

2025-2026 Annual Report

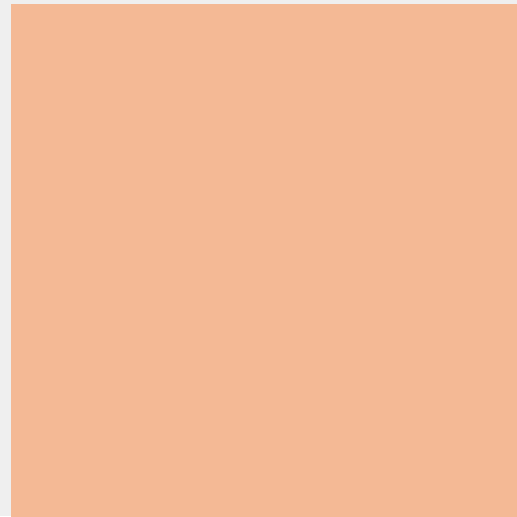
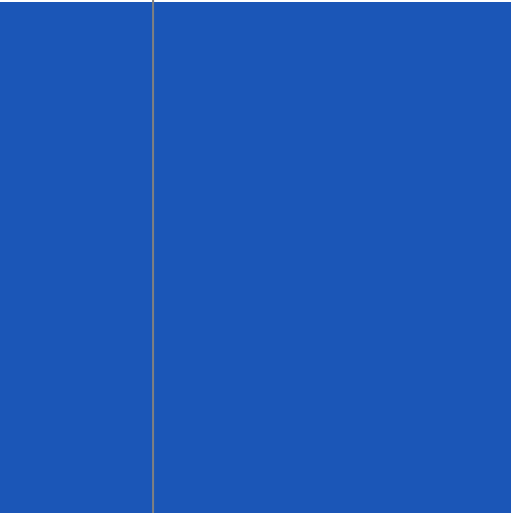




Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
President’s Report	2
Executive Director’s Report	3
Governance and Administration	4
2025–2029 Strategic Plan Implementation	5
Grants and Finances	5
Membership	8
Advocacy	10
Partnerships	10
In the Media	11
Projects	12
<i>Montreal Review of Books</i>	12
Read Quebec Book Fair 2025	13
Read Quebec Digital Platform	14
Salon du Livre de Montréal 2025	15
Professional Development	16
“Brain Dates” Mentorship Initiative	16
Open Books, Open Minds 2026	17
Information Sharing	17

President's Report

As difficult as it has been to read news from around the globe, and especially from the ongoing attempts to censor speech south of the border (and in Alberta, which we lobbied against), there was a key piece of local news that I want to draw your attention to: according to the latest statistics from BookNet, in 2025, both Canadian-authored and Canadian-published titles increased their market share. While AELAQ's member publishers are only one part of a larger Canadian publishing industry, it is gratifying to know that there is a growing interest from Canadians in supporting local businesses and authors in tumultuous times.



I do not think this good news is coincidental. There is much to celebrate about our members—AELAQ member publications continue to be recognized for their quality, both for their design and for their content. Organizations like AELAQ, and many others around Quebec, create the conditions necessary for our communities to receive the attention they deserve, and to launch works from these communities into other audiences. We all celebrate when our members win awards on either a national or international stage.

While other review forums shrink, the *Montreal Review of Books* continues its admirable mission of dedicated space to books published in Quebec and by Quebec authors. Launches for new issues and the readings from authors continue to be well attended, as well as flagship events like the Read Quebec bookfair. I am perpetually impressed with the engaging programming and the seamless operations coordinated by Rebecca West and Alexandra Sweny for these public events. I also want to compliment them for their perseverance in tracking our progress for the gradual implementation of our five-year strategic plan, which was approved at last year's AGM. I am happy to report that the goals we hoped to reach by this year have been accomplished.

I would like to extend my personal thanks for the volunteer work and valuable contributions of our two departing board members-at-large, Lara de Beaupré and Sarah Robinson, as well as to our departing treasurer, Francine Yulo. It has been a true joy to work with you, learn from you, and to share in your fun company.

But most of all, thank you to all our members for working with us. We all benefit from your participation, and for collaborating with us in a larger and stronger community of readers.

