

# CULT

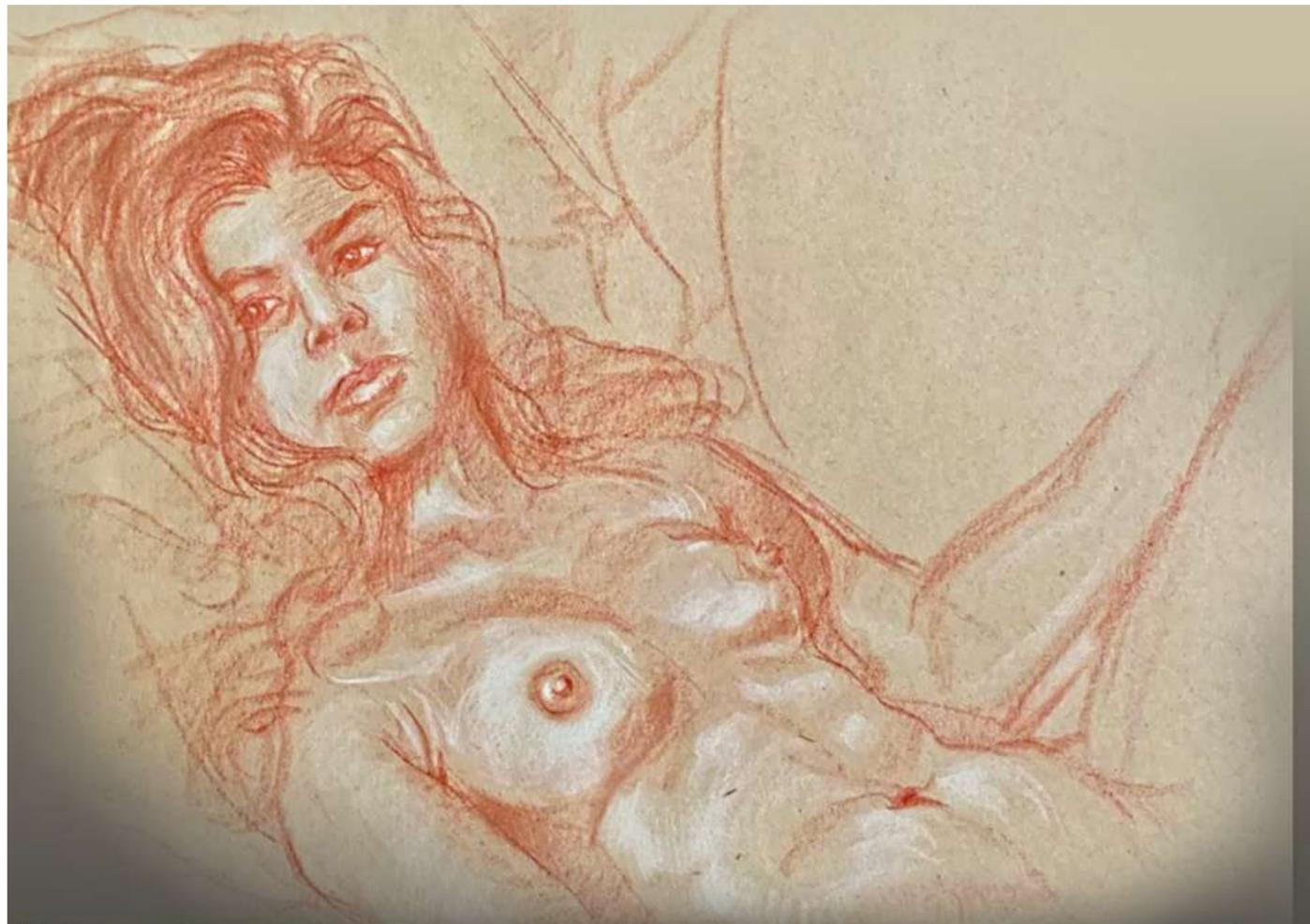
#MTL



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FREE

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Electronic music producer and cyberpunk pop star Grimes talks about world-building, making art about the climate crisis and dealing with celebrity status.

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**cultmtl.com**

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# to-do list

For the daily To-Do List, visit [cultmtl.com](http://cultmtl.com)



Jivesh Parasram, at the MAI this month

## To March 7

These are the final days of the annual Rendez-vous Québec Cinéma festival, which screens over 300 films (including roughly 100 premieres) — new/recent feature and short films made in this province.

Not Your Babe Fest is “a feminist festival promoting a safe space for women, non-binary/genderqueer and trans people in the counterculture scene.” The fourth edition will feature local and touring bands playing Casa del Popolo, la Sala Rossa and B-Ward over the course of three days, with a complementary series of workshops and a flash tattoo day. → Various locations and times, ticket details TBD

## To March 23

The 20th anniversary edition of Art Matters, North America's largest student-run art fair, takes place at Concordia. See the complete program of exhibitions, events and workshops at [artmattersfestival.org](http://artmattersfestival.org).

## To May 31

At the Canadian Centre for Architecture, see the third and final installment of the Out of the Box exhibition series, showcasing the writings, photographs, films, correspondence and select artworks of architect and conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark, as selected by Kitty Scott. → 1920 Baile, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. (till 9 p.m. on Thursdays), closed Mondays and Tuesdays

## March 6–14

The second annual Velouria Festival showcases local post-punk, darkwave, coldwave and shoegaze bands at various venues (and “modest prices” — a four-show pass costs only \$20). Note that the fest takes place primarily from March 12–14 with one show on March 6.

## March 7

Fondation Phi hosts the last of four special events in conjunction with its exhibition of work by British artist Phil

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Collins, and this one is a dance party. Bring Down the Walls, presented in conjunction with Mile Ex art space Never Apart, promises music by TS Ellise, G L O W Z I and MikeQ. → 465 St-Jean, 9:30 p.m., free

## March 8

For International Women's Day, the Planetarium presents Women Taking Up Space, a panel (in French) featuring DJ Mini and special guest Safia Nolin. → 4801 Pierre-de Coubertin, 6 p.m., \$16.25/\$15.25 seniors/\$12.50 students 18+/\$8.25 5–17

## March 9–17

Jocelyn Pelletier's *MAC(DEATH)* “transposes *Macbeth*'s violent and supernatural dramaturgy through the cathartic experience of a heavy metal show,” at la Chapelle. → 3700 St-Dominique, various times, \$33.50/\$28.50 students, seniors, under 30, art pros and neighbourhood residents/\$23.50 performing arts students

## March 11–13

“Shifting between the temptation of being alone and the threat of real conflict,” Alexandra “Spicey” Landé's six-dancer show *In-Ward* is on for three days at Agora de la danse, care of EbniDh. (Note that the performance on March 11 was sold out at press time.) → 1435 Bleury #102, 7 p.m., \$25.67/\$19.95

## March 18–31

The 38th annual International Festival of Films on Art (also known by its French acronym FIFA, or ArtFIFA) will screen a series of art documentaries on a wide variety of topics. Among the special events and parties complementing the program are Brutal Disco with DJ Super Taste (*Edifice Wilder*, 1435 St-Laurent, March 19, 9 p.m., \$5) and a MUTEK afterparty at the same location (March 21, 10 p.m.) feat. electronic music and a “visual environment” made up of archival footage of East Germany.

## March 26

The spring issue of the *Montreal Review of Books* launches at la Petite Drawn & Quarterly with readings and/or presentations by Kaie Kellough, K.B. Thors and Sherwin Tjia. → 176 Bernard, 7 p.m., free

## March 27–29

The Montreal Audio Fest gathers over 100 exhibitors and 300 brands under one roof (Hotel Bonaventure) to demonstrate “some of the world's best sound systems.” → 900 de la Gauchetière W., 11 a.m.–5 p.m., free (RSVP required, [montrealaudiofest.org](http://montrealaudiofest.org))

## March 28

Five bands will compete in the Jim Beam Talent Search at Hémisphère Gauche. → 221 Beaubien E., 7 p.m., free

## March 29

A cornucopia of pop culture toys and comics awaits at Montreal Toycon, happening at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel (at the airport). → 7000 Place Robert-Joncas, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

## March 30–April 3

Paul Chambers and David-Alexandre Chabot (aka Collectif CHA) present an interactive and sonic installation called “Phases Chromatiques” at la Chapelle. → 3700 St-Dominique, various times, \$33.50/\$28.50 students, seniors, under 30, art pros and neighbourhood residents/\$23.50 performing arts students/\$18.50 12 and under

## March 30

YES Montreal's annual Business Skills for Creative Souls Business Conference is happening at Centre St-Jax Montréal, with a keynote address by 7 Fingers founder Shanna Carroll, speakers including Brad Barr, Leila Basen, Daniel Iregui and host Sonali Karnick. → 1439 Ste-Catherine W., 9 a.m.–5 p.m., \$30/\$35

## April 2–4

Indo-Caribbean Canadian artist Jivesh Parasram brings his show *Take d Milk, Nah?* to the MAI. The blend of storytelling, comedy and ritual explores “race, religion and nationalism(s).” → 3680 Jeanne-Mance, various times, \$24.35/\$19.13/\$13.91

## April 3–4

See a screening of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* in the grandeur of Place des Arts's Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, with the score performed by a live orchestra. → 175 Ste-Catherine W., 7:30 p.m. both nights, \$49.44–\$109.58 Friday, \$60.94–\$121.08 Saturday

## April 4

Anima Art School begins its spring session of digital- and traditional-art courses in drawing and watercolours. The registration deadline is March 20. → 1844 William, 6 courses for \$200

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# Mar-Apr

### EXHIBITIONS

● Building a new New World: Amerikanizm in Russian Architecture 13.11.2019–05.04.2020

● Line of Flight: Gordon Matta-Clark selected by Kitty Scott 07.02–31.05.2020  
● Detour: Alternative Readings of Travel 12.12.2019–16.08.2020

### CCA ELSEWHERE

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● Our Happy Life travels to Madrid

### YOUNG PUBLIC

● Stretch the Shortcut 07.03.2020, 04.04.2020, 11am

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# :persona mtl



Martha Wainwright

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

Martha Wainwright is on the tail end of several shows marking the 10-year anniversary of the death of her (and her brother Rufus's) mother Kate McGarrigle. When we met in Ursa, the event space she opened nine months ago beneath POP Montreal's headquarters, the walls were still adorned with photos of Kate and her sister Anna from a tribute show and exhibition back in early February. Family, legacy and art all come together in a space that, with its intimate shows and exhibits, as well as a kitchen in which Wainwright herself often cooks for a crowd, feels flung out of an idealized past. The place is in the process of coming into itself, but it exudes a coziness truly redolent of Montreal's laissez-faire core, a core that feels increasingly hard to find.

