

# Montreal artists want to leave their mark on Nicaragua

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of The Gazette

Montreal artists leave for Nicaragua next Sunday to paint for a month.

They aren't sure where they're going to stay, what they're going to do, or even whether they've got a

chance. The women, aged from 21 to 29, are mostly students or alumni of Concordia University's fine arts faculty, who will use their art to express support and sympathy for the people of the war-ravaged Central American country.

## part

of the arrangements — primarily the result of poor communication between them and their Nicaraguan contacts — is just part of the experience.

Interested in the people of Nicaragua, not in the politics there," says Evelyne Asals, 21, one of the artists, in an interview.

Not all Marxist-Leninists. They want support for a poor country to make its way."

Sabrina Mathews, 24, another member of the group, suggests that she does play a part in the interest in the country, the result of which is fighting U.S.-backed counter-revolutions.

"It's not just a poor country making its way," she said. "It's a poor country that's being attacked."

The artists, who are of various disciplines, got some practice working together when they painted a mural in the cafe of the Carrefour Latino Americano on Ontario St. E.

That mural depicts a battle against the "monster of imperialism," Mathews said.

The group is called Artifact, which stands for "artists for action."

It has been meeting since March, and is subsidized for 12 months through the Quebec government's Jeunes Volontaires program, and will have received almost \$20,000 in grants by the time its project ends next year.

It has also received money for art supplies from Concordia and raised money through dances and parties.

Artifact will collaborate on its work in Managua with mural students from the National School of Fine Arts there.

Though the artists hope to be able to create a work expressing their anger at the "oppression" of the Nicaraguans by foreign powers, they said they intend to let their Nicaraguan colleagues decide exactly what is to be depicted.

"We feel we can't express the anger of the Nicaraguans because

we're Canadians and it wouldn't be honest," Mathews said, adding, however, that the Canadian content in the piece will somehow still be made evident.

"We want people to see the work and see that this is a work showing Canadian solidarity with them."

"I would like to express anger as well but the imagery is difficult," agreed Kathy Kranias, 21, another artist.

Though the National School of Fine Arts in Managua is co-operating with Artifact by allowing some of its students to participate in the project, the group has had no promise of accommodation.

## Plan to film

Neither has there been any word about a wall.

They're confident, however, that finding a wall will be the least of their problems.

"I don't think the bureaucracy involved in trying to paint a wall will be as heavy there as it is here," Asals said.

As for the fighting, the artists admit they've all had nightmares about it, but fully expect to make it through their visit intact.

They plan to film their experience, and present the results to art students and women's groups next spring.



To paint Nicaraguan mural: Sabrina Mathews, Kathy Kranias and