Luc Bossé
President

Executive Director's Report

While the Canadian publishing industry continues to face threats from shifting tariff policies, stagnant funding, and AI disruption, to name a few, in the past year, AELAQ has taken the opportunity to reinforce our foundations, and lay the groundwork for the years ahead.



With the adoption of our 2025–2029 at last year's annual general meeting, we were given a clear mandate from the membership to focus on five interconnected priorities:

1. Strengthen sector capacity through professional development, mentorship, and peer learning.
2. Enhance discoverability, branding, and digital tools for publishers and programs.
3. Advance advocacy to strengthen the sector's voice.
4. Amplify impact through flagship programming.
5. Strengthen community ties and increase partnerships.

The test of any strategic plan lies, of course, not in the strength of its ideas, but in its implementation. I am pleased to report that we have made progress in all five priorities over the past year.

On the governance and administration side, we were able to diversify our revenue streams and increase self-generated income by 34%, ending the year with a modest surplus, as well as strengthen our policies in terms of staff and board codes of conduct, and the institution of an endorsement policy.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated Board of Directors. I am grateful for the ongoing support from President Luc Bossé, who is always available when I need a sounding board, and able to provide unique insights as a publisher bridging our two official languages and cultures. I'd like to extend special thanks to Francine Yulo, who has served on the board since 2023, and as our treasurer since 2024, and will step down this year. I'd also like to extend thanks to members-at-large Sarah Robinson and Lara de Beaupré, who will also be stepping down this year.

AELAQ's projects and daily smooth operations would not be possible without our hardworking staff and many longtime collaborators. Many thanks go to Alexandra Sweny, who took on the role of Project Manager this year with gusto, to our steady at the helm Montreal Review of Books editor Malcolm Fraser, associate editor Priscilla

Jolly, graphic designer David LeBlanc, and our dedicated book fair coordinator Elise Moser.

Finally, I wish to thank our member publishers for their solidarity and participation in our many initiatives throughout the year. I am inspired not only by your books, but by your sense of collaboration and determination in a challenging and ever-changing climate. I look forward to another year of working together towards building a resilient English-language literary community in Quebec.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca West
Executive Director
June 2, 2026

Governance and Administration

Rebecca West served as executive director throughout 2025–2026, and Alexandra Sweny was promoted to the role of project manager in 2025. At the mRb, Malcolm Fraser served as editor. In the summer of 2025, we hired Priscilla Jolly as our associate editor. Elise Moser completed her 10th edition as our book fair coordinator, and we worked with Liana Cusmano and Erika Lamon to manage our presence at the Salon du livre de Montréal.



L-R: mRb associate editor Priscilla Jolly, editor Malcolm Fraser, graphic designer David Leblanc, publisher Rebecca West, associate publisher Alexandra Sweny.

AELAQ by the numbers

29

members

20

events

1,006

books sold

3,433

guests at events



2025–2029 Strategic Plan Implementation

We are now one year into the implementation of our five-year 2025–2029 plan, or 20% complete. In terms of the targets that we set out:

- 11% are complete,
- 42% are in progress,
- 47% are not yet started.

Specific accomplishments this past year include:

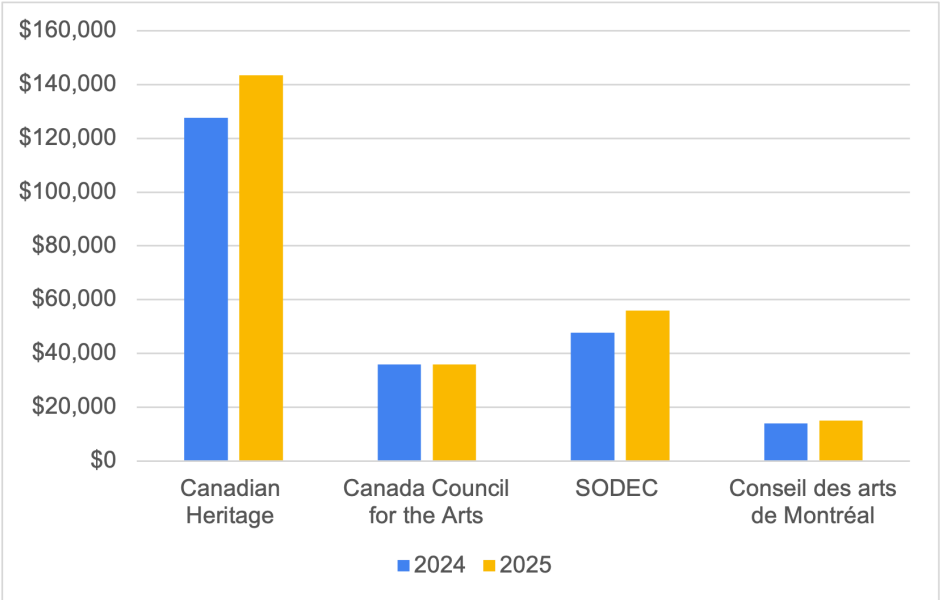
- a new members' mentorship program;
- expanded advocacy efforts and broadened media coverage;
- a new local retail showcase and promotional campaign for librarians;
- early stage development of a new aelaq.org website;
- and bringing on new partners and sponsors, such as Booksellers.ca, Druide Informatique, and Sustana.

Grants and Finances

AELAQ received operational funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage's (PCH) Canada Book Fund, SODEC, and the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as project funding from the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

We are pleased to report that from 2024 to 2025, our revenues increased by 15%, including a 34% increase in earned revenues, due to steady *mRb* ad sales (which we took in-house in 2025), new sponsorships, and increased participation at our annual book fair and professional development conference. We ended 2025 with a surplus of 3%, or \$9,989, in contrast to our deficit at the close of 2024.

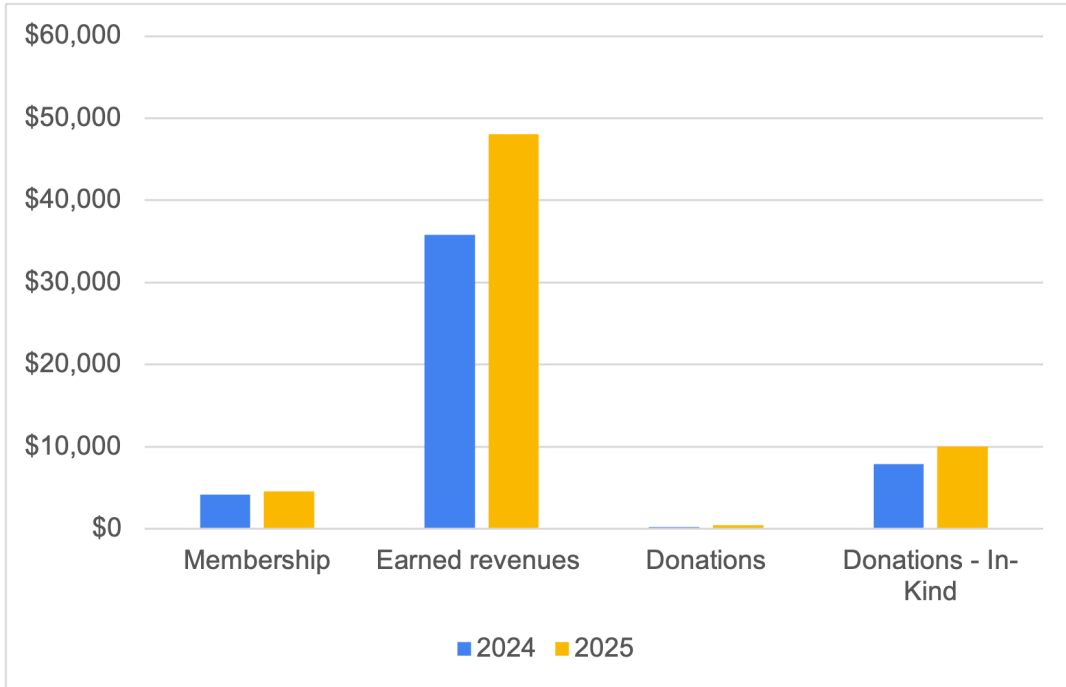
Grant revenue, 2024 vs. 2025



We continue to supplement our grant revenue with earned income, primarily through:

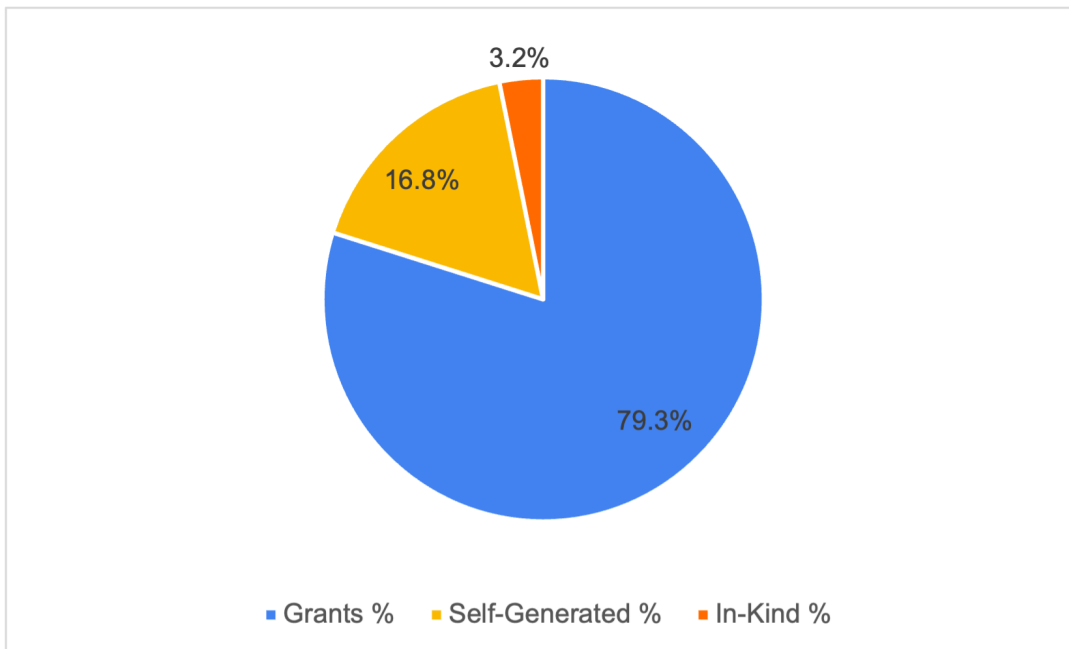
- *mRb* advertising sales;
- *mRb* subscriptions and donations;
- membership fees;
- exhibitor fees at our annual book fair and Salon du livre de Montréal;
- tiered-pricing ticketing for professional development.

Earned income, 2024 vs. 2025



Year over year, our revenues were up 15%, while our expenses only increased by 4%, leading to a surplus of \$9,989. Our proportion of earned income vs. grants increased to 20% this year, compared to 18% last year.

Breakdown of Total Revenue in 2025



Membership

AELAQ is presently composed of 29 member publishers working across scholarly, trade and children's literature. We welcomed Anteism Books as a new active member this year, as well as Garden Wolf Publishing House, Sheer Spite Press, and Georgette Blanchard as supporting members.

Current members include: Anteism Books, Baraka Books / QC Fiction, Bunim & Bannigan, Concordia University Press, Corner Studio, Daraja Press, DC Books, Drawn & Quarterly, Garden Wolf Publishing House, Georgette Blanchard, Guernica Editions, InfiniPRESS, Kersplebedeb, Linda Leith Publishing, Livres Agapé Books, Longbridge Books, McGill-Queen's University Press, Metatron, Metonymy Press, Milky Way Picture Books, PAPP International, Phoenicia Publishing, Pow Pow Press, Prince Chameleon Press, Renaissance Press, The Secret Mountain, Sheer Spite Press, Universitas Press, and Véhicule Press.

Find the full list of our members at aelaq.org/members.