Nora Rosenthal: **What prompted Ursa's creation?**

Martha Wainwright: **For many years I had — I don't think it's a childish fantasy — but a stupid idea to have a little music venue/space where I'd be wearing an apron and cooking and then I'd sing songs. It's a vision that lots of people have, you know. "I want to own a bakery," that kind of thing. Everybody knows it's a really bad idea and they don't do it, or if they do it they realize that they're all in or they spend all their money and it might not work. But I decided not to consider any of those things.**

NR: **It's been interesting hearing people talk about Ursa because they almost seem at a loss for the right word for the kind of venue it is. What is Ursa?**

MW: **Everybody I knew and especially people I know who have made any money — and I don't know many people like that, but I know a couple, would ask me when I talked to them about Ursa, "But what is it? Are you a café? Are you a bar? Are you a music venue?" They were like, "You are totally going about this in the most incorrect stupid way," because people want things to be defined. It's a problem that I've always had with everything. It's a problem I had with my music. "Are you folk? Are you folk-pop? Are you folk-rock? What are you?" They couldn't pigeon-hole my albums. I couldn't brand myself ever. I would change my look, I would change my hair, I would wear high heels one night and then the next night I'd be in galoshes and it frustrated people to no end because there was no direct path to success.**

# :rant line™

**THIS WEEK: COVID-19, bye-bye playoffs, the handjob that never happened!  
PLUS: No scooters for you!!**

"edited" by AL SOUTH

**F** Hello, I just wanted to say that I am not a **PARANOID PERSON**, I don't think, but I was at my local fruit and vegetable store — I won't name it, you know where it is — and the woman at the cash was weighing my vegetables, my **EGGPLANTS**, and she stopped to **SNEEZE** into her hands! And then she went right on weighing and handling them and then she gave me back my cash, which I have to say I was almost reluctant to take. I was going to say, no it's ok, keep the change! But you know, I'm sure she didn't mean to do it or do it on purpose, she just wasn't thinking about it, but I was thinking about it — I was thinking about the **CORONAVIRUS** and this is something we all should be thinking about. I heard on the news some guy from Harvard, some professor or doctor, an academic, saying that he thinks 70 per cent of the **WORLD** — the world! — will eventually get this virus. So we all need to do what we can do to stop it from spreading, if we even can. We need to be **VIGILANT**. Anyway, that's all I wanted to say. Stay healthy. **[BLEEP!]**

**M** Good day Rant Line™, I am calling to say that it is great, just great, that the city has decided not to bring back the **LIME SCOOTERS**. Yes I am being sarcastic. Now personally I did not use the scooters very much. If you saw me, you would know why. Let's just say I am of a big build, I have a **WIDE STANCE**, that is not really suited to riding a scooter. I would look ridiculous, and would probably be a danger to myself and others. But never mind me, lots of people **DID** use the scooters. The scooters were a cheap and really eco-friendly way to get around town. As far as I know nobody was killed riding them, so they weren't as dangerous as some people thought they might be in the beginning. So what was the problem? That we didn't follow the rules! "Non-compliance with the rules" was what I heard reported. We weren't putting them back where they were supposed to go, or something like that. Between the **GREEN LINES**. Really? Cities all over Europe have e-scooters, they are very popular there. They seem to be able to figure out how to make them work and where to put them. Are we really the only place that can't follow the rules? We are that **UNRULY**? I am not sure who is to blame for this. Is it us, the people, the Montrealers — are we are just too undisciplined to follow rules? So as a result we don't deserve eco-friendly electronic scooters? No scooters for you! Or were the regulations poorly planned and not properly enforced? I think it might

be the second choice. But either way, it is a shame. No scooters for you! **[BLEEP!]**

**M** Here's a piece of good news: The teacher from Oshawa who was accused of giving her 10-year-old student a **HANDJOB** — in front of the class — has had the charges dropped. Please think about that for a moment. A 10-year-old kid said his teacher gave him a handjob — in front of the class — and the police immediately went and arrested her. They didn't talk to her, they didn't talk to any of the 30 students who were in the class, to ask them if they had seen the handjob. They didn't think, "Well this sounds very unlikely, a handjob in front of the class." They just arrested her. They put her in handcuffs, put her in jail. And so **OBVIOUSLY** the charges have now been dropped, because obviously the charges were outrageous, but, and here's the thing, it took two years! Two years she had to live with these charges. Doesn't seem fair to me. Does it seem fair to you? **[BLEEP!]**

**M** Habs are out of the playoffs — well, any minute now. For the fourth time in five years. This is as bad as the **LEAFS**. I've been watching this over the years — Toronto got everything, all the money, got bigger, more people, got baseball, got basketball, but the one thing we had was the Habs, the Montreal Canadiens, the most storied franchise in history, 24 Stanley cups, blah blah blah. Now we have a whole generation — two generations? Three generations? I don't know, Montrealers who are nearly 30 years old who have never seen their team win a Stanley Cup! It's unbelievable. And yet people still support the team and talk about the team and wear Habs jerseys and bleed red white and blue and the organization still makes money hand over fist — even though it produces a **DISMAL PRODUCT**. Leading the league in revenue, stinking out the league on the ice. Go Habs go! **[BLEEP!]**

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# :inspectah dep

BY THE DEPSET

It's become a bit of a Montreal cliché that Prince Arthur Street has seen better days. Back in the '80s and '90s, the pedestrian stretch between St-Laurent and Carré St-Louis was known for its expansive terraces and affordable bring-your-own-wine Greek restaurants offering heaping plates of brochettes. Though the shifting neighbourhood economy, the parking situation and changing food fashions have taken their toll on the street, Marché Brito (fka Marché Xtra) is a vestige of the glory days.

This long-standing, large-format **dépanneur** has been an integral part of the Prince Arthur scene through thick and thin. Most notably, its power-wall of wine has been and continues to be indispensable for those last-minute **BYOW** rendez-vous. Say what you will about the quality of **dépanneur** wines — we've all shown up empty-handed to the restaurant or house party, and Brito's selection goes way beyond the few dusty bottles of Nicolas Laloux and Wallaroo Trail (shudder) at most corner depts. The beer selection also beats the basics with two full walls of fridges as well as a shelf with more artisanal products.

What's more, the establishment offers a surprisingly decent selection of groceries, including fresh fruits and vegetables and a solid selection of coffee. There is a deli counter at the back with sandwiches, a tureen of hot soup and big bowls of homemade potato and pasta salad. By the cash you'll find warm samosas and Jamaican patties. All of this makes for a great snack on the way to Sherbrooke metro or provides for a cheap "picnic" if you want to do some hobo-chic park bench drinking in Carré St-Louis.

All in all, Marché Brito is a reminder of true urban resilience. While the surrounding restaurants literally burned to the ground and the city tore up the street repeatedly in vain attempts to bring new business, Brito survived by offering a solid selection of on-the-go essentials worth dodging scaffolding and forklifts.

Prince Arthur seems to have settled into a more peaceful phase these days, with a handful of new, more neighbourhood-oriented restaurants, fresh paving stones, some rather expensive-looking public art and a shiny row of condos. Whether this will suffice for it to reclaim its status as a city-wide destination is doubtful, but one thing's for sure: Marché Brito isn't going anywhere.



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# food & drink

## Italian jewel



Mano Cornuto



Clay Sandhu

BY CLAY SANDHU

I don't like Griffintown.

If the area around St-Zotique is Little Italy, then Griffintown is, like, Little Toronto: an overdeveloped chunk of highrises. Fortunately a little space on the ground floor of one of those highrises is home to Mano Cornuto, and if I have to get lunch in Griffintown, there's nowhere else I'd rather go.

On the day I ate there, the place was absolutely jammed. I get the impression that Mano Cornuto gets busy often — it's small, it's convenient, it attracts a lunch crowd. But be warned: they don't take reservations. After a few minutes of waiting by the entrance, I managed to grab a seat at the bar.

Right off the bat, I want to address the branding — it's excellent. There is this whimsical but iconic quality that defines much of Italian branding and Mano Cornuto's embodies the feeling and aesthetic without really copying anything in particular. It's classical but original, which essentially sums up the restaurant's charm as a whole. It's got all the classic caffè tropes, but done in a style that is uniquely its own.

