

Circoluza

Explore the Wonderful World of Circus Arts



Teacher's Guide



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Introduction

This teacher's guide was designed to accompany the digital exhibition [Circoluza: Explore the Wonderful World of the Circus Arts](#).

Children are given a mission to explore the collection of TOHU (a circus-specialized theatre in Montréal, Québec, Canada), including never-before-seen 360-degree videos and interviews with circus professionals, and find content that helps them discover what it's like to be a circus artist. Throughout their quest, children learn about the different circus disciplines and explore the otherwise inaccessible backstage areas at a circus. They discover the steps involved in producing a circus show, including training the artists, developing the acts and preparing its technical elements.

This project was made possible by the Digital Museums Canada investment program. Digital Museums Canada is administered by the Canadian Museum of History with the financial support of the Government of Canada.



How to

Use this Site

Accessible for everyone

There are two versions of the *Circoluza* exhibition:

- Immersive: Deep dive into the world of circus arts through 360 degree videos and photos
- Simplified: Accessible site that supports all Internet connection types and does not require Javascript

The exhibition is even suitable for children still learning to read since all content is in audio form.

Both versions are accessible to children with hearing or visual impairments. All content is subtitled and/or accompanied by a transcription. Several methods of navigation are available.

Navigation tips

Children should start with the welcome video. If they do not understand how to explore the 360-degree video and exhibition, the Help page gives explanations.

Each section is introduced by a 360-degree video. We recommend all visitors watch these videos. In the 360-degree photo, children can click to learn more about the selected work or video.

Game

Each time a child clicks on content, a window opens with information about the work or video and the child wins a star. Collected stars appear in their inventory at the bottom of the page.

Details about the game are available [HERE](#)



Educational

Activities

Activity 1

Life as....

Circus Artists in the Past

Level: Grades 5 and 6

Duration: Two 90-minute periods; part can be done at home.

Summary

Students research a circus artist, write a biography of the artist in the first person and roleplay the artist.

Curriculum Connections

Social Sciences/Humanities/Social Studies

Drama

Languages

Digital Literacy

Suggested Lesson Plan

- Ask students if they know any circus artists, past or present.
- Ask students to look at the exhibition's History section and watch a few of the videos of historic artists (Choose from: Chocolat, P. T. Barnum, Enkhtsetseg Lodoi or Annie Fratellini). This part can be done in groups at school or alone at home.
- Explain that the next step is for students to bring one of the circus artists back to life. Here is how:

Choose one circus artist from the past and find information about their life. You can provide a list of artist names or let them search on the Internet.

Write a short biography in the first person. Suggested length: 200 words.

Present the artist to the class by reading their biography, playing the artist (they could even wear a costume) or creating an audio or video file.

Appendix

Digging Deeper

History of the Circus (page 16)

Some examples of historical circus artists from Québec and the rest of Canada

Louis Cyr – French-Canadian strongman – 1863-1912 – Québec

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/louis-cyr>

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cyr_louis_14F.html

Léon DuPerré – French-Canadian unicyclist – 1886-1943 – Québec

<https://ecolenationaledecirque.ca/en/school/library/leon-duperre-collection>

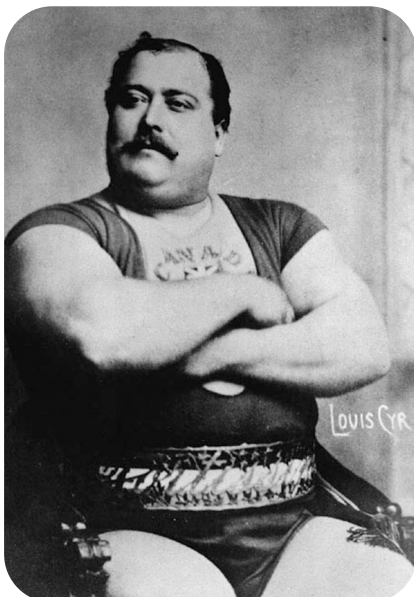
Source: Léon DuPerré Collection, National Circus School Library

Anna Swan – Giantess – 1846-1888 – Nova Scotia

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/swan_anna_haining_11F.html

Édouard Beaupré known as Beaupré the giant – 1881-1904 – Saskatchewan

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/beaupre_edouard_13F.html



Louis
Cyr



Édouard
Beaupré

Activity 2

The Circus and Emotions¹

Level: Grades 1 to 6

Duration: 45 minutes

Summary

Students use music or the visual arts to express the emotions they feel while watching a contemporary circus performance.