Bragging Rights

Here is a sample of the awards and nominations our member publishers took home this year:

- Lee Lai's [*Cannon*](#), published by Drawn & Quarterly, winner of the 2026 Stella Prize, shortlisted for the 2026 Carol Shields Literary Award, nominated for the 2025 Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction and the 2026 Eisner Award for best new graphic album;
- Val Bah's [*Subterrane*](#), published by Véhicule Press, winner of the 2025 Amazon First Novel Prize;
- Nino Bulling's [*Firebugs*](#), published by Drawn & Quarterly, winner of the 2025 Lambda Literary Award for Best Transgender Fiction;
- Boum's [*The Jellyfish*](#), published by Pow Pow Press, winner of the 2025 Eisner Award, Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize Honor Book, Doug Wright Nipper Award, and the Graphic Medicine Award;
- Kevin Quigley, Kaitlynn Lowe, Sarah Moore, and Brianna Wolfe's [*Seized by Uncertainty*](#), published by McGill-Queen's University Press, winner of the 2025 Donner Prize;
- Matthew Purvis' [*The Pornographic Delicatessen*](#), published by Concordia University Press, winner of the 47th Bookseller Diagram Prize for Oddest Book Title of the Year and selected for the Association of University Presses' Book, Jacket, and Journal Show in the 2026 Scholarly Typographic category;
- Colin Ripley's [*The House Is \(Not\) a Prison*](#), published by Concordia University Press, selected for the Association of University Presses' Book, Jacket, and Journal Show in the Jackets and Covers category;
- [*Tsunami*](#) by Ned Wenlock, published by Pow Pow Press, winner of the New Zealand Society of Authors Best First Book Award;
- Lorna Goodison's translation of [*The Inferno*](#), published by Véhicule Press, finalist for the 2025 Governor General's Literary Award in Poetry;
- Leila Marshy's [*My Thievery of the People*](#), published by Baraka Books, shortlisted for the 2025 Danuta Gleed Literary Award, nominated for the 2025 Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction;
- Edeet Ravel's [*Miss Matty*](#), published by Linda Leith Publishing, nominated for the 2025 Janet Savage Blachford Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature.

Advocacy, Partnerships and Community Involvement

Advocacy

We expanded our advocacy efforts in the past year with a focus on the following key issues:

- increasing the annual budget of the Canada Book Fund;
- enhancing Canada Council for the Arts funding to support new and emerging publishers;
- amending the Copyright Act to ensure fair compensation for creators;
- advocating for AI regulations that protect the rights of authors and publishers;
- and advocating for English-language minority rights and visibility in Quebec.

Specific initiatives included:

- Summer 2025 pre-budget outreach to federal MPs, resulting in meetings with Anthony Housefather, Connor Fischer (staffer to former MP Steven Guilbeault), and Aaron Stafford (deputy to MP Claude Guay);
- December 2025 briefing to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages;
- March 2026 joint statement denouncing Nova Scotia arts funding cuts;
- March 2026 open letter denouncing Correctional Service Canada's plan to eliminate federal librarian positions and CEGEP funding for incarcerated students in Quebec.

In addition to our collaboration with the Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP), we continue to maintain regular contact with the Association nationale des éditeurs de livres (ANEL) to support and defend the interests of Quebec-based book publishers. Our executive director Rebecca West also advocates for our official-language minority publishers as a member of Quebec's Conseil Consultatif de la Lecture et du Livre (CCLL).

Partnerships

We're grateful to be connected to a strong community of like-minded organizations, both here in Montreal and across the country. This year, we have had the pleasure of working with the Quebec Writers' Federation, the Salon du livre de Montréal, Les Libraires, Booksellers.ca, Apple Books, the Atwater Library and Computer Centre, the Community Digital Arts Hub, Casa del Popolo, P'tit Ours, Paragraphe Bookstore, Casa d'Italia, the Blue Metropolis Literary Festival, Teesri Duniya Theatre, the Book and Periodical Council, and the Canadian Copyright Institute. As of June 2026,

McGill-Queen's University Press' Jeremy Audet holds the publishing seat on the ELAN board.

We are grateful to the sponsors who supported our 2025 events: Hebdo-Litho, Babar Books, the Montreal Gazette, Penguin Random House Canada, Sustana, Druide, and Drawn & Quarterly.

In the Media

We are proud to highlight Quebec's English-language publishers, authors and their works onscreen and on the air.