Located on the slightly hidden corner of Ottawa and Ann streets, Mano Cornuto opened around the end of the summer, which means the four owners are all very present. One of them, Tyler Maher, was tending bar the day I went. I don't know if this is always the case at Mano Cornuto, but Thursday at 1 p.m. is apparently cocktail rush hour. Maher was dutifully up to the task, making pleasant conversation

with clients, taking orders and managing the flips all while making about a dozen cocktails, one of which was for me.

There's a good selection of affordable natural wines by the bottle and by the glass, a small but curated selection of beers, too, but looking around the room, everyone was drinking cocktails. The cocktails lean heavily on the aperitivo side of things: think a few different spritzes, a negroni, an Americano and, one of my personal favourites, a Garibaldi: a simple combination of orange juice and Campari, made famous at world-renowned New York bar Dante. "Fluffy" orange juice is really what makes the Garibaldi, and at Mano Cornuto, they nail it: the orange juice gets a quick pulse in a blender, aerates it — ie. fluffing it up — so that the drink is bitter, sweet, acidic and creamy all at once. It's delicious.

The menu is simple and straightforward, with a section of pastries meant to accompany the excellent coffee, some homemade focaccia served warmed and topped with ricotta and a choice of jams or, should you wish, truffled honey. For the more substantial dishes, they have a choice of a few paninis, which are excellent. I'm talking thick slices of warm and tender focaccia filled with mortadella and pancetta, or a thick slice of frittata — either way, a generous and delicious sandwich. Additionally, there are a few meal-sized salads, a choice of two pastas and a fish option. I went for an interesting sounding antipasti salad with speck, gorgonzola, roasted plum and pistachios, and then opted for a classic casarecce bolognese.

The salad is generous, truly a heaping mound, and is frankly quite tasty. There's a fairly quotidian mix of greens that are brightened with a generous handful of boldly coloured and

bitter radicchio; a bitterness that acts as a nice contrasting flavour to the rich roasted plum that is nearly a jam but for its electric acidity. It's a dense salad, though. Between the strips of speck that line the plate and the whole roasted plums and umami-rich clumps of funky gorgonzola, it's a meal in its own right.

The casarecce bolognese was also quite good, not to mention emblematic of the style of cooking that defines Mano Cornuto. It seems so classic, pasta bolognese. And yet, the pasta itself, the casarecce (which simply means homemade) is an iconic pasta of Sicily, and the ragu, the Bolognese, is both a staple of Bolognese cooking from North Central Italy and of the Italian diaspora around the world. Casarecce, which are short noodles roughly the shape of a cinnamon stick, are sturdy and have great ridges for collecting the chunky ragu. It's really a sensible type of pasta to use for this kind of sauce. But what I find more interesting is that despite the atypical nature of the dish, it feels utterly classic. That to me is what Mano Cornuto is all about: it embodies an Italianness, one that feels genuine, but in a way that's hard to pin to one particular identity.

While Mano Cornuto might not be the greatest Italian joint in town, it's certainly a very good one. Italian food is something that we all think we understand. The idea of the caffè, the trattoria, we get, we've seen it a thousand times, and yet there's always a particularity. When the concept is mediocre, it's a thinly veiled caricature. When it's done poorly, it's an insult. When it's done well, as it's done at Mano Cornuto, it seems effortless.

→ Mano Cornuto  
988 Ottawa



Photo © Mirages & Miracles, Adrien M & Claire B

## MIRAGES & MIRACLES

BY ADRIEN M & CLAIRE B

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## Miss Conception

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

When Grimes signed to Jay Z's Roc Nation label in 2013, she compared it to joining the X-Men. When it was revealed that she was dating Tesla/SpaceX founder/CEO Elon Musk in 2018, some people reacted as though she had joined the Legion of Doom.

Being portrayed as a villain, a sell-out and a flake in the mainstream media (not to mention social media) is part of what inspired her fifth album, *Miss Anthropocene*, released on Feb. 21. Over 10 tracks, she weaves a loose narrative about an "anthropomorphic goddess of climate change" over an intoxicating fog of beats and synths, experimental ballads and pop reverie — with its fair share of sonic left turns (acoustic guitar, high-energy drums, a Bollywood sample).

I spoke to the former Montrealer (née Claire Boucher, in Vancouver) — who is currently nearly seven months pregnant, in case you hadn't heard — about world-building, revolutionizing live music and the scrutiny she has to deal with as the girlfriend of Elon Musk.

Lorraine Carpenter: How did the concept for *Miss Anthropocene* come about?

Grimes: I started doing visual art before I ever made music, so with this record I was getting really caught up with making a comic. I was drawing a lot and thinking about visuals and concepts. I didn't want to just sit down and write another album — that seemed boring, like, "Oh, here's another catchy tune guys."

I was weirdly obsessed with AI and climate change. I was fixated on the existential threat to humanity and I just wanted to pursue some of these ideas in more creative ways. I keep saying "make the climate crisis fun" which is a very ignorant phrase and people keep getting mad at me for saying that, but *Lord of the Rings* was a metaphor for World War I and people are gonna start making stuff about climate change. I just wanted to do my *Lord of the Rings* on climate change.

The earliest human art was making gods and goddesses and all the earliest works of fiction revolved around polytheism. It was really compelling to me: what would new gods and goddesses feel like? What would they look like? Instead of the god of war, what about the goddess of climate change? The goddess of AI? The goddess of chemical addiction?

LC: Was the making of this record complicated by your relationship status and the scrutiny that came with it?

Grimes: I'm sort of weirdly good at compartmentalizing, and making music is my safe space, or my happy zone. I get into a state of mind that is free and untethered from my environment or my social situation or anything good or bad that is happening. But in other ways it was weirdly tormented



Grimes

as well. [The album's release was delayed for months due in part to the death of Grimes's manager in July 2019.]

LC: Given the pregnancy, will you be playing this record live at all? If so, what will it look like?

Grimes: I need to not think about playing this live. It's very hard to play [2012 album] *Visions* live; it was created by someone who didn't think that they would ever have much of an audience. After going through the trauma of trying to perform *Visions* and having a lot of sketchy moments, I really needed to reorient with *Art Angels*, that was a primary focus. But in the actual writing process, that was a huge inhibition.

I think with *Miss Anthropocene* again, a lot of these songs would just be a total nightmare to perform. Towards the end, when I was planning to get pregnant and stuff, I (decided to) just put this out, not tour this one and figure it out after the fact.

I'm kind of bored with live music. I feel like I need to kick it up a notch and make it something else. That's one of the main things we're scheming on right now, is how do we make a live show totally different. I really want to do an art gallery thing, something where you go into an installation and, ideally, motion-capture into an avatar to play simultaneously in multiple locations. It's also much better for the

environment, if I just figure out how to do that, instead of moving 12 people and a ton of gear everywhere. There's got to be a better way.

I also want to do raves for babies and kids.

LC: What are some of the misconceptions about you, Elon Musk and your life now that you'd like to clear up?

Grimes: When you're in the public eye, you just accept it to an extent. When you try to correct things or comment on controversies, it just revives them. But the main thing that bothers me is the idea that I'm detached from reality and that it's unethical to make art about climate change. I just don't think censorship in art is wise. I mean, I'm not saying "Climate change rules!" I'm trying to consider whether there's any way to format this besides just stressing people out with scary talking points.

So much great art, historically has taken super painful concepts and ideas and personified them. The Joker is one of the greatest villains of all time and he's a manifestation of abusive behaviour and mental illness. It just seems like that's an essential part of being human: taking the things that hurt us the most and turning them into fiction or narrative so that they're easier to digest.

The climate crisis, there's not a day that it happened and there's not a person who did it so it's a really abstract concept that's hard to wrap your head around. Finding [creative] ways to talk about it is totally valid, and I don't think it implies a detachment from reality. It's not like I started dating my boyfriend two years ago and forgot my whole life before that. It's not like my whole life was erased.

It's a hard thing to talk about. I understand why people don't like my boyfriend. A lot of people have problems with Silicon Valley, and it's complex, it's not easy to answer in one simple statement. There's so many things that so many people are mad about and so many of them are extremely skewed or incorrect. I understand that where I'm at there's just going to be a certain amount of shit-talking forevermore, and I accept that. But the thing that really gets me is that it's audacious or ignorant to make art about a certain topic. I don't think art can be moralized.

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# Not so solo

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

The idea of a musician “going solo” evokes a familiar set of assumptions: the band must have broken up; the band must have been stifling the artist’s creativity to the point where they had to break free.

For Alex Nicol, neither of these things are quite true. His band Hoan is still working on a record together, albeit at a slow pace. It was pacing that drove him to “go solo” in the first place, to make his own record with Howard Bilerman at Hotel2Tango instead of a record with the band. But despite frustrations with timing and some creative differences, there’s no bad blood in Hoan. Nicol’s bandmate and childhood friend Michael Heinermann plays bass with the live band in this new project, alongside Nicol’s brother Oliver (guitar). Together they’ll be launching Nicol’s debut LP *All for Nada* this month, alongside Nicol’s sister Marielle (keys and vocals) and Ryan White (drums).

Nicol’s key collaborator, however, won’t be on stage. His girlfriend Nada Temerinski handles the visual element of the project, but her role as a kind of artistic director goes beyond videos, photos and album art. What you hear on the album is the result of their artistic alliance, even though she’s not a musician or songwriter.

“There’s a reason why the album is called *All for Nada*,” Nicol explains. “She’s essentially a producer. She doesn’t play an instrument and she’s not engineering anything, but she’s sitting there with me and listening and saying, ‘This is what I think.’ She’s invested in making great art that she likes. The origin of this project is our ability to be inspired by each other and to see through the ideas that we have together.”

Nicol, who moved to Montreal from Ottawa 11 years ago, played in a succession of bands (among them Kurvi Tasch, and She Divides with Tess Roby) and worked at the underground music venue Poisson Noir. Sonically, he fell in with the tendencies of the indie scene at the time, towards math rock, jangly guitars and electronic experimentation.

“(Nada) would hear me playing acoustic guitar and singing, and she’d say, ‘So you can do that? Why aren’t you doing that?’ And I’d say, ‘I don’t know, it’s not what I’m into.’ And she’d say, ‘You should do that,’ and I’d say, ‘No,’ and that went on for years.”

Folk-rock is how Nicol himself classifies his sound now, and it’s a genre with a spotty history as far as this project’s ideological mandate is concerned.

“You have your Bob Dylans and your Neil Youngs and your Leonard Cohens — these are men who made a living writing songs about their sexual attraction to the female body or the essence of a female or the ideal of feminine beauty. There’s a lot of ego in that, and there’s a lot of elements about that that I find not to my liking. I think songwriting has the potential to go deeper. White men like me who don’t have much to gripe about almost have it as our duty to engage in the realness of life in a deeper way than sexual attraction. This project is my attempt to articulate that feeling, the notion that no songwriter stands alone on a cliff and looks out and is sad about some woman on some cloud somewhere. That’s not the reality of how life is.



Alex Nicol

Shary Lee

“And these men get helped a lot along the way by their partners. There’s a hidden history there of women supporting men in their art. The emotional support that women provided these artists is often ignored, and so in my own work I wanna be so ignorant of what my own ego is saying that we can objectify the work that Nada and I did together and give her equal appreciation. This wouldn’t be happening if it wasn’t for her. I want that to be said more often by men who make music.

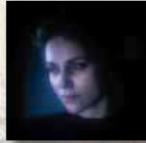
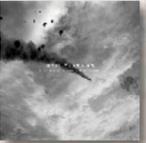
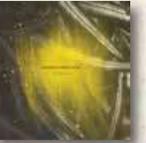
“This isn’t about me and how sexy chicks are and how everybody thinks that chicks are sexy. Music is more than

that. There needs to be an element of depth and I’m hoping to do that more, even if I don’t always know how. Love is an open-ended topic and you can’t get away from talking about emotions without it being physical. But I’ve written lyrics that Nada agrees represent ideals that she supports. I think that’s enough. If we see eye to eye, then I think it’s something good.”

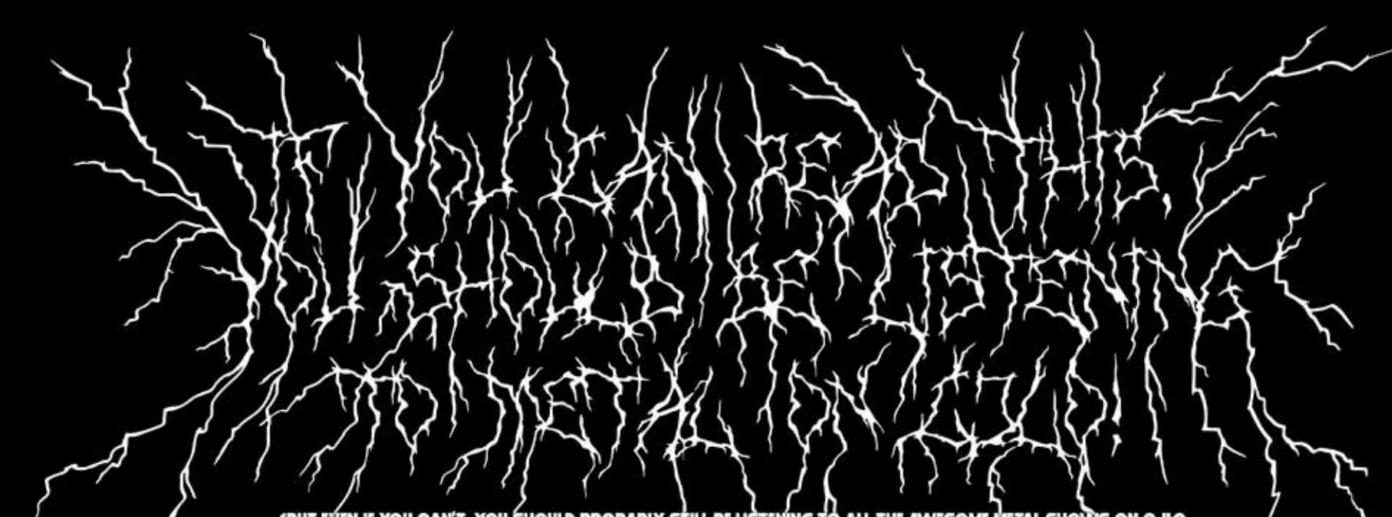
→ Alex Nicol & co. play with opener Michael Feuerstack at Ursa (5589 Parc) on Saturday, March 7, 8 p.m., \$10

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# Bass vacillations

BY DARCY MACDONALD

Whether winning a Grammy with Kendrick, thrashing with Suicidal Tendencies or rumbling in the glitch with Flying Lotus, who gave the six-string-thumping groove master a place to shine solo on his Brainfeeder label, L.A. bass boss

Thundercat puts the low end at the forefront of all that he does

With his fourth LP *It Is What It Is* brimming with new sounds and ideas (it's being released by Brainfeeder on April 3), he spoke to us on leap-day afternoon from Portland after his first official tour stop in Vancouver.

Darcy MacDonald: How was the first show?

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Thundercat: It was pretty fun! I mean, that's my favourite thing to do. Touring and playing live shows is how I grew up, so I genuinely love it.

DM: When you're writing, how do you approach balancing the complexity of what you do, knowing that you will invariably have to bring it to the stage?

Thundercat: I love making music that's gonna challenge me to sing and play. It's two different melodies going at the same time (when I'm) playing bass and singing. Creating independence between those two is always fun.

And I like making music that is challenging when I'm playing it live on tour. Sometimes I like writing really fast tunes with a lot of changes and stuff like that because it keeps my mind sharp, in that respect, because that's literally how I grew up. Since I was a kid and I decided this was what I wanted to do, (I've liked) anything that would lend itself to me playing and always having a process that is fun for me. Even if it's painful.

The role of the bass vacillates somewhere between the harmonic stuff, but also you can create melody, and then also you have a job that's a bit locomotive, where you have to keep things moving. So yeah, I'd say that it's a pretty big challenge to play and create solely from the bass like that, and sing. It can be really jarring in some respects.

DM: When you compose, do you start uniquely from bass ideas and move outward or do you have ideas for what other pieces may be doing simultaneously as you're writing?

Thundercat: I feel like everything does naturally stem from the bass. I mean, even though, like, I could play key bass or try to mess around with different instruments like that, it always is starting from somewhere between the bass and my mind, melodies and harmonies I'm hearing and stuff like that. I do hear the different roles the instruments play and I do anything from trying to emulate them to create them myself from what I'm hearing rhythmically, from the bass.

DM: As a young artist, you toured for several years as a member of Suicidal Tendencies. Please tell me about that a bit.

Thundercat: Mike Muir — Cyco Miko — really kicked my ass into shape. I think he saw something there, to some degree, but at the same time I think he just... we would just have fun, to be honest with you! Me and Mike would always just have fun on stage, and there would always be some crazy moment that would lend itself to like, you know, "Oh, what are you gonna do here?"

(I'd) stand up there and almost get pelted with beer bottles, and people telling me that I'm not [the band's previous longtime guitarist] Rocky George. Those types of moments would happen, but (Mike) would encourage me to not feel anything except what I felt in the music. And I would try to go for it, genuinely. So it was very educational. He encouraged me to be myself.

Every now and then I'd get made fun of because I always dressed a little weird, but it's kinda like, that's just what comes with the territory. And Mike taught me a lot. He would force me to stand out and solo. He'd give me a moment to think through solos, and take my time. That's how we would treat it, and that's ultimately what I would take into my music, along with the speed, and the craziness, and the intensity. All that stuff that we know Mike, and Suicidal, and Infectious Grooves for. He taught me that, for it to always be that intense, and never let up, you know? That's my formative years! Some people go to college, I went to the School of Suicidal.

DM: Growing up, who was your fantasy band you wished you could play with?

Thundercat: Frank Zappa. Or Mahavishnu Orchestra, that's who I would have wanted to play with. (Drummer) Billy Cobham was in there throwing fireballs. That would be it for sure. As I grew up, that's definitely something I

saw myself doing, like, "Man, I wish I woulda played with John McLaughlin back in those years," or been involved in those moments. That is something I have romanticized.

DM: What do you feel you're pushing forward with on *It Is What It Is*?

Thundercat: I'm just always excited about the music, man. I get excited about the progress but at the same time I'm always just wanting it to still be something special and different every time people hear it. Another one of my biggest influences is Andre 3000, for what he contributed at the time that he did. Guys like him and Pharrel busted the doors open for people to be open, and listen with open ears and open hearts. So I'm always excited about what's next. I just like to see change.

I think everything is familiar (and) I think there's space for everything. I think people are becoming open to that, and that's more important to me than just the part of like, striving and struggling to be something-and-this-and-that.