Curriculum Connections

Visual arts

Music

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- Ask the students if they have ever seen a contemporary circus show. If they have, what emotions did they feel? Which did they like and which did they like less? If most of the students have never seen a show, skip to the next step.

- Ask students to follow these steps:

- Watch several videos from the Contemporary Circus or Disciplines sections

- Choose the video you like the most

- Think about the emotions you felt watching the video.

- Choose whether to focus on visual arts or music.

- Option 1: Music

- Using an instrument, students produce sounds that can express different emotions

- Using different instruments, students try to find sounds to accompany various actions (sound effects).

- Option 2: Visual arts

- Drawing inspiration from the video they chose and the emotions it made them feel, students recreate the excerpt from the show in their way and in the medium of their choice.

¹ Inspired by the Aubergine circus company: laubergine.qc.ca/en/

Activity 3

Memory Game

Activity to do at home

Suggested Lesson Plan

- Print the cards in Appendix A and arrange them face down on a table
- Children can play alone or in a group
- Ask them to match up pairs of identical pictures
- They can then search through the exhibition for the pictures to find out more about them.

Appendix A



8



9

Activity 4

Develop a Comedy Routine with a Prop

Level: Grades 1 to 6

Duration: 45 minutes to 2 hours

Summary

Students create a clown act using everyday objects.

Curriculum Connections

Create, interpret and appreciate works of drama

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- Start with a discussion about clowns with your students or children. Learn more about clowns by reading Annex D.
- Explain that today, they will become clowns and create a comedy routine using a prop
- Show them the following videos:

Jamie Adkins, [Circus Incognito](#)

Charlie Chaplin, [The Gold Rush – Roll Dance](#)

Dimitri Clown, [Porteur -Kurztrailer](#) (45 First seconds)

The video of the clown in the Circoluza exhibition

- Now ask each child to choose an object they use everyday (e.g. a pencil, chair or glass) and give them the following instructions:

Start by taking some time to observe and study the object you chose in detail.

Then imagine that the object is alive and is talking to you.

Imagine how you'd react to this object talking to you. Clowns are naive and get surprised or scared at the tiniest thing. Clowns don't necessarily make the audience laugh. The audience laughs at them instead. Imagine and perform the reactions you could have as a clown faced with this moving and talking object. Try to make it so that the object is making the clown scared, then excited and finally sad. End with the object deciding to become friends with you, the clown.

Perform this sequence for your family or class.

Additional resources: Accompanying handbook for *The Big Bad Wolf*, a show produced by DynamO Théâtre

Activity 5

Circus terminology

Activity to do at home

In the puzzle, find the hidden words listed in bold below. Words may be placed horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

E	Q	U	E	S	T	R	I	A	N	P
A	I	C	H	A	O	I	T	E	A	U
F	P	L	U	X	H	B	O	L	R	C
O	T	O	P	Y	U	A	H	O	N	O
P	F	W	O	P	Y	R	A	M	I	D
J	E	N	G	L	E	N	J	Z	M	T
I	R	L	S	Q	J	U	G	G	L	E
S	T	R	O	N	G	M	A	N	Q	M
S	R	P	H	I	C	I	R	Q	U	E
T	R	A	P	E	Z	E	L	J	D	S
C	O	S	T	U	M	E	S	P	L	F

Big **Top**: A tent set up outdoors for circus shows

Clown: Circus funniest character

Equestrian: A man who performs acrobatics on a horse

To **juggle**: The action of tossing and catching several objects at a time, such as balls

Strongman: A man who can carry very heavy objects

Barnum: An American man who owned a very famous circus

Trapeze: A bar suspended by two ropes used for performing aerial acrobatics

TOHU: A circus performance hall in Montréal

Costumes: The clothes worn by artists in a show

Éloize: A Québec circus company

Human **pyramid**: A pyramid made of several people who climb on one another

Activity 6

Build a Big Top

Level: Grades 1 to 6

Duration: 45 minutes

Summary

Students make a paper or cardboard model of a big top

Curriculum Connections

Visual arts

Suggested Lesson Plan:

- Start with a discussion about big tops with your students or children. For example, ask them if they've ever seen or gone inside a big top. Have them look at the big tops in the [Exhibition spaces section](#) and the image in Appendix B. What are their observations? (the size and shape of the big tops may vary)

This drawing is by Patrick Bouchain, an architect who designs temporary performance structures that can be disassembled and transported.

