

**HEARTWARMING HUMANITY**  
COMMUNITY SPIRIT SPARKS THE 10TH  
EDITION OF ART-ACTIVIST  
"MANIFESTIVAL" ÉTAT D'URGENCE

by Robyn Fadden

Everyone's heard the cliché "the true spirit of the holiday season" – we might roll our eyes at first, but that spirit is undeniable when you're standing in the middle of Place Émilie-Gamelin with hundreds of Montrealers from all walks of life, gathered for one good reason: to protect basic human rights. A heartwarming sense of community solidarity just tends to naturally follow.

And it will occur over the course of five days at the 10th edition of État d'urgence, a public art "Manifestival" tied to Amnesty International's 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the rights of homeless people in our city. Annie Roy, co-founder of Montreal's art-activist group Action Terroriste Socialement Acceptable (ATSA), the group behind the event, says, "There are always relationships to make with people and because there are so many things to see artistically with others, you feel some solidarity – that homeless people are human beings and you can talk to them." Over the past 10 years, the number of artists, activists and community members coming together at État d'urgence has grown to become a microcosm of society itself, she adds.

The effort of staging a five-day, 24-hour arts, culture and activist event is great, but the ATSA name has spread far over the past 10 years, so despite having over 450 work shifts to fill, Roy says that volunteers have already registered for a lot of them. More volunteers is never a bad thing though, especially during the night shifts. And donations to ATSA can be made in the name of friends as well as in sponsorship of seats for the event's meals – all donated and organized by local well-known restaurateurs, including Nov. 29's five-course gastronomical feast Banquet Cochon.

If you're looking for socially responsible stocking stuffers – like bombed-out toy cars on keychains – ATSA's temporary project/store, Change, (at the corner of Marie-Anne and St-Laurent Blvd.) has extended its existence until Dec. 24. The store also displays a brief and colourful history of the organization and sells copies of their bilingual 10-year anniversary book.

More information on État d'urgence including event schedules, volunteering and donations, as well as a comprehensive overview of ATSA, can be found at [www.atsa.qc.ca](http://www.atsa.qc.ca). (˘)

**10th edition of État d'urgence**

at Place Émilie-Gamelin (next to Berri-UQAM metro), Nov. 26–30

11/27/2008

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