional territory of the Mohawk people.

A Word from the Artist

An installation can be described as a multi-part art project that transforms a space and is created around a single theme. My current installation project, “Étalement,” was inspired by changes I observed in my local landscape. To create the project, I explored six local sites (Beauharnois, St-Urbain, Ste-Martine, Howick, Ormstown, St-Étienne) where agricultural lands collide with box stores and subdivisions.

The first part of “Étalement” was the creation of a large wooden folding screen, 2.3 metres high and 4.3 metres long. On one side are two acrylic paintings arranged in six equal sections of alternating panels that show farmland, developed land, or a mix of both landscapes, depending on where you are standing. In the recessed niches on the reverse side, I created assemblages from objects found at construction and agricultural sites.

I then made a series of charcoal drawings to further explore the local sites where farmland and development meet, capturing the visual tension of these in-between spaces and telling the story of their environments.

By visually exploring the impact of urban development on farmland, my intention is to show how art can help us think and talk about a locally relevant, globally significant, and complex issue.