- Choose one of the activities below to build a big top:

[First Palette – Paper Circus Tent](#)

[First Palette – Circus Diorama and Puppet Theater](#)

[L'Atelier Canson](#) (in french only)

[Debobrico](#) (in french only)

- Print the drawings in Appendix C and have the children cut out the figures to play with them in their big tops.

Activity 7

Tutorials for Various Circus Disciplines

- [Learn to juggle and make your own juggling balls](#) with the Montréal-based juggler Jimmy Gonzalez and TOHU
- Learn different circus disciplines with the National Circus School of Montreal and the Cirque du Soleil
- [Multimedia educational kit](#) including written documents and videos on disciplines like the diabolo, pyramids, handstand and acting.
Click on "Techniques de cirque" then click on "English".
- [Cirque du Soleil makeup tutorial](#)



Fact

Sheets

A short history

of the Circus Arts
by Pascal Jacob²

Introduction

The circus arts are undoubtedly one of the most widely shared cultural treasures on this planet. Primarily developed in the West, the sources upon which they have drawn are innumerable. A great number of techniques have origins in the Far East, but their dispersion throughout the world was very rapid: the Silk Road in particular played a determining role in the propagation of several acrobatic disciplines in Europe. Thousands of years old, tightrope walking, acrobatics, balancing, and juggling objects were to become the most prominent circus arts by the end of second half of the 18th century.

Origins

In Lambeth, a suburb of London, a demobilized cavalry officer traced a circle in the grass and dust, crystallizing influences that were at the same time aristocratic and derived from travelling acrobats. By juxtaposing trick equestrian performers and jugglers, he began to shape the foundations of a new form of spectacle. It was there, between two drum rolls and a tumbler's diatribe, swept along by the horses' gallop and the acrobats' virtuosity, that the circus was born.

All accomplished in a track 13 metres in diameter, covered with earth and sawdust for optimum flexibility and resiliency. The show was composed of equestrian numbers, some acrobatic performances and the first comic elements. Animals in costume would come much later, and at the end of the 19th century the circus underwent a decisive change in its performance codes.

The Modern Circus is Born

Taking refuge in the shelter of buildings of wood, stone and steel as they go, jugglers, clowns and acrobats traveled through Europe. The introduction of the circus tent in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century will give the circus independence and freedom. It became also that much more popular. The reserve until then of a certain societal elite, it now sought to conquer increasingly larger audiences. It is the time of gigantism in Germany and of boundless expansion in the United States. Beginning in the 1930s, the circus also played an important role in the development of cultural policy in the Soviet Union; the opening of the Moscow Circus School is a major event, instituting an unprecedented pedagogical and artistic vehicle for the West. It is also as decisive a development for circus arts as the emergence of exoticism 50 years earlier, or the supremacy of the big top as an essential vector of communication, at the same time an aesthetic convention and performance arena.

An Era of Renewal

At the beginning of the 1970s, the circus arts experienced a new revolution, initiated on the heels of the political and social upheaval at the close of the 1960s. In France, the United States, Australia and Scandinavia, many existing models were questioned, and the circus undergoes an extraordinary revival there.

The experiments that evolve in these countries do not all hold the same importance; some will be transitory. But an alternate understanding of acrobatic moves, a new artistic significance granted to technique, will become intrinsic over two decades and contribute to the circus arts gaining a major place on the playing field of Western culture.

The most ancient techniques, revisited and transcended by several generations of creators, will acquire artistic autonomy and be put at the disposal of a global community. Today, juggling, acrobatics, clowning or the flying trapeze are regarded as essential disciplines in conceiving a potential performance. It is no longer necessarily the juxtaposition of numbers that ensures the quality of the show, but increasingly a single discipline that broadens and enlivens a creation.

Fragmented, evolving, the circus appears somewhat divided, from the point of view of its techniques and artists, and also of its audience. Multiple, changing, it lives.

Chronology of events

Chronology of Events in the History of the Circus in Québec by Anna-Karyna Barlati³

18th century

- 1768 – Birth of the modern circus** In London the initiative of a demobilized soldier, Philip Astley, sees the first spectacle linking trick horseback riders and acrobatic prowess. Nevertheless, its creator was not to baptize it as such: it was not until 1782 and Charles Hughes that the term “circus” would come to identify an equestrian and acrobatic show.
- 1793 – The modern circus arrives in America** British equestrian Bill Ricketts settles in Philadelphia with his troupe. He builds a resident circus there and establishes this new form of spectacle in America.
- 1797 – Establishment of the circus arts in Quebec** British equestrian John Bill Ricketts visits Montreal for six months and introduces circus arts to Quebec.