It's meant to be enjoyable, and it's meant to be something you love. And even though there's pain in love, it's one of those things where, sonically, it's a big world. I don't think so much along the lines of making sure I'm in the right place or doing the right things. I always just make sure I'm following my heart, and go where my heart leads me.

→ Thundercat performs with Teejayx6 at Corona

Theatre (2490 Notre-Dame W.) on Thursday, March 19, SOLD OUT.



Thundercat

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INTERCONTINENTAL

# Basement uplift

BY DARCY MACDONALD

Scott C has witnessed, testified for and contributed to Montreal's nightlife scene for over two decades, as a DJ, producer and social commentator.

Today, he can be said to have survived it. And having won a frightening battle with prostate cancer last year, he's back at the pulpit with a new monthly, Misa Negra, at la Sotterenea, a new-ish venue in the basement of la Sala Rossa.

"I was laid up for almost seven weeks after my surgery and I was thinking about a lotta things. I had to get my money in order. My mom had hip surgery during the same period and we were talking every day but I couldn't do anything to go down and help her," Scott recalls.

"So I kept thinking, 'What am I gonna do when I get out of this?' I've made it through the other side, and I got it in my head to get back out."

Scott was an early advocate for the club monthly, and cites age and experience as factors lending to creating monthly magic over weekly havoc.

"Me and Andy (Williams) were doing the Goods for almost 15 years at la Sala Rossa and we were very lucky to be able to sort of create our own little corner of Montreal. Maybe the first couple of years were tough going but once we found our footing, the crowd came back years on end. It was a really simple formula," he explains.

"It was an open format party, the kind I grew up on and started DJing on. And the varied nature of the format was reflected in the crowd that would come out. That's something I've always liked about a great party: a mix of people from different places, backgrounds, ages. People are coming to be open to whatever happens at the joint and that's the vibe I've always tried to get back to."

It was tough to call it off but the duo stepped back before it "hit the ditch," says Scott.

But having the spirit of rhythm strong in him, naturally he wasn't stopping there.

"I always, in the back of my head, wanted to start something new. I've always DJed, I've been DJing for over 25 years and



Scott C

there's something that still appeals to me about a night of fresh music, new music, old music, in the same breath, and the crowd that that attracts."

Enter la Misa Negra — or black mass — a celebration of black music in all its forms.

"I had started a night at Local Legend when it opened (in 2017). Out of respect for (owner) Richie Hilary and him opening a new place on St-Laurent, I decided to do Misa Negra over there on Friday nights. I don't know if that was a bit hasty, but to think about doing something leftfield on the lower Main on a Friday night was a little dodgy. Plus it had just opened. I did it for two or three months and then they decided to do more the Friday night thing and brought in Godfather D. They offered me some other nights but I

turned it down because I really wanted to wait for the right thing to come along instead of burying myself on a Tuesday night. And all respect to them, they found their groove!" Scott says.

Thereafter came his battle with cancer and eventually the surgery that would purge him of it.

"While I was laid up, people were visiting me. My friend told me about the basement of Sala Rossa. I was like, 'What are you talking about?' And he told me he had gone to a party there and that they had opened it up and were doing stuff down there. And I'm like, 'What basement?!?'"

"So the first time I was able to get out of the house properly outside and walk and move around, where did I go? I went to see Kiva and Dan at Sala and they showed me the basement room. It's great, it's perfect. It's tiny. It's called la Sotterenea — the underground. It's basically about a 100-person capacity. One side of the room is a bar, a pool table and some couches. And the other side is an open hardwood dancefloor with a mirrored wall and hanging speakers. It's tiny. It's perfect," he enthuses.

He's booked a grip of guests through June. This month he's joined by Drumspeak, and he already tested the waters with Lexis earlier this winter.

"I'm thankful to come out the other side of this thing," Scott says gratefully. "There's so much music, and I don't digest it the same way I used to, but it's still a weekly thing. There's so much I wanna share with people, both new and old, and I want a place where I can invite like-minded DJs to come and share and build that vibe with me. There's some great monthlies in town, but I still feel like there's room for the vibe that I like to call home, and I'm happy to try to share that with people in the basement. My superpower is being able to link genres and give that back to people."

And as for the mass, he's not trying to spring religion on anyone, but the spirit of the thing is in symbolic moment the vet knows how to curate.

"I wanted the name to encapsulate the holiness of black music across the board," Scott reasons. "The black mass, if you'll forgive me, it's church, man! I'm trying to just get a small group of people to come, observe, listen and digest something that's gonna lift up their soul and expand their mind, simple and plain. I'm not Kanye, man! I'm not trying to invoke any kind of spirituality or anything like that but it is gonna happen on a regular basis and if you're there, you will get lifted."

→ Misa Negra with Scott C and Drumspeak is happening at la Sotterenea (4848 St-Laurent) on Friday, March 20, 10 p.m.–3 a.m., \$10

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# :hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

There is no shortage of revisionist punk rock docs — trust me, I have seen them all.

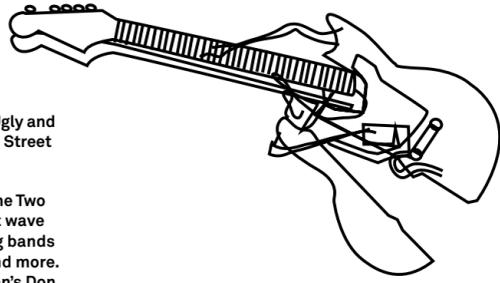
The late '70s first wave scenes of New York and London are more than well documented. Thankfully there always seem to be people like Don Letts with his Super8 capturing the spit and mohair jumpers at the Roxy, while *Punk* magazine, led by Legs McNeil and John Holmstrom, got the CBGB's scene down on the printed page. Things were bubbling under in Los Angeles with the Masque club scene and there was also great proto-punk happening in places like Cleveland (Pagans, the Electric Eels, Rocket From the Tombs). But Toronto never really got a fair shake in being portrayed as a formative and significant scene in the beginning of punk, 1977.

If you were to ask punk rock's main players of the day, like the Ramones (one of the bruddahs' first shows out of New York was at the New Yorker Theatre in Toronto!), Dead Boys, Talking Heads etc, Toronto was the triangle point along with New York and London. Toronto "the Good" boasted an exclusive punk rock club, Crash and Burn, run by punk/pop band the Diodes as well as promoters the Two Garys, who were more than willing to take chances on this commercially unproven genre. As a result of this support and infrastructure, you got incredible local

punk bands like Teenage Head, the Viletones, the Ugly and more experimental rockers spilling out onto Queen Street from the Ontario College of Art.

All good things must end, though, and promoters the Two Garys hosted a night signifying the end of the first wave of punk at the tiny venue the Horseshoe, featuring bands Teenage Head, a revamped Viletones, the Mods and more. Director/producer Colin Brunton, much like London's Don Letts, happened to be in the right place at the right time and captured the historically significant show with a sort of fuzzy clarity — the night quickly unfolded into a riot when undercover cops attempted to shut it down. Much like almost every musician who graced the stage that night (and certainly the majority of the punk scene at the time), Brunton's footage is pretty amateurish, but like a smash and bash chord emanating from the Les Paul Jr. of the Head's Gordie Lewis, the spirit and the passion is definitely all there.

The original DVD copy of *The Last Pogo* was a revelation after a decade ago, but this re-release — *The Last Pogo Jumps Again* — is utterly mandatory. Brunton goes far further in-depth, while using his original footage as a jumping off point and stuffing the new DVD with a running time of nearly three and a half hours, with nary a duff moment. Viletones singer and punk legend Steven Lechie is worth the price of admission alone. Brunton is able to shed light on the heroin use that marred the pre-hardcore punk years, the casualties that were cast adrift after the scene collapsed, the sense of DIY community that ultimately provided the fuel and how the first wave of the Toronto punk scene continues to influence



and provide a bedrock for the DIY and underground music community all over the world.

If this is getting you hot under your dog collar, *Cult MTL* is giving away not one, not two but three copies of the deluxe double DVD edition of *The Last Pogo Jumps Again*. Much thanks to director/producer/bottle washer Colin Brunton for being so generous. To win your very own copy, just email me the name of the singer from the Viletones (jonthan.cummins@gmail.com). If a hardcopy is too cumbersome for you, *The Last Pogo Jumps Again* is also available on most digital platforms and should prove to be one of the best punk rock docs you will ever see — if not the best.

