

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL STUDENTS ENGAGED IN PLANNING  
“KOBÉ, UNESCO CITY OF DESIGN”**

**Montréal, October 19, 2009** — Kobe City, Japan, and its Mayor, Yada Tatsuo, will host the sixth edition of the Workshop\_atelier/terrain (WAT), an international project of the UNESCO Chair in Landscape and Environmental Design at Université de Montréal (CUPEUM), from November 8 to 21. With the theme “*Kobe in Landscape – 12 Urban Design Projects*,” the WAT, bringing together 13 universities, will be an opportunity to exchange ideas on urban landscapes and generate urban design projects for Kobe City.

Under the scientific direction of the CUPEUM, this transdisciplinary academic activity will bring together 11 professors and 47 students from eight countries in five regions of the globe: Japan, China, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Italy and Canada. Eight students from Université de Montréal’s School of Architecture and School of Landscape Architecture will be making the trip this year to Kobe, a city whose landscapes bear similarities to those of Montréal.

“This one-of-a-kind international co-operative initiative will gather together students as well as professors who are enthusiastic about architecture, landscape architecture and urban design, and who will draw on their cultural expression, creativity and talent to imagine the future of Kobe City,” remarks Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec, the professor in charge of the UNESCO WATs. “This gathering will be a locus for debate and prospective creation designed to generate solutions for the repurposing of key highway, industrial and port infrastructures, the highlighting of Kobe’s emblematic landscapes (mountain and sea), and the redeployment of habitats and public spaces in the city’s heritage districts. The challenge is a daunting one, and definitely worthy of an activity involving dialogue rich in teachings from five distinct regions of the world.”

While in Kobe, participating students will develop urban design projects for various spaces in the downtown core. After intensive dialogue and discussions, the projects will be assessed by an international UNESCO jury. They will subsequently be exhibited at Kobe Design University as well as by Kobe City, which will in turn be responsible for implementing them.

The CUPEUM WAT\_Kobe is an international activity arising from Kobe’s designation as a UNESCO City of Design, a distinction shared with the city of Montréal.

The WAT, under the aegis of UNESCO and its specific programs MOST (Management of Social Transformations), MAB (Man and Biosphere) and WHC (World Heritage Centre), offers a genuine co-operative approach to local government, and is also receiving support from the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as well as its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Embassy of Canada to Japan, the Délégation générale du Québec in Tokyo, the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO, the Ministère des Relations internationales du Québec, the Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse, the Consulate General of Japan at Montréal, the Ville de Montréal and the Université de Montréal’s Office of International Relations.

As with all previous WATs (Morocco 2004, Lebanon 2005, Tunisia 2006, Republic of Korea 2007 and China 2008), the results of this year's workshop will be deposited in the CUPEUM's virtual library, on its website at <http://www.unesco-paysage.umontreal.ca/activites-pedagogiques-kobe.html>. They will also be collected into a book to be published in 2011 by the Presses de l'Université de Montréal as part of its "Architecture de paysage" collection, to be distributed through the university networks and via selected architecture booksellers in various countries.

**Opening Ceremony and Introductory Seminar:**

November 9 and 10, 2009                      Fruit and Flower Park, Kobe, Japan

**Public presentations, Jury, Closing and Medals Ceremony:**

November 20, 2009                      Kobe Design University, Japan

**Exhibitions:**

November 20 to 27, 2009                      Kobe Design University, Japan

December 7 to 20, 2009                      Kobe City (Japan)

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