In August, Alexandra Sweny joined CBC's Rebecca Ugolini to talk about the 2025 edition of *Le 12 août, j'achète un livre québécois*. In February 2026, Rebecca West appeared alongside Drawn & Quarterly's Tom Devlin on CTV News to discuss the rise in French-language book sales in Quebec, and how this compares to the English-language market.

Other appearances include CBC Radio (All in a Weekend, Daybreak, Radio Noon), CBC TV Evening News with Sudha Krishnan, Global News Mornings, the Montreal Gazette, CultMTL, The Suburban, The Concordian, The Montrealer, and more.



Rebecca West in studio with CBC's Sudha Krishnan.

Readers, local stores profit as book sales rise in Quebec

By [Angela MacKenzie](#)

Published: March 02, 2026 at 8:32AM EST



Rebecca West and Tom Devlin on CTV evening news.

Projects

Montreal Review of Books

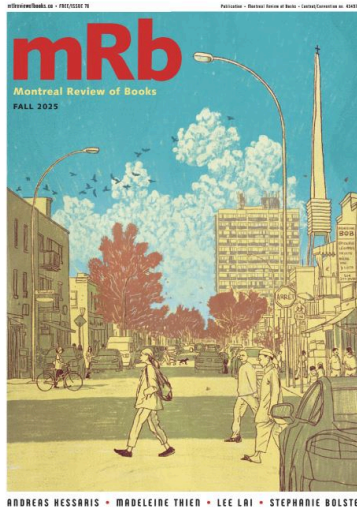
It was another successful year for the *Montreal Review of Books*, as our flagship project continues to carve out a dedicated audience in the heart of the literary community. We published three issues, each with an average print run of 34,000 copies, as well as 8 additional online reviews. We continue to work with Malcolm Fraser as editor, David Leblanc as graphic designer, Alexandra Sweny as associate publisher, and Rebecca West as publisher. We hired Priscilla Jolly as associate editor in July 2025.

Our 2025 launches took place in hybrid format, in-person and live-streamed to YouTube. Here are some highlights:



Summer 2025

- 30 books
- 32 authors
- 15 English-language minority authors
- 26 publishers
- \$515 in launch sales at Casa del Popolo.



Fall 2025

- 31 books
- 36 authors
- 21 English-language minority authors
- 22 publishers
- \$216 in launch sales at P'tit Ours



Spring 2026

- 34 books
- 35 authors
- 10 English-language minority authors
- 31 publishers
- \$480 in launch sales at Hotel 10

All of the reviews from our print issues are featured online, alongside web exclusive content and original monthly illustrations. In 2025, the *mRb* website attracted approximately 38,000 visitors—check out what they were reading in [“The Top mRb Reviews of 2025”!](#)

Read Quebec Book Fair 2025



Photo of the 2025 Read Quebec Book Fair by Julian Haber.

Year after year, the Read Quebec Book Fair continues to unite, promote and enrich Quebec's English-language publishing industry and literary community. 2025 marked the tenth anniversary of the Read Quebec Book Fair, which took place the weekend of December 6 and 7, 2025, at Casa d'Italia.

As in previous years, we were fortunate to work with Elise Moser as our book fair coordinator, and Danny Payne from Raison d'Etre media for PR and media outreach. We hired local graphic designer Amélie Lehoux to create a visual identity for the Fair as well as our kiosk at the Salon du Livre a week prior, using our presence at the Salon to promote the Fair.

For the first time, we welcome out-of-province English-language publishers and associations to exhibit, in an effort to expand the fair's reach and impact. Across the weekend, we welcomed approximately 800 visitors and reached \$16,397 in sales (708 books)—the book fair's highest sales yet!

Across both days of the fair, we welcomed 100 authors, with books from 35 publishers. Of these, we were proud to put a spotlight on 2 Indigenous authors, 12 BIPOC authors, and 66 authors from language-minority communities.

Read Quebec Digital Platform

Read Quebec is the online hub for our annual book fair, and throughout the year features recent releases and news from Quebec's English-language publishing scene. The brand also encompasses various public-facing initiatives, including seasonal book catalogues, retail showcases for librarians, and collective kiosks at other book fairs and salons.