19th century

- 1823 – The West & Blanchard** circus tours across Quebec, presenting shows with equestrian acrobatics, tightrope dance, clown and daredevil stunts.
- 1825 – Birth of the big top** In America, Joshua Purdy Brown adapts a tent to accommodate his trick riding show: the “big top,” or circus tent, is born.
- 1833 – Montrealer Joseph Édouard Guilbault founds Guilbault's Botanic and Zoological Garden**, whose Glaciarium housed a circus school that was open to acrobats from Quebec and elsewhere as well as several American circuses from 1862 up until 1870.
- 1860 – Quebec acrobat and clown Louis Durand** begins a 35-year career with numerous circuses in the United States, Europe and Asia.
- 1881 – The golden age of the American circus** Barnum and his colleagues make standard the juxtaposed three-ring concept; the American circus enters a growth phase.
- 1889 – Sohmer Park** opens its doors in Montreal as an amusement park; until 1919 it also attracts a great number of acrobats of all origins, especially from Asia.
- 1892 – Quebec strongmen Louis Cyr and Horace Barré** sign a contract with the American Ringling Brothers Circus. Two years later, they launch their own circus that appears on Canadian and American stages.

20th century

- 1906 — In Montreal, [Dominion Park](#) opens, providing performance opportunities for Quebec and international acrobats until 1937.
- 1908 — [Quebec acrobat Léon DuPérré](#) signs a contract with the U.S. company Ringling Brothers Circus, going on to tour more than 100 American cities.
- 1930 — [Troupe Adriano](#), a family company founded by [Adrien Tremblay](#), produces vaudeville shows in which various acrobatic numbers are performed across Quebec up until 1943.
- 1971 — [Creation of Cirque Gatini in Quebec](#)
- 1977 — Founding of the first Bourses Louis Merlin, the future [Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain](#)
- 1981 — [The École nationale de cirque \(National Circus School\) opens its doors in Montreal](#)
- 1984 — [Founding of Cirque du Soleil](#)
- 1993 — [Founding of Cirque Eloize](#)

21st century

- 2002 — [Founding in Montreal of the company Les 7 doigts de la main.](#)
- 2004 — [TOHU, la Cité des arts du cirque](#), opens in Montreal.
- 2005 — Founding in Saint-Alphonse-Rodriguez of the company [Cirque Alfonse](#).
- 2009 — [The Canada Council for the Arts](#) recognizes the circus as a distinct art form.
- 2010 — Creation of the international festival [MONTRÉAL COMPLÈTEMENT CIRQUE](#), an annual summer celebration of the circus arts.

3 © "[Historical Reference](#)" by Anna-Karyna Barlati for the National Circus School.

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The Six Families

of Circus Disciplines by Anna-Karyna Barlati⁴

Circus disciplines are the specialties in which acrobats work and that involve physical virtuosity and risk, and pushing boundaries. A major source of circus expression, they are also on the cutting edge of new advancements in circus arts, contributing to their technical evolution and the invention of new apparatus. Circus disciplines also encourage acrobatic aesthetic explorations and each requires a specific register of circus movements. They are grouped into broad categories based on the apparatus or rigging used and the skills and abilities required to practice them.

1. Equestrian art

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, after the war, there were many demobilized cavalymen and horses accustomed to difficult battlefield conditions at loose ends. Both contributed to promoting the popularity of show horsemanship that led to the birth of the classical circus. Equestrian arts involve working with one or more horses to perform dressage, academic riding, vaulting, and so forth. Some equestrian disciplines, such as the musical ride, high school or garrocha, require the rider to be seated on the horse while for others like voltige or the Hungarian post the acrobat must stand on the back of a galloping horse. Bareback numbers feature horses without a saddle or harness guided by their trainer as they perform choreography.

2. Floor acrobatics

These ancient disciplines of strength form the foundation of circus arts. Acrobatics consist of executing figures that may involve jumps, balances or contortion on the floor. Of Greek origin, the word "acrobatics" means "one who walks on tiptoe." Banquine, balance beam, Russian bar, hand-to-hand and trampoline are all floor acrobatic disciplines.

