

**Kelly Arlene Grant**  
**2018 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship Award Recipient**

The 2018 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship was awarded to Kelly Arlene Grant. Ms. Grant is a PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies, Fine Arts in Humanities at Concordia University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture. Kelly is conducting her research under the primary supervision of Dr. John Potvin, Associate Professor Art History. Dr. Stephen Snow from the Creative Arts Therapies, and Professor Kelly Thompson (MFA) from Fibres and Material Practices serve as secondary advisors. Kelly will complete her PhD in Humanities at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec in 2021.

For Kelly, Loyalist material culture has been a life-long passion. At the beginning of her academic career, she was fortunate enough to study extant garments of loyalist provenance at the New Brunswick Museum. It was that early exposure that helped guide her professional work with museums and living history programs.



In 2011, Ms. Grant received an Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Fine Art at NSCAD University, followed in 2015 by a Master of Arts degree from Saint Mary's University in Women's and Gender Studies.

Kelly has an extensive background in historical garment research and construction. Work experience includes employment as Wardrobe Contractor to various National Historic Sites and Professional Interpreters as well as dressing the former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Myra Freeman for various special engagements. Ms. Grant has worked as Wardrobe Manager at the Halifax Citadel NHS (1997-2003); Museum Assistant/Preparator (2004-2008) at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic; Teaching Assistant in Costume Studies Program Dalhousie University;

and volunteer Curatorial Assistant Maritime Command Museum, and the Atlantic Living Heritage Association.

In the summer of 2013, Kelly was named an Artist in Residence at the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design. While there, she examined linen production in Nova Scotia and household textiles from the eighteenth-century. The summer concluded with a group gallery show.

She has held instructor and teaching assistant positions at both NSCAD University and Concordia University.

Following is the abstract of Kelly A. Grant's research proposal – "A State of Upheaval: Dress and Personal Material Culture in Eighteenth Century Nova Scotia."

## The Project

In the living history and experimental archaeology communities there is a move afoot to recreate and use the material culture of the everyday to better understand the way in which people lived their lives. Changes made towards the greater understanding of the minutiae of how objects were created and used, and how items developed individual characteristics and wear patterns have led to a more in-depth understanding of daily practice. In recreating the material culture and using these items in living history programs, we are better able to engage with our history on an embodied level.

For my doctoral dissertation research, I will undertake an interdisciplinary study of eighteenth-century clothing and material culture of Nova Scotia, focusing specifically on Planter and Loyalist immigrants. These two groups are important to my ongoing research as they make up a large portion of the historical population and their material culture has historically been collected by the Nova Scotia museum complex. The Loyalist experience is also integral to my own personal history. This project will combine traditional archival scholarship with research creation and experiential learning as I recreate extant items of textiles and clothing and then use them in living history programs based on the recorded experiences of immigrant refugees during the Revolutionary period. This approach to understanding the history and culture of early Nova Scotia seeks to shift the dominant historical narrative of English, Protestant, Halifax to include the non-dominant voices of other European and American cultures who settled in the province. The dominant narrative is characteristically masculine in nature and leaves out the feminine voice. By studying the material culture of Nova Scotian history, I also hope to uncover the marginalized voices of other European cultures that immigrated to Nova Scotia during the eighteenth century. Living history scholarship has a didactic facet, engaging the senses. The reproduced objects help to re-create the texture of everyday life, bringing the stories of our European colonial ancestors to life.

Beginning with archival material housed in museums and archives in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I will examine textile production, clothing manufacture, and retail markets in eighteenth-century Nova Scotia. As a result, I pose the following series of questions: What sorts of clothing and textiles were being produced in the province? Were these objects being produced in the home, or on an industrial level? Were they deemed to be of equal quality to those imported from Europe? I will also look at who was involved in textile and clothing production and whether there were gender specific jobs throughout the process? I will then examine what clothing and textiles were available in the Halifax, Shelburne, and Pictou, Nova Scotia, and in Saint John New Brunswick. The goal is to ascertain whether there was a market for secondhand clothing in any of the major areas of the region, or if textiles were repurposed throughout their lifespan and whether this may contribute to the lack of extant garments in museum collections. Working with museum and archival collections at the McCord Museum in Montreal, the Nova Scotia Museum, and New Brunswick Museum complexes, I will undertake a full study of the extant textile pieces. Preliminary research throughout my career has uncovered extant garments from the eighteenth-century in collections housed at Ross-Thompson House (Shelburne, Nova Scotia), Uniacke House, just outside Halifax (Nova Scotia), the Dartmouth Heritage Museum (Nova Scotia), as well as the extensive collection housed in the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John. There are also extant garments with Nova Scotian provenance housed in the McCord Museum in Montreal. My

dissertation project will also include creation-based production which will include the creation of patterns of the weave structure of the cloth used as well as for constructing the garment itself. I will create samples of the textiles and half-scale recreations of the garments to test the patterns and to create detailed instructions on how the garments were originally constructed using historical methods. I will include historical stitch types used and for what purpose so that these garments can be accurately reproduced by living historians. I will also be working closely with living history interpreters to further develop appropriate interpretation and material culture guidelines to be used in conjunction with site specific event organization.

This project also, subsequently allows me to continue my loyalist family story through my own living history interpretation programs. I am a direct descendant of Donald Grant, private, 4th Company, MacKinnon's Light Infantry, 84th Royal Highland Immigrants. He enlisted 27th November 1775 in New York/Boston harbor on the ship ASIA. Our family still holds the original grant of land through Governor John Wentworth in Pine Tree, Nova Scotia.

**The Program:** PhD program in Interdisciplinary Studies, Fine Arts in Humanities at Concordia University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture

Loyalist material culture has been a life-long passion. At the beginning of my academic career, I was fortunate enough to study extant garments of loyalist provenance at the New Brunswick Museum. It was that early exposure that helped guide my professional work with museums and living history programs. When beginning to graduate studies, I looked for graduate programs that would help combine traditional forms of scholarship with experiential learning that formed a large part of my work-life. It is the *research/creation* (or *practice-based research*) stream of the Humanities program that contributed to my desire to attend Concordia University. Dr. John Potvin from the Department of Art History serves as my primary supervisor, while Dr. Stephen Snow from the Creative Arts Therapies and Professor Kelly Thompson (MFA) from Fibres and Material Practices serve as secondary advisors. Through Dr. Potvin's expertise and research in fashion, design, material culture and gender, I hope to develop a better understanding of how Enlightenment thought influenced notions of masculinity and femininity through fashion in particular, and material culture more broadly. With Dr. Snow I will explore the professional parameters of living history and the 'progressive' zeitgeist that has developed among museum employees and volunteers over the past three decades. Working with Professor Kelly Thompson I hope to further my abilities as a weaver by exploring historical textile production and weaving techniques. I am currently in my third year of the program, undertaking comprehensive exams in each of the three disciplines. I will write a traditional exam essay in material culture for Dr. Potvin. I will then develop a comprehensive interpretation plan for a living history museum in Nova Scotia for Dr. Snow, featuring recreated items of clothing for both men and women as part of a style guide for interpreters that will make up the studio exam for Professor Thompson.