Over the past year, we published and distributed Read Quebec spring and fall digital catalogues featuring 83 member titles. We also published 9 articles about recent happenings in Quebec's literary community, including a feature on the new Lire Queer Reader Fest, and a spotlight on Baraka Books' new chapbook series.

Read Quebec is also the banner under which we present member titles in and around the city. This summer, Librairie Paragraphe Books invited us to curate a showcase of recently released member titles in their showroom, where acquiring librarians browse for new additions to their catalogues. Our inaugural Fall showcase generated \$2,266 in sales, and we launched our Spring showcase in April 2026.

Throughout the year, we promoted selections of member titles across various platforms, including LesLibraires.ca for Quebec Book Day (August 12), booksellers.ca, and Apple Books.

Salon du Livre de Montréal 2025



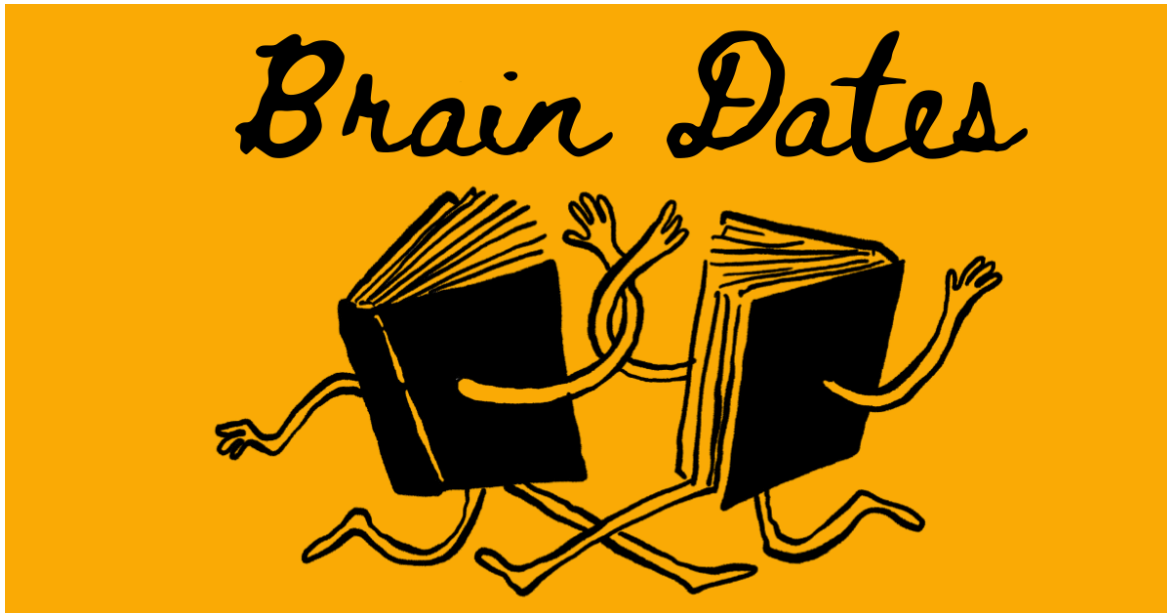
Jennifer Varkonyi and Liana Cusmano at the 2025 Read Quebec kiosk.

The Salon du livre de Montréal—the city’s largest in-person book fair—took place this year from November 19 to 23 at the Palais de Congres de Montréal. As a predominantly French-language event, AELAQ is the Salon’s primary exhibitor featuring English books, with the goal of showcasing the diversity and resilience of English-language publishing in the province. In total 106,000 people are estimated to have attended the Salon, with 1,917 visitors to the AELAQ kiosk.

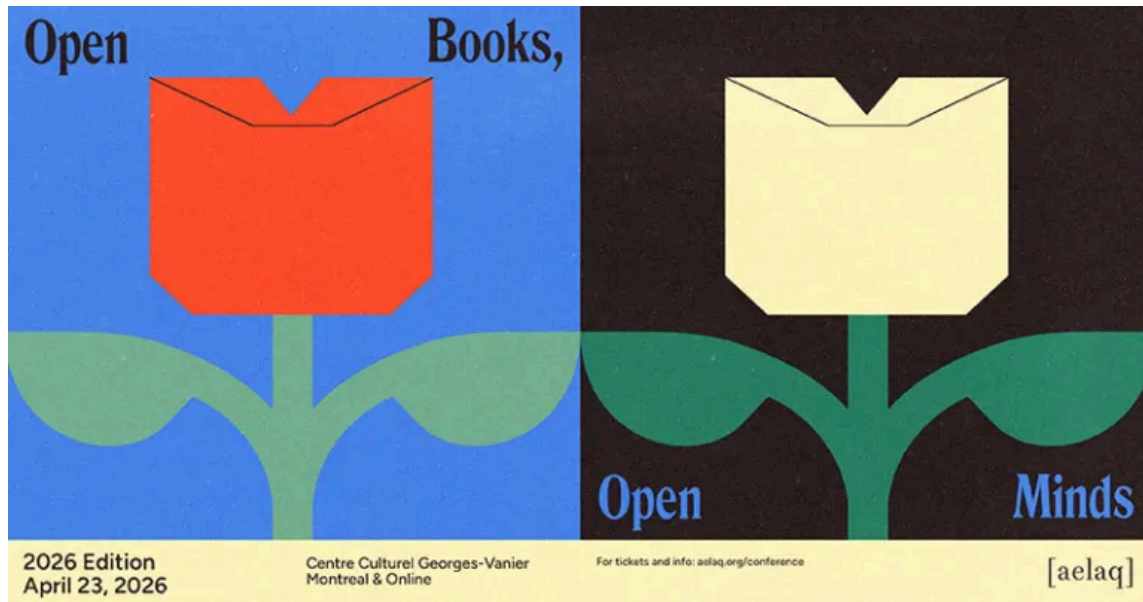
This year, 12 member publishers participated to feature 62 titles. Book sales totalled \$3,977.85 (155 units), a slight decrease from \$4,213.33 (169 units) the year prior. We can’t point to a single explanation for the decrease, but some publishers observed that the kiosk didn’t have enough titles to feel full and that the location may not have had as much foot traffic as last year. A big thank you to AELAQ President Luc Bossé and his team at Pow Pow Press, who championed the project and provided much needed hands-on support throughout the Salon.

Professional Development

“Brain Dates” Mentorship Initiative



As a result of AELAQ’s newly launched 2025–2029 strategic plan, we set out in Fall 2025 to pilot a mentorship program amongst members. Based on the framework of the Association of Canadian Publishers’ mentorship program, this service pairs member publishers looking to gain skills with member publishers experienced in the field. While the mentorship itself takes place in the context of a one-hour session, the aim is to facilitate knowledge-sharing amongst members in the hope that the relationships built are long-lasting. In this first pilot edition, we facilitated three mentorship pairings. We are fundraising with the goal of expanding the program to offer honoraria for mentors in the coming years.



2026 visual branding by Amélie Lehoux.

Open Books, Open Minds 2026

We held the third edition of our professional development conference in April 2026 at the Centre culturel Georges-Vanier. Talks and panels included:

1. Opening Talk with Norm Nehmetallah
2. The Mechanics of AI Search with Augustin Delporte
3. AI NOPE with Raymond Biesinger
4. Finding Your Identity with Norm Nehmetallah, Johnelle Smith, and Martha Sharpe; moderated by Ashley Obscura.
5. Book Club Discussion: Lament for a Literature, moderated by Julien Lefort-Favreau
6. Booksellers Shop Talk with Sundus Abdul Hadi, Kennedy Rooke, Alex Nierenhausen, Andreas Kessarar, and Martha Sharpe; moderated by Mélissa Bull

In total we welcomed 38 guests (31 in person and 7 online), 16 of whom were AELAQ members. Feedback was largely positive!

Information Sharing

AELAQ acts as a hub of information for the public, other associations, writers, English-language publishers from outside Quebec, and francophone publishers. We regularly update a calendar of member and industry events, which is open to the public on our [website](#). To keep up with the latest from AELAQ and the *Montreal Review of Books*, sign up for our [newsletter](#), or [subscribe](#) to have all three issues delivered directly to your door.