3. Aerial acrobatics

Aerial acrobatics likely originated with the practice of tightrope dancing at medieval fairs. They encompass all disciplines requiring the rigging of an apparatus at a height, e.g., a bar, rope, trapeze, silk, etc. With the exception of tightrope performers, aerial acrobats use the force of their arms and hands to lift or move their own body or that of their partners. Catchers or flyers perform at a height in a fixed position, or while swinging or flying. Aerial hoops, rings, chains or straps are among the aerial acrobatic apparatus used.

4. Balancing

In ancient times, tightrope walking was prevalent in Greece and Rome, while balancing acts executed atop long bamboo poles were very popular in Asia. Balance is a fundamental quality for circus artists and physical balancing prowess engages the entire body of the acrobat, alone or with a partner. An acrobat may balance on a surface reduced to the minimum, or a stand or object. Through controlling, stabilizing or immobilizing either the human body or objects in extraordinary and original positions, balancing plays with the laws of gravity. The more the point of contact with the ground is reduced and is raised, the more spectacular the feat. Balancing combines several disciplines and uses techniques on the floor, close to the ground or at a height. A wide variety of apparatuses and accessories, such as the bicycle, balance ball, tightrope or slack line may be used.

5. Clowning art

Derived from the English comedy of pre-Shakespearean times, the clown was originally a comic character, a country jester. Clowns first appeared in equestrian and acrobatic burlesque, and then became broadly comic and grotesque characters within pantomime and circus shows. Clowning arts combine acting, mime, farce and slapstick to create sketches that make audiences laugh. The first famous pantomime clown was Joey Grimaldi (1778-1837).

6. Juggling

Juggling is the family matriarch of the manipulation disciplines. This adroit and agile art can be traced to the days of antiquity, and may be practiced individually or in groups. Juggling involves tossing into the air or along the ground several objects that may be of any kind, including rings, balls, clubs and so forth, without letting them fall and timing their relaunch so that they may be caught again. Juggling practice is frequently combined with another circus discipline such as unicycle, tightrope, rola-bola, etc. There are also subcategories of juggling; balancing juggling, for instance, involves balancing various objects—bowls, glasses, balloons, and the like—often stacked on the head, forehead, or feet.

The background is a solid dark gray. A large, vibrant pink circle is positioned in the upper-middle section. A diagonal band of a slightly lighter pink shade runs from the top-left corner towards the center, partially overlapping the pink circle.

Glossary

Glossary

Acrobatics: See the disciplines fact sheet p. 20-21

Equestrian arts: Acts involving artists performing acrobatics on the backs of galloping horses or dressage acts in which horses perform a series of figures.

Auguste: A comic clown who is a bit of a fool and the white clown's punching bag. He often wears oversized clothes, a red nose and a wig.

Big Top: A tent set up outdoors for circus shows.

Humbug: A fraud or imposter.

Circus artist: A person who belongs to the world of the circus arts.

Permanent circus: A building designed for circus shows.

Contortion: The practice of extreme physical flexibility that allows the contortionist to perform extreme stretching, flexing and bending of the arms and legs.⁵

Equestrian/Equestrienne: An artist who performs acrobatics with a horse.

Slave: A person who is not free, who is bought or sold as private property by other people, and forced to work without being paid.

Rigger: A person who ensures that the equipment used by the artists is installed securely. They raise and lower the different apparatus.

Inuit: An Indigenous people that lives in northern Canada, Alaska and northern Europe.

Juggler: A circus artist who tosses and catches several objects at a time, like balls.

Bareback (with horses): An equestrian discipline practised without any equipment. Artists use their bodies and voice to communicate with their horses.

Dressing room: Where artists get ready for a show and change out of their costumes after the show.

Hand to hand: A discipline performed by two or more acrobats in which the carrier executes various moves involving strength, balance and elevation and flexibility by carrying the flyer on their hands or sometimes the head.

Unicycle: A bicycle with a single wheel.

Ring: A round stage where circus performances are presented.

Cyr wheel: Acrobatic discipline composed of a simple metal circle in which an acrobat moves. Using their own impetus, they launch into endless turns while performing executing acrobatics.⁶

Storyboard: A document that breaks a show down into scenes, each illustrated in one or more drawings.

Show technician: A person who sets up the furniture, apparatus and sets for a show in keeping with safety regulations.

Trapeze: A horizontal bar suspended by two ropes used for aerial acrobatics.

4 © "Circus disciplines" by Anna-Karyna Barlati for the National Circus School.

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Digging
Deeper

How Do You

Become an Acrobat

There are a number of circus schools in Canada, including:


ORGANISME	CITY	PROVINCE
Flip Factory	Calgary	Alberta
Firefly Circus Academy	Edmonton	Alberta
Circus West (Cirkids)	Vancouver	British Columbia
Vancouver Circus School	Vancouver	British Columbia
Momentum Aerial - Gym Winnipeg	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Prairie Circus Arts	Winnipeg	Manitoba
Atlantic Cirque Agency & School	Dartmouth	Nova Scotia
Circus Circle / Halifax Circus	Halifax	Nova Scotia
The Toronto School of Circus Arts	Toronto	Ontario
Ottawa Circus School	Ottawa	Ontario
Big Top School of Circus Arts	Newmarket	Ontario
Zacada Circus School	Stoney Creek	Ontario
Zero Gravity Circus	Toronto	Ontario
École nationale de cirque	Montréal	Québec
École Horizon Soleil	Saint-Eustache	Québec
Flip Cirque	Ste-Adèle	Québec
École de Cirque Polyvalente Disraeli	Disraeli	Québec
École de cirque de Québec	Québec	Québec
École de cirque de Verdun	Verdun	Québec
École de cirque de Sherbrooke	Sherbrooke	Québec
École de cirque et de gymnastique de Châteauguay	Châteauguay	Québec
École de cirque VireVolte	Mirabel	Québec
École du Papillon-bleu	Vaudreuil-Dorion	Québec
Sodam /École Cirkana	Mascouche	Québec
Cirrus Cirkus	St-Lin-Laurentides	Québec
École de cirque des îles de la Madeleine	L'Étang-du-Nord	Québec
iFly Aerial Arts	Saint-John's	Newfoundland

Where Can You See Circus Shows

Many theatres, performance halls and festivals around Canada present circus shows. We recommend checking the arts and culture listings for your community.

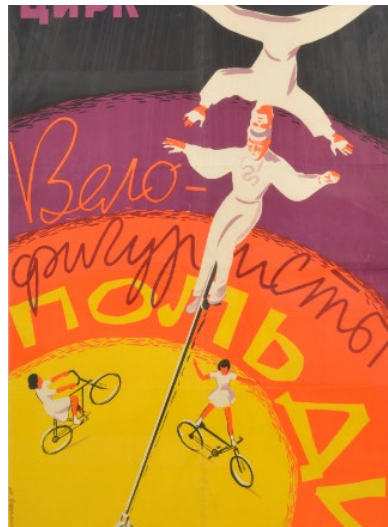
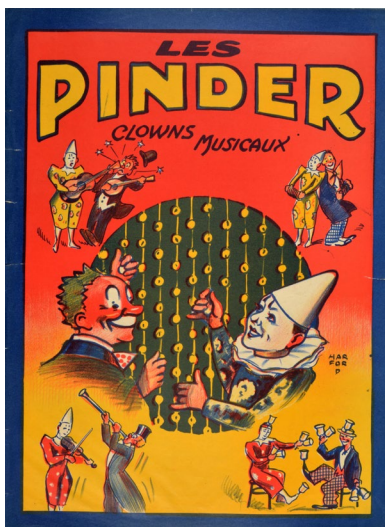
A few suggestions:

La TOHU	Montréal	Québec
The Cultch	Vancouver	British Columbia
Living Things Festival	Kelowna	British Columbia
Alberta Circus Arts Festival	Edmonton	Alberta
St John's Circus Festival	Saint-John's	Newfoundland
Festival de cirque des Îles	Îles de la Madeleine	Québec
Festival de Cirque Dieppe	Dieppe	New-Brunswick

The background is a solid dark gray. A large, vibrant pink circle is positioned in the upper-middle section. A diagonal band of a slightly lighter shade of pink runs from the top-left corner towards the center, partially overlapping the pink circle.

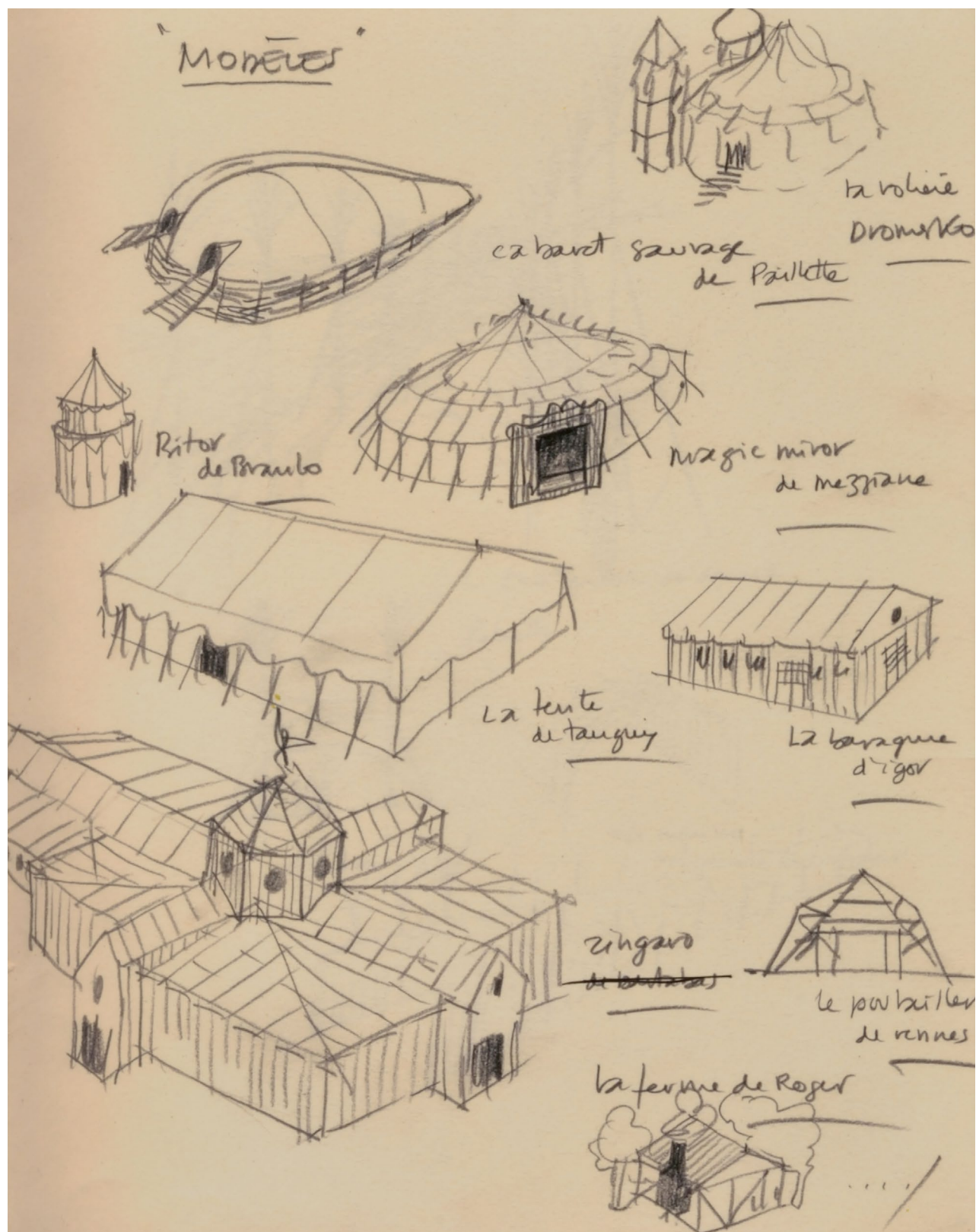
Appendices

Appendix A

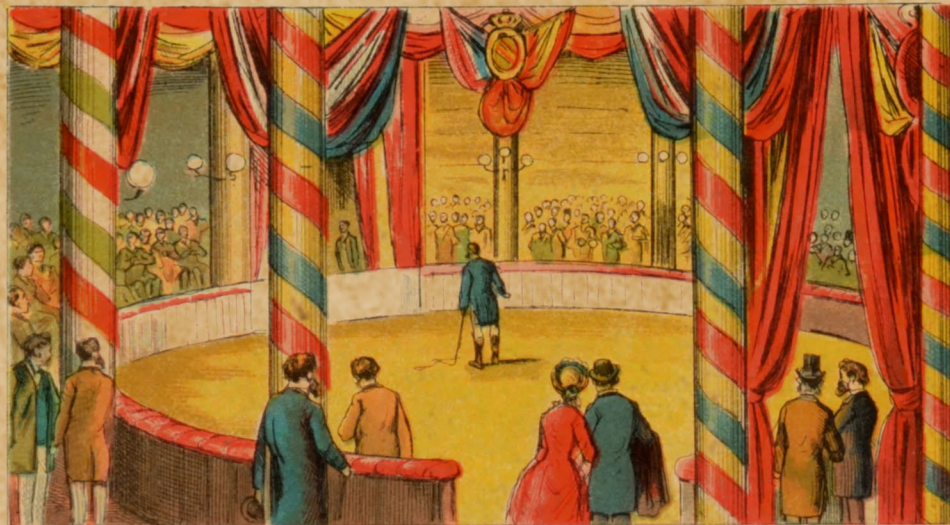




Appendix B



Appendix C





Appendix D

The clown and its environment

The Clown

The first circuses didn't star clowns: the public rather came to admire acrobats and animal tamers. In fact, clowns would appear early in the show to play "sketches" and encourage spectators to move inside the circus tent. This is why their brief scenes are called "entrées," French for "entrance." Then, the clowns would play interludes between acts to keep the audience's attention while the athletes would prepare for their next stunts.

The audience was delighted by the clowns' entrées and antics, so they gradually gained status and their sketches became more musical. At the end of the 19th century, clowns shifted to performing music-halls¹, which allowed them to find their way into variety shows and become more verbal. Towards the middle of the 20th century, clowns advanced into theaters where they enriched their characters with dramatic progressions and themes, enabling them to create complete plays.

All artists who set out to discover their own inner clown embark on a journey that takes them deep inside themselves. Discovering your inner clown is an act of creation that requires you to engage your whole being, down to its most hidden dimensions. Clowns bring out their creator's playful spirit and—wanting to have fun at all costs and continue amusing the audience—they don't let social conventions stop them. Clowns aren't afraid to cross the line. They live in the present moment and draw the audience into their world to bring people back in touch with their own humanity.



The Marx Brothers are American comedians from New York who made a career in cinema, as well as on television and on stage.



As Dario Fo², a famous Italian author, wrote, "The clown relies on the voice, body, gestures, music and mask. Clowns must be entertainers and know how to do back flips. The clown must know how to fall, play a musical instrument, be knowledgeable about stage design." Which makes us realize that there is more to being a clown than gesticulating on a stage. It is above all the work of a lifetime on what it means to be human.

The character

It is the characters that bring a story to life. They make us laugh, think and cry, and stick in our memory. A lot of time must be devoted to "developing characters" in order to create new worlds, but also to help the actors get into their roles and play them convincingly. Several techniques can be used to reach that goal.

¹ This type of variety show was introduced around 1848 and incorporated songs, comedy acts, and sometimes attractions.
Source: **Larousse dictionary**

² Dario Fo is an Italian writer, direct heir to the Tabarins and Harlequins, who wrote zany and political comedies.

The clown entrée

The clown entrée is an act designed to put the main focus on comedy, whereas the circus disciplines (juggling, acrobatics, music, etc.) serve only as secondary elements. There is not much dialogue: good clowns are never talkative. We must not forget that the dialogue is also subject to change from one day to another to adapt to each audience's reaction and depending on what the clown remembers, the general atmosphere, and the unpredictability of improvisation.

The right word to describe a clown's performance is neither "act" nor "skit." It seems that the word "entrée" comes from the fact that the first comic effect is produced by the very appearance of the clown on the stage. Originally, these entrées served as a mere framework that, after being used over and over again, gradually gave birth to a repertoire of routines.

The clown entrée is one of the most difficult facets of the show to fine tune as it requires extreme attention to detail. It must run like a Swiss watch! Comedy is so fragile that the effectiveness of a comic effect must be constantly reassessed. It takes a lot of patience to develop a gag to the point of being able to perform it successfully. Clowns must continually readjust, through a series of trial and error. Sometimes, changing only one small detail makes the whole act fall flat. This is why a clown entrée sometimes requires a high level of elaboration.

Charlie Chaplin - *La Ruée vers l'or* - La danse des petits pains :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DLdMa98JdM>

Dimitri Clown - *Porteur* - Kurztrailer : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci2w3hh6Kjg>

Amo Gulinello - *Cirque du Soleil - Saltimbanco* - Clown René Bazinet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rqkQPMwW-U>



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Makeup

A clown's makeup is not mere decoration. On the contrary, it must complement the comedian's face, features and expressions. In addition, it's not enough to put on clown makeup to convince the audience that what they're seeing is a clown. Authentic clowns find their own personal makeup design. It evolves in stages. What's more, the face alone is worthless if it doesn't harmonize with the clown's look. It's the combination of these two aspects—the makeup and the character—that makes the clown whole.