Current Obsession: Scientist, *Scientific Dub*  
jonathan.cummins@gmail.com

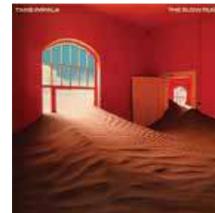
# Album reviews

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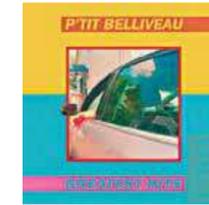
Antibalas, *Fu Chronicles* (Daptone)  
You can gentrify Williamsburg, NY — Antibalas's place of origin — but you can't take the Afro out of the beat these players (now 20-plus years deep into their mission) put down. On a seventh studio voyage through African and Latin landscapes of funk,

jazz and dance-oriented rhythm, the power still belongs to the people. Fans know what to expect, to be sure, but we find the band a little more focused here, and while their compositions always have and always will take time to breathe and stretch, it's noteworthy that lead vocalist Duke Amayo spends a little less time getting warmed up from track to track, making for a more cohesive, harmonic blend of instrumentation and lyrics that lends structure to each song and thereby the album as a whole. While Antibalas has long since found its voice, *Fu Chronicles* gives it sharper impact. 8/10 Trial Track: "Lai Lai" (Darcy MacDonald)



Tame Impala, *The Slow Rush* (Interscope)  
*Lonerism* and *Currents* were respectively two of the quintessential indie rock albums of the 2010s. How do you follow up two back-to-back, genre defying albums? Maybe you release a project

a little less momentous and maybe that's just fine. *The Slow Rush* may not be Tame Impala's most exciting project to date but still has plenty of enjoyable moments to offer. Kevin Parker goes considerably more dance-oriented than his past releases, the album feeling near tailor-made for the festival circuit. As its title insinuates, *The Slow Rush* is not a first listen knockout, rather a gradual grower. 8/10 Trial Track: "Is It True" (Mr. Wavvy)



P'tit Belliveau, *Greatest Hits Vol.1* (Bonsound)  
P'tit Belliveau — a real 'bon jack' type hailing from Baie-Ste-Marie, NS — can sing about black bears, boats in the bay, or blowing his income tax return on booze and Taco Bell all the while bringing the funk with banjo-

fuelled bluegrass and disco-driven country. Don't confuse this with plain ol' rigodon, either. When not experimenting with synths amid the playful down-home ditties here, Belliveau favours a more traditional take on the classic Americana genres he clearly adores. Singing in French, a little English and whole lotta backwoods Chiac, he sings and plays with a combination of childlike wonder, introspective easygoingness and fuck-it-let's-get-hammered rebellion, which is probably the most endearing thread throughout this official ten-title LP debut. 8/10 Trial Track: "Income Tax" (Darcy MacDonald) *Album launch at l'Escogriffe (4461 St-Denis) on April 1, 7 p.m., free*



Sayveeyun, *Impulse Ode EP* (Aurawire)  
Fragility and fracas duke it out on the local electronic producer's impressively realized three-song collection. His internalized, echoing vocals barely register as more than a disembodied cry for help as mechanical pulleys and levers blare

around him, before they haplessly melt into sonic layers that build until they suffocate. The inner turmoil in the beats and rhythms lean more towards a British palette, with "Bad Magic" specifically coming across as the most sinister cut *Underworld* could've ever written. 8/10 Trial Track: "Warble" (Erik Leijon)



Maky Lavender, *...At Least My Mom Loves Me* (Ghost Club)  
The West Island's great hip hop hope is a young man both burdened and strengthened by suburban mall ennui, industry micro-aggressions and rap dreams beyond the St. Charles exit off Highway 40. He's a charismatic emcee with

a personable flow and a knack for world building, although charm only gets you so far on the undercooked "Billie Gin" and "5 Stars." He also stretches his singsong muscles on "Bloom," and the release's many looks all tenuously hold together with vibrant, chromatic beats. He'll count more fans than his mom before too long. 6/10 Trial Track: "Air Transat Freestyle" (Erik Leijon) *Album launch at Ausgang Plaza (6524 St-Hubert), March 18, 6 p.m., \$10*

  
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# film

## Keep on survivin'



Jusqu'au déclin

Bertrand Calmeau

BY ALEX ROSE

Private financing is a very rare beast in Quebec filmmaking. It's not unheard of, but it often conjures the notion of vanity funding. Movies that have to go to private financing are often thought to be the ones not good enough to get institutional backing — either because they went through part of the process and were rejected, or just avoided the process outright. That hasn't always been the case, of course; there are a variety of factors that may affect funding in Quebec, but there has never been a disrupting force quite like Netflix.

There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to any enormous disrupting force, but one of the net advantages of Netflix is that they have both the budget and the range of distribution to allow for projects that the SODEC can't. It's probably no coincidence, then, that the first Quebec production funded by Netflix is a violent and extremely efficient thriller in the Jeremy Sautnier mold. It is almost exactly the kind of movie that we *don't* see coming out of institutions, and that has less to do with its quality than the so-called expectations of the market.

"It started as a short, then we were asked to write a longer version," says Guillaume Laurin, who plays the lead role and forms one-third of Couronne Nord, the production company behind the film. Of all the faces in the film, Laurin is almost certainly the least familiar. "There was a point where we were going to make the film with another company. But Netflix was very open to the idea that I would be part of the project. There was a real desire to discover new talent — I've been doing my thing for a while, but this is definitely a come-up."

Funding and commercial potential aren't usually at the forefront of a director's mind when they discuss their first film, but Patrice Laliberté is aware that *Jusqu'au déclin's*

status as the first Netflix production means things are a little different — and that his approach had to be slightly more pragmatic.

"The goal was always to make a short movie," says Laliberté after I compliment the film's trim 82-minute running time — there's nary a superfluous second here. "The longer a movie is, the more footage you have to shoot and the more that costs. In my head, I thought I'd never have access to millions of dollars to make this movie, so I had to plan accordingly. A shorter movie is one way to do this. Another thing that I had to take into account was my own use of the platform. The amount of time I spend skipping through movies on a streaming platform... I'll take a look at the title, the poster and the running time. I wanted to attract people with a running time. I come from short films, too. I have this desire to synthesize stories. A scene that doesn't move things along? Cut it. I really had this economic approach to the whole thing — straight to the point."

Antoine (Guillaume Laurin) is a budding suburban survivalist; a father and husband who's convinced that society is on the brink of collapse, and thus spends most of his time prepping and training his family for that inevitability. Antoine is taken by the work of Alain (Réal Bossé), a "survival influencer" who teaches tips and tricks on his YouTube channel; Antoine is so taken with Alain's work, in fact, that when a place opens up in one of the seminars he runs up north, Antoine jumps at the chance to participate. He soon finds himself in a somewhat secret location alongside several other survival enthusiasts (Marie-Évelyne Lessard, Guillaume Cyr, Marilyne Castonguay, Marc Beauré and Marc-André Grondin) who share in the common belief that shit's about to go south any second. What they haven't planned for, however, is that shit might go south in the immediate, without the involvement of the society they so deeply fear — and when it does, there's no going back.

"The challenge as early as the writing stage was to maintain a slow burn," explains Laurin. "We wanted to spend time on the characters and their relationships so we could fuck them up. (laughs) But we needed to feel attached to the characters for long enough. It really starts like a pretty slow and meditative drama, and for a while, you start to believe it. The challenge was to shift the tone in a way that was unexpected, but also organic. From the beginning, we agreed with Netflix that it had to start slow."

*Jusqu'au déclin* — or, at least, the first third of *Jusqu'au déclin* — is very much concerned with current ideas of deceleration and impending societal collapse. It doesn't necessarily mean, however, that the film is a glowing portrait of the survivalist mentality. "Survivalists are consumed by fear," says Laliberté. "But the whole first phase of the survivalist mentality is great — it's about being self-sufficient, it's punk, DIY. You grow your own food, generate your own electricity, you don't depend on anyone. It's always incremental, too. No one just ups and buys a bunker. They take small steps, but they're driven by fear. I think it's fine, as a way of life; there's a lot of positive there. Where it gets complicated is in phase two. 'Stand your ground' paranoia. The paranoid thought that society is on the verge of collapse, as far as I'm concerned, is basically pragmatic. It's mathematics. We can't require three per cent economic growth at all times — it's going to go to shit. There's something pragmatic about that idea. But in the second phase, when you've moved on from putting rice in mylar bags to training with an AR-15 to 'defend yourself against migrants,' it's a whole other thing."

→ *Jusqu'au déclin* opens in select cinemas on March 13 and comes to Netflix on March 27.

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# BFF battles



Kenny vs. Spenny

BY JACOB CAREY

*Audience members beware: this time, you may be the one facing humiliation.*

Critically acclaimed TV show *Kenny vs. Spenny* may have ended nearly a decade ago, but the two broken best friends are back on tour to antagonize and humiliate each other once more.

“Everything’s money, motive-wise,” says Spenny. “I don’t think we’d be doing this for free! Beyond that, I think we see the value in our dysfunctional relationship, and we love the comedy that comes out of it.”

Kenneth Hotz and Spencer Rice’s TV series, which debuted in 2002, consisted of weekly challenges between the roommates that resulted in a humiliation to be performed by the loser of the competition. Early seasons featured episodes like “Who Can Stay Awake the Longest?” and “Who Makes the Most Convincing Woman?” while the comedians upped their stupidities in later years with competitions like “First Guy to Get a Boner Loses” and “Who Can Get Further With the Other Guy’s Mom?”

The comedic gold lay not in the challenges themselves,

but in the exchanges between the two childhood friends. Kenny’s compulsion to humiliate Spenny oftentimes led to elaborate schemes to gain a competitive edge, if not outright cheating, while the latter would only find out after his humiliation. Spenny’s commitment to winning in an honest manner was arguably his biggest downfall, leading to a final series count of 59-21 wins for Kenny. The series went on to pioneer many international spinoffs, none of them as successful as the original.

“There’s something very vulgar about what we do that, somehow, we don’t get much credit for,” says Spenny. “They don’t see past the spit, and the puke, and the shit, and anything else. But what it was, it was a real relationship going on. As corny as it was, if the point of a comedy is to make people laugh, I would argue our show was one of the greats.”

Now in their 50s and able to live a normal life outside of the public eye, Kenny and Spenny continue to take pleasure in being able to tour across Canada and make their fans laugh in a live setting. However, Spenny promises that this tour, things will be a little different.

“Kenny never did a humiliation live, ever,” Spenny says. “I always did it. I did it not because I like it, not because I’m a masochist — I did it because the fans wanted to see it. So

as much as I’m grumpy and can be a bit of an asshole to the fans, I’ll do what I have to do to get them their money’s worth. That’s over now. I’ve done enough of those things. Now we’re going to pull people out of the audience and have them do it.”

*Kenny vs. Spenny* hopped around from network to network throughout the show’s lifespan. They gained their fame on CBC Television with a poorly planned timeslot, as viewers would tune in minutes before the nightly news and witness the show’s absurd humiliations. The show aired its finale in Sept. 2010 on Showcase, though fans were later gifted with one final Christmas special before its demise. Despite the show’s turbulent run, Spenny has no regrets.

“Kenny and I are stunned that we’re still schlepping this shit, but we both know it was funny and that’s really what we wanted to do to begin with,” he says. “The typecasting part of it is a little tough because I’m a serious musician — I play solo, and I play with a band, and you know, I’ll always be Spenny who shit himself on TV with an octopus on his head, right? B.B. King never really had to deal with that side of things.”

→ *The Kenny vs. Spenny tour comes to Fairmount Theatre (5240 Parc) on Friday, March 27, 7 p.m., \$48.64*

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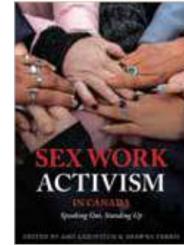
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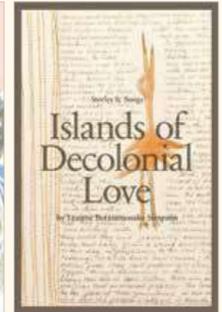
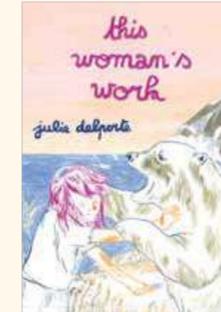
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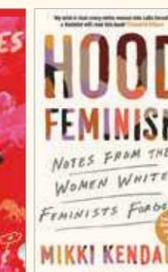
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## NEW AND EXCITING THIS MONTH



# On Screen



Run This Town



Blood Quantum



My Spy



A Quiet Place Part II

BY ALEX ROSE

It's a given that when a relatively inexpensive horror film becomes a breakout hit, there'll be a sequel. It happens almost systematically, and John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place Part II* (March 20) seems to follow that logic — but these follow-ups rarely, if ever, get the same kind of attention. Krasinski returns behind the camera and Emily Blunt returns in the lead; Djimon Hounsou and Cillian Murphy co-star.

*The Way Back* (March 6) has a logline that kind of sounds like a joke: it's about a widowed alcoholic who tries to get his life back on track by becoming the coach of a high school basketball team. Given that the premise is straight out of 2005 and that it stars noted alcoholic Ben Affleck in the lead role, it seems more than a little on-the-nose. But, then again, could it even be as generic as it sounds?

The most controversial film that no one saw last year finally gets a release on March 13. The release of *The Hunt* (March 13) was delayed in the fall for its apparently incendiary liberal politics, which were at the very least enough to get Donald Trump to tweet about a Blumhouse movie — but, frankly, it just kind of seems like an umpteenth variation of *The Most Dangerous Game* with red-state / blue-state buzzwords being thrown around. Betty Gilpin, Emma Roberts and Hilary Swank star. Disney's pilfering of their back catalogue continues with *Mulan* (March 27), which admittedly looks like a more elaborate remake than the by-the-book efforts that have resulted from this practice thus far. Niki Caro's take on the 1998 animated film goes for a

more pared-down, realistic vibe (no talking dragon here) and is the first of Disney's remakes to be rated PG-13.

Once in a while, a Christian movie seeps out into the mainstream and gets a wide release even up here, in relatively godless pinko Canada. This year, the sole culprit is likely to be *I Still Believe* (March 13), a biopic of contemporary Christian musician Jeremy Camp (played here by *Riverdale*'s K.J. Apa) and more specifically of the tragic outcome of his first marriage, which ended with the death of his wife (Britt Robertson) from ovarian cancer.

Never one to do things quite the expected way, Vin Diesel joins the superhero fray with *Bloodshot* (March 13), an adaptation of a somewhat niche title from Valiant Comics. Diesel stars as the titular character, a superhuman soldier enhanced by nanotechnology who's out for revenge following the death of his wife and daughter. It looks pretty hokey, but I have to say that the premise is somewhat appealing to me. Speaking of muscular action heroes, Dave Bautista gets the requisite *Mr. Nanny* / *The Tooth Fairy* / *The Pacifier* effort out of the way with *My Spy* (March 13), an espionage comedy that pairs him with a nine-year-old girl. Bautista has a more rough-hewn, less spit-shined persona than many of the other wrestler-turned-actors, but I can't see it being particularly well-served in this comedy from frequent Sandler collaborator Peter Segal.

As Cannes looms on the horizon, most distributors are trying to clear their slate of festival acquisitions from the past year. In the world of indie and arthouse, though, a long time between a premiere and a theatrical release doesn't necessarily mean a dump. Steve Coogan's long-standing collaboration with Michael Winterbottom continues with *Greed* (March 6), a satire of the one per cent, in which Coogan plays the CEO of a fast-fashion company. *Peep Show*'s David Mitchell and Isla Fisher co-star. Indie stalwart Kelly Reichardt returns with *First Cow* (March 20), a frontier-set, Western-ish drama starring John Magaro, Orion Lee and the recently deceased Rene Auberjonois. Montreal-based Mi'kmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby follows up his excellent

2013 film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* with *Blood Quantum* (March 27), a First Nations zombie movie starring Michael Greyeyes and Forrest Goodluck.

I wasn't that enthused by the neo-noir thriller *The Burnt Orange Heresy* (March 27) when I saw it at TIFF. The stiff art-world thriller starring very tall, very beautiful leads (Claes Bang and Elisabeth Debicki) is out on March 13. *Vivarium* (March 27), a sci-fi thriller that played at *Fantasia*, is out March 27; Jesse Eisenberg and Imogen Poots star as a couple who get stuck in what appears to be an endless neighbourhood of identical houses while house-hunting.

Palestinian director Elia Suleiman's *It Must Be Heaven* (March 27) doesn't differ enormously from his previous works — slightly absurdist and deadpan vignettes — but it's hard to deny he's one of the best in the world at doing that very thing. Ken Loach follows up his Palme d'Or-winning *I, Daniel Blake* with *Sorry We Missed You* (March 13), another passionate and humanistic drama from England's most skilled social-issues filmmaker. Speaking of former Palme d'Or winners, Abdellatif Kechiche followed his 2012 win with a pair of controversial (not to mention sexually explicit) films based on François Bégaudeau's novel *La blessure, la vraie*. The first installment, titled *Mektoub, My Love: Canto Uno*, finally hits screens on March 13, nearly three years after its premiere at the Venice Film Festival.

Jean-Carl Boucher, the protagonist of Ricardo Trogi's autobiographical trilogy, makes his directorial debut with the coming-of-age dramedy *Flashwood* (March 13), which stars so many up-and-coming Quebec stars in their 20s, you'd be forgiven for thinking it's based on an S.E. Hinton novel. Montreal-based filmmaker Aisling Chin-Yee makes her feature directorial debut with *The Rest of Us* (March 20), a family dramedy that stars Heather Graham and Sophie Nélisse. A particularly thorny piece of recent Canadian history is explored in Ricky Tollman's *Run This Town*, a lightly fictionalized exploration of the brouhaha surrounding the Rob Ford crack tape; Ben Platt, Mena Massoud and Damian Lewis (as Rob Ford!) star.

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# arts

## Femininity on the move



∞POSTX∞

Geneviève Smith

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

Tangente Danse is marking International Women's Day with a double bill on the broad topic of femininity.

The evening features two performances: a solo by Toronto dance artist Jane-Alison McKinney (*There she was*) and two solos by Montreal choreographer Geneviève Smith-Courtois (∞POSTX∞) performed by Smith-Courtois and Juliette Pottier Plaziat.

Both artists take a broad and chaotic approach to the feminine, McKinney as she "towers over miniature furniture" in stilettos, Smith-Courtois with a "post-pornographic vision of sexuality" that integrates a 360 degree camera.

Smith-Courtois's starting point for ∞POSTX∞ was both

a desire to physically embody "infinite... like the mathematical symbol" but also a "strong post-pornographic vision" of a vagina being opened by a key.

The term post-porn is attributed to the photographer Wink van Kempen, but for the curious and academically-minded out there, a *Cultural Studies Review* links post-pornography more broadly to "sex-positive, anti-censorship and queer/feminist" artists and theorists in "the United States in the 1980s and 1990s."

Two artists in particular inspired Smith-Courtois's vision of the post-pornographic. First, Virginie Dépente, author of *Baise-Moi* — and a woman *The Guardian* refers to as having "secured renown as a 'rock'n'roll Zola.'" Second, Annie Sprinke, the woman behind the performance art piece *A Public Cervix Announcement*, where, after a quick and flirtatious lesson in female anatomy, she inserts a speculum into herself and invites the audience to come look

at her cervix with a flashlight. (Sprinke is also nothing if not prolific, and I invite everyone to please visit [anniespring.org](http://anniespring.org) to discover this true weirdo. I'd hazard to say that she learned HTML to design their own rabbit-hole of a website, including gems like all 57 minutes of *Annie Sprinke's Amazing World of Orgasm*.)

McKinney's exploration of femininity and sexuality in *There she was* may be less technologically and theoretically mediated than ∞POSTX∞, but her performance, which hinges on an improvised score, stems from a similar sex-positivity, a similar openness to the nuance and flux of sexuality. The inadvisability of too-closely defining womanhood sets the tone of our discussion about how she grapples with the idea. She talks about the "plethora of artists and people" who are "presenting femininity in this wide variety of ways," part of a contemporary dialogue that is "very alive and full of nuance."



∞POSTX∞

Francesca Chiaruffi

The link between these two works seems at least in part to spring from a sense of femininity as an iconographic and physical mash-up, to varying degrees an identity hinged on both biology and culture. McKinney and Smith-Courtois may reference a wide variety of external sources in their pieces, but they appear to highlight that truism common to dance: the conduit for their work, and the source of their work's profundity, are their bodies themselves.

→ *There she was* and ∞POSTX∞ will be performed at Tangente Edifice Wilder Espace danse (1435 Bleury #101) March 5-7, 7:30 p.m. and March 8, 4 p.m. There will be a discussion with the artists on March 6 and discounted regular tickets on March 8 (\$21). All other shows \$19-\$26.62, 18+

Quotes from Geneviève Smith-Courtois have been translated from French.

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# Extreme Shakespeare

BY SARAH DESHAIES

Jocelyn Pelletier is an actor, writer and director. But when he's in the audience, it's not necessarily the acting, words or vision that he fixates on. "Most of the time, when I go to the theatre, what I enjoy most is the musical part."

He's a fan of different genres, especially electronic and experimental styles, or what he terms "very extreme music." So when Pelletier sought to reinvent Macbeth, a story based partly on historical figures that has spawned countless iterations about the allure and pitfalls of power, he rewrote much of the text and started thinking about a musical.

First presented in 1606, "the Scottish Play" centres on a general who encounters a cadre of witches who prophesied that he will become King. Macbeth is cajoled by his unscrupulous wife into getting his hands very dirty in order to achieve their vision. While he rises to the medieval C-suite, his subsequent fall is a bloody warning about overarching ambition.



(MAC)DEATH

Pelletier instead casts Macbeth as the frontman of a heavy metal band in a concept album meets witchy, psychological thriller, reinforced with percussion and cacophonous guitar chords. His show, (MAC)DEATH, is getting a remount next week at la Chapelle Scènes Contemporaines.

"The guitars are the swords. It's their weapon," says Pelletier. The witches open the play, and Lady Macbeth is there, but a

good chunk of the Bard's story has been scrubbed in order to tell a story that taps instead into Macbeth's mental state and some of metal's tenets: authenticity, solidarity, questioning power and consumerism. It's "the story we know, but with a little twist."

Pelletier grew up in St-Hubert but is now based in Montreal, where he recently graduated from the directing program at the National Theatre School. His Phaedra-inspired work *From Time and Eternity* has played at Usine C and Ottawa's Trillium Theatre.

"As a child, I always wanted to be in a band, but I'm not good at any instrument at all," Pelletier says. "I'm a manager of a fictional group!"

Guillaume Perreault, who plays the frontman, found an old incantation of sorts online, and it was incorporated into a few of the songs. It was a slow process, as each tune took awhile to craft; some are even in English. It's important to note that this is not a show from a seasoned band. Not all the five-member-strong cast are trained musicians, though Samuel Bobony is a bonafide drummer. Pelletier admitted that here he is intentionally striving to push his artists out of their comfort zone, to create a certain anxiety in the performance.

Pelletier himself took care of the set design, to create a world that is "dark, loud and bloody." Costume designer Kate Lecourse did a lot of research into musicians and bands to craft the heavy metal look.

"In my wildest dreams, it's a field of mud. It's like they're in a cemetery," says Pelletier. Four litres of fake blood are used in each performance. "Some of (the actors) are getting pretty dirty."

The show has been a work in progress for three-and-a-half years, with help from two performance labs, first at OFFTA 2018 in Montreal and then at Mois Multi last February in Quebec City. With the show's remount at la Chapelle, the team has been gifted an extra week of residency.

"It's amazing because we can concentrate and can work deeper," says Pelletier. He hopes to eventually record songs from the show and share them online.

→ (MAC)DEATH will be performed at la Chapelle (3700 St-Dominique), March 9-10, 13-17, various times, \$33.50/\$28.50 students, seniors, under 30, art pros and neighbourhood residents/\$23.50 performing arts students. The performance on March 13 will have English surtitles.

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# If you want to destroy my sweater

BY RYAN DIDUCK

JOYFULTALK, "Part II - Pixelated skin,"  
A Separation of Being (Constellation)

I am not even finished reading the introduction of Agnès Gayraud's new book, *Dialectic of Pop*, when I come across this devastating passage:

"If pop was once a kingdom, it is now crumbling. In the early 21st century there is no universal King of Pop, only a myriad of little kings and queens, ruling over the patchwork countries of a segmented mainstream. The 'underground' exists on the same monopolistic platforms as the most prominent artists, the only real meaning of the word being relative weakness in the marketplace. As a result of this collapse, music, once lucrative when it found an audience, has no value and costs nothing. Up until the moment when no one is interested anymore, pop will just continue to perform, for free, its historically allocated task: entertaining consumers."

LEYA, "Wave," *Flood Dream* (NNA Tapes)

I toast to the crumbling of Pop music's kingdom. What even were the Michael Jacksons and Madonnas but consumer-entertainers doing their schtick to hypnotize the punters of this sleazy hotel-casino of late capitalism? This system of Kings and Queens made these people alien to us and to themselves, unable to wear their own faces, their marred and misshapen bodies tossed aside whenever they were no longer useful at seamlessly separating capital from the subject. Or when they were worth more dead than alive, when they became liabilities to the consumer entertainment industries. To lament the loss of this kingdom would be to waste our tears upon torturers.

Punks wore mohawks and leather and studs and tattooed their faces and pierced their noses so that they wouldn't be able to fit into society, so that they could honestly show up to an employment office or job interview and be pretty much assured of not having to work.

"We could refer here to Dick Hebdige's notion of 'confrontation dressing,'" wrote the cultural theorist Paul Mann in his 1995 article "Stupid Undergrounds," an article to which I keep returning: "(actually, Vivienne Westwood's phrase), epitomized by the punk swastika, riot grrl grunge and middle-class girls decked out in the 'sluttiest' gear (hooker chic, or underwear worn as outerwear, made famous and hence evacuated by the stupid icon named Madonna)."

black midi, "Sweater," *Sweater* (Rough Trade)

There is nothing, though — no article of fashion or personal adornment — that epitomizes punk, poverty and the passage of time quite like a moth-riddled sweater. The Johnny Rotten special, replete with safety pins. A quick Google search today for



Nirvana on MTV Unplugged, Nov. 18, 1993

original Seditinaires mohair sweaters returns a number for sale, from around \$2,000 to \$7,212.51 — quite a specific number for something that once signified a certain kind of carelessness. A very careful carelessness.

Punk fashion is especially overripe fruit for the picking, the last of the margins to be recuperated into the centre — the centre which is neither margin nor centre — in this post-Kingdom Pop era. Kurt Cobain's green cardigan, which he wore during the MTV Unplugged performance, sold last October at auction for \$334,000 U.S. The sweater's previous owner had purchased it in 2015 for \$180,000, meaning that it had almost doubled in value in five years.

Zoë Mc Pherson, "Tenace (dogs road),"  
*States of Fugue* (SFX)

The crass absurdity of a junkshop sweater's meteoric rise in price is emblematic of the two solitudes of late capitalism, in which not only the economic but also the existential gap between us, the 99%, and the top 1%, is almost untraversable. It is only through rarefied items such as Cobain's sweater that the membrane is punctured, when something worthless all of a sudden becomes priceless. The object of value here is not a product of the artist's creativity, nor is it even necessarily a product of creativity in general. It is not music, nor is it a musical instrument. It is a mass-produced and utterly banal object, neither purposefully fashionable nor especially functional. And the dirtier it is, the more it's worth.

We have skipped over the entertainment portion of tonight's show and moved directly to the consumption segment. Entertainment is no longer necessary to grease the wheels of capital. Capitalism might even prove more efficient in entertainment's absence. Kurt Cobain could have saved himself a lot of headaches, not to mention heartaches, had

he only been given an early clue that his calling was not, in fact, the rebellious musician, perhaps the last King of Pop, albeit a reluctant monarch whose head forever lay heavy beneath the crown, and was simply to be a human mannequin, nothing more than fashion's latest face, the imperfect visage of an anti-Pop fashion which functioned as the yang to Pop fashion's yin.

Daniel Avery & Alessandro Cortini, "Illusion of Time"  
*Illusion of Time* (Mute)

The only thing separating the worthless from the priceless is time. If the 20th century's greatest contemporary theorist Andy Warhol was to be believed, it is just a matter of time in this post-Pop system before each of us will have our very own priceless moment before plummeting back into worthlessness. Yet time is one thing that capital has not found a reliable way to transcend; there is no technological solution to a temporal problem.

The historian of science and technology Rosalind Williams wrote in her foundational book *Notes on the Underground* that civilization has two fears for the future: "The first fear is that humanity might get its wish and devise marvellous technologies that conquer nature and fulfill every conceivable need ... The second fear is that such technological progress will not be realized ... Either by conquering nature or by not conquering it, humanity will degenerate."

The question remains: when will we lose interest in our degenerative delights?

@ryandiduck



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