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## YANN POCREAU IMPERMANENCIES

UNTIL AUGUST 1, 2021

In this exhibition, the artist shares his recent musings on astronomy and the existential questions it inspires.

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## CAROLINE MONNET NINGA MÌNÈH

UNTIL AUGUST 1, 2021

In her first solo exhibition in a Canadian museum, the artist presents works that evoke the inequalities in living conditions experienced by Indigenous communities in Canada.

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– T’Cha Dunlevy, *Montreal Gazette*

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The artists received financial support from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. | An exhibition organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), *Impermanencies* is the culmination of an MMFA-sponsored residency the artist completed at the Darling Foundry from 2016 to 2018. Yann Pocreau, *Celestial Bodies*, 2018-2020. Collection of the artist | The exhibition *Ninga Mìnèh* is organized by the MMFA. Caroline Monnet is the winner of the 2020 Prix Pierre-Ayot, which is presented each year by Ville de Montréal in partnership with the Contemporary Art Galleries Association (AGAC). Caroline Monnet, *We Shape Our Homes and Then Our Homes Shape Us*, 2021. Collection of the artist. Photo MMFA, Jean-François Brière



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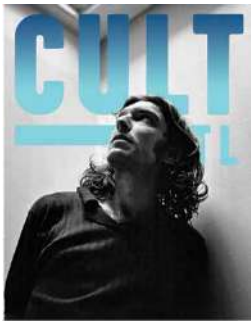
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We spoke to Montreal singer, songwriter, drummer, artist and latter-day animator Paul Jacobs about pandemic life and his new album *Pink Dogs on the Green Grass*.

Photo by Christopher Vincent

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# Big bug dreams

BY STEPHANE BANFI

Louise Hénault-Ethier, the energetic scientist responsible for research and development at Tricycle, slips into her lab coat and leads us through the breeding area, a square, temperature-controlled room where stacks of what look like plastic shoe bins are piled 10 shelves high. Each bin has a label neatly stuck on the front, bearing a 12-digit code.

The cramped room, roughly 800 square feet, looks more like a generous walk-in closet than a farm.

And yet, this is where Hénault-Ethier and her two associates at the company — Étienne Normandin and Alexis Fortin — breed 44 million heads of livestock a year, keeping a watchful eye on their development as the hum of the climate-controller keeps a steady temperature between 25 and 28 degrees, and the humidity level at 60%.

She pulls one of the drawers open and gently gives it a shake. After a few seconds, almost imperceptibly, minuscule mealworms — the size of short, thick, white hairs — begin to wiggle to the surface through what appears to be sawdust. (It's actually dried food.)

“There’s life in this one!” I can’t help but yelp, because after all, that’s what one does at the sight of thousands of squirming bugs.

But Hénault-Ethier and her young company are betting on a new growing trend that will hopefully foster a different reaction: eating them. By the millions.

Welcome to Tricycle, an innovative, Montreal-based edible insect farm with big bug dreams, and a unique approach to farming that could very well be the future of food.

If your idea of eating insects is limited to devouring the worm at the bottom of a mezcal bottle or inadvertently swallowing a mosquito during a bike ride, you should know that bugs are already part of the traditional diet of approximately two billion people on the planet. Grasshoppers, beetle grubs, caterpillars, giant ants and crickets are just a few of the culinary staples notably found in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

From 1993 to 2005, the Biodome infamously put edible insects on the map in the city with its Insect Tastings event, where visitors could crunch into a wide array of six-legged delicacies. The insect movement gradually faded away, crawling back under its rock until it received a massive jolt in 2013, when the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recommended the production of edible insects for an ever-growing population because of their tremendous nutritional bang and limited ecological impact.

“For the same weight, you’ll have two to three times more protein in insects than you have in meat,” explains Étienne Normandin, director of production and entomologist at Tricycle, whose mealworm powder features a whopping 58 grams of protein per 100 grams. “Insects can also be included in a vegetarian diet because they contain vitamin B12, an essential vitamin only found in animals.”

With the nutritional wind in its sails, the market recently exploded with a variety of insect-based snack bars, powders and flours now readily available in many grocery stores. President’s Choice even sells their own private-label cricket powder. Insects also made it to prime time TV thanks to Shark Tank and Mark Cuban’s numerous forays into the industry.

A recent report from Barclays forecasts that the edible insects market could reach \$8-billion by 2030. In Quebec alone, l’*Association des éleveurs et transformateurs d’insectes du Québec* (AÉTIQ) already boasts more than 30 breeders and processors, producing more than 100 tons of insects a year.

However, in all this sudden frenzy, Tricycle’s approach remains unique in that it’s truly both entomological and ecological, keeping the environment at the core of its business model.

“We want to give a third life to food,” explains Hénault-Ethier, in reference to the company’s name. “We’re working on a circular economy that I would qualify as deep. A circular economy is when you take a byproduct and give it value. Well, at Tricycle, we’re taking it to the next level.”

And it all starts with food waste — roughly 80 tons of it a year.

Hénault-Ethier’s laboratory is a short, metallic counter located just on the other side of the breeding area.

“This is my playground and my small instruments of torture,” she chuckles, pointing to an assortment of Petri dishes, scales and clipboards, along with plastic bags of dry insects.

Here, Hénault-Ethier analyzes as much food waste as she can, collected within a five-kilometre radius. Whether it’s pulp from local juicers Loop, who make their products by repurposing discarded fruit and vegetables, spent grain from the nearby Etoh micro-brewery or bread residue from la Boulangerie Jarry, Hénault-Ethier uses these byproducts to concoct a perfect blend of feed for her worms. Like an alchemist of refuse, she carefully weighs each gram to find the perfect combination to optimize her tiny tenants’ growth.

The feed is broken down into two types: dry and humid, which are equally essential to ensure her mealworms reach maturity, from eggs to larvae, in roughly three months’ time.

“They’re able to churn out chickens a lot faster,” she laughs. “But they’ve been doing research on chicken breeding for hundreds of years. We’re just starting.”

Once the insects reach the larval stage — weighing an average of 100 mg each, slightly lighter than a coffee bean — they’re ready for harvest and are then dehydrated in an oven, to be sold either dried or in powdered form. Some lucky adults are kept for reproduction, to repeat the cycle.

But that’s not all: along the way, all the insects’ droppings are also recovered to make a potent fertilizer known as frass.

“Our tests have shown that one teaspoon of frass per litre of earth yielded 16 times more vegetables than without it,” she explains.

The whole process is painstaking work that requires constant supervision, meticulous control at various stages of growth, continuous testing — and a hell of a lot of sifting.

The result is a high-end, local production of nearly four tons of mealworms a year where 93% of the food used in the breeding process is, in fact, local, organic residue.

Now in their third year of operation, Tricycle and its five employees offer consultation services to entrepreneurs who are tempted by the insect-farming venture, since the scientific groundwork is already done.

“We want to be an open-source company, a reference centre, and our goal is to create a network of interconnected insect farms across Quebec,” she says.

And the secret recipe to feed her worms?

“It turns out that the key for them to thrive is a wide variety of food in their diet,” she explains.

Ironically, food variety remains Tricycle’s biggest challenge in the marketplace.



There’s no doubt that we discriminate when it comes to what we’re willing to tolerate on our plates. While most of us still balk at eating insects, we’ve nevertheless elevated shrimp and escargot to the status of fine cuisine. Louisiana crawfish are a delicacy — even if they’re also known as mudbugs. And if you take a long, hard look at a lobster, it clearly has all the architecture of a giant insect.

The line between insects and seafood is probably murkier than we think. A note on Tricycle’s products warns that people allergic to crustaceans can also be allergic to insects.

“It’s a cultural problem,” says chef Jean-Louis Thémistocle, who grew up in Madagascar where tables of grasshoppers were regularly displayed next to peanuts at the local market. Chef Thémis, as he is known, is a pioneer of insect cuisine in Quebec, and wrote a book on the subject back in 1997 entitled *Des insectes à croquer*. “It’s not the insect’s taste itself that’s the pushback. It’s the concept of putting a *bibitte* in your mouth. Eating bugs just isn’t a reflex. And the only way to change the mentality is through chefs and gastronomy.”

As for the taste, it will vary depending on which one of the 1,900 edible varieties you’ll eat. For example, mealworms have a distinct taste of roasted nuts, while ants are more acidic, closer to lemon.

The ultimate irony may be that we’re all eating insects already. We just don’t know it.

“On average, everybody eats half a kilo of insects per year,” explains Normandin, from Tricