

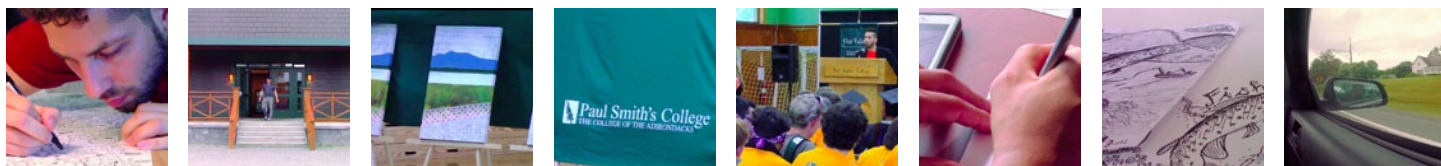
HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH OTHERS?

300+ incoming freshmen students.

5 days to welcome them into the community

One collaborative artwork to capture the moment

[Click here to watch last year's video!](#)



On the busy calendar of artist Aquil Virani, there is always a week at the end of August that is circled months in advance with a big green marker. For the third year straight, Paul Smith's College has invited artist Aquil Virani to create a collaborative artwork with hundreds of incoming freshmen students. On Tuesday, August 25th, the 2015 edition of the "We Are All Artists" project will be unveiled at a freshmen ceremony at Paul Smith's College, featuring the re-drawn doodles of every single freshmen student.

"Aquil's 'We Are All Artists' project is a perfect fit for the college," says Curt Stager, Professor of Natural Sciences at Paul Smith's. "It beautifully captures and contributes to the spirit of community, and it shows that the arts are an important part of who we are and what we do here." It's not surprising then that Aquil has been invited back for a third-straight year; his addition to Paul Smith's Welcome Week has been a budding tradition since 2013.

"I was surprised with the immense impact that Aquil made...the connection he created with the community in such a short period of time," noted Virginia McAleese, Director of the Academic Success Centre. "The collaborative nature of the project provides a perfect means for our new students to begin their journey at Paul Smith's College."

Virani says that the project is also about "revealing the artist in everyone." Students drawings are integrated directly into the artwork, showing them that their contributions are valuable even if they are initially afraid or reluctant to participate. "It's a great starting point for your college career, to get you out of your shell and into the college community."

The piece will be unveiled on Tuesday, August 25th, 2015 at a half-hour convocation ceremony starting at 2pm in the Buxton Annex of the Saunders Sports Complex.



**CLICK HERE TO WATCH
LAST YEAR'S VIDEO!**

During Aquil's second visit at Paul Smith's College, he captured some footage of the whole process and create a short video montage of his experience. You can watch the video at aquil.ca/psc by [clicking here](#).



AQUIL VIRANI

Aquil Virani (b. 1991, Vancouver, BC, Canada) is a freelance visual artist, graphic designer and speaker. While based in Montreal, his creative projects have taken him throughout the world, from Vancouver to Agua Prieta, from New York to Punta Cana. He has been called “the people’s artist” with his collaborative art projects being featured consistently on television, radio, print and online by numerous organisations such as CBC, Global News, CTV, NPR, Canadian Geographic, Applied Arts Magazine and the Montreal Gazette. Aquil recently completed a coast-to-coast Canada-wide art project that featured over 800 drawings about Canadian identity in a single artwork. It is scheduled to be exhibited at the *Canadian Museum of Immigration* in 2016. He believes that we are all artists at heart and that we can all experience the joy he feels when creating.

[Click here to watch a video at aquil.ca](http://aquil.ca)

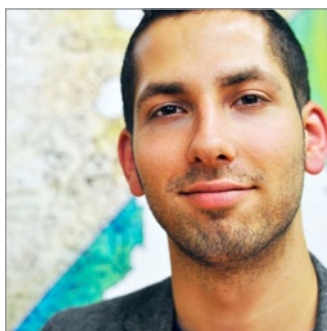
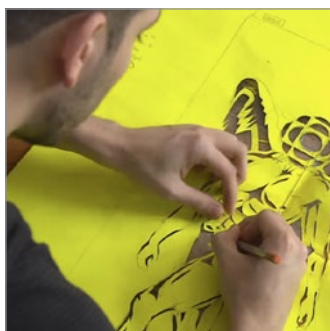


THIS IS WHAT I BELIEVE IN.

In 2012, Montreal's Leacocks Magazine called me "the people's artist." And even though that statement is a bit grandiose, it does clearly describe my mission as an artist - to create accessible, collaborative artwork that includes the contributions of the public and re-ignites the joy of art in everyone.

I engage with project participants who might not consider themselves as "artists" to battle the pretentiousness often associated with visual art. It frustrates me that the fear of not getting something perfect, the pressure of being a serious adult, and the feeling of not understanding art have taken away the joy of drawing from many people who once loved to create. Art is a powerful tool that should be accessible to all. We are all artists.

Collaborative artwork is not only a way to communicate complex ideas, it's also a way to explore a topic and provide a platform for a wide array of perspectives. The art project at Paul Smith's College gets students to reflect on the years ahead of them while creating an art piece that they can remember throughout their college years and beyond.



IN 2015, AQUIL HAS BEEN FEATURED ON:

- "Canada's Self Portrait" (print). Julie Chaumont. **Urbania Magazine**. (Upcoming in August)
- "What is Canada's Self Portrait?" (television). **Breakfast Television Montreal**.
- "Esquisse de l'identité canadienne" (online). Éric Clément. **La Presse**.
- "Drawing Canadian Identity" (radio). Sue Smith. Homerun. **CBC Montreal**.
- "Crowdsourced art on Canadian identity." (online) Carys Mills. **Canadian Geographic**.
- "Drawing Canadian Identity" (online). Kristina Urquhart. **Applied Arts Magazine**.
- "Coast-to-coast collaborative creation" (online). Neil McDevitt. **McGill Reporter**.
- "Drawing Canadian Identity" (online). Rachel Yeoh. **Entitled Magazine**.
- "Canada Day with Canada's Self Portrait" (online). **Artistorian**.
- "Montreal artist creates 24 pieces in 24 hours" (television). **CBC TV Montreal**.
- "What's On: Aquil Virani creates 24 artworks in 24 hours" (television). **CTV Montreal**.
- "The 24 project" (radio). Mike Finnerty. **CBC Montreal**.