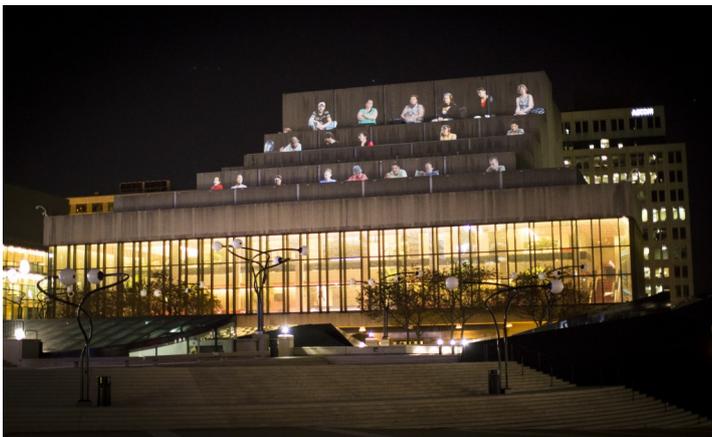# THE ART NEWSPAPER

Brother, can you spare some screen time?

Artist works with Canada's homeless population for Montreal Biennial project

By Pac Pobric. Published online: 20 October 2014

Homeless Projection: Place des Arts is being screened on the façade of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Kes Tagney, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York

The Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko has worked with Montreal's homeless population to create a politically engaged light projection for the 2014 Biennale de Montréal (22 October-4 January 2015).

For the piece *Homeless Projection: Place des Arts*, Wodiczko worked for almost a year with St Michael's Mission, a local non-profit that supports Montreal's poorest, and interviewed 22 homeless people about their life experiences. The resulting films, in which they tell their stories or sing songs, are being screened on the façade of the Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, on select evenings until 23 November.

Wodiczko says that the projection high above the street level reverses the usual relationship between the homeless and the rest of the city. "Usually, we are tall and they are sitting or laying on the ground," he says. "They see the city from the bottom, from want and poverty. This time, they'll be above us, so we will feel smaller. The issue is not so much to make them bigger, but to make us smaller."

The artist hopes the work will humanise a community that is rarely heard from. For that reason, he tries to keep his input minimal. "I don't really interview people," Wodiczko says. "I just create the conditions for them to speak. It's not like I have one statement to make. I'm not waving a flag at the public to tell them about my convictions."

After the exhibition is over, he hopes the films continue to affect the lives of the people involved. "If they make sense of the project for themselves afterwards, then maybe it's a success. If they don't, that's my failure, because it means I did not give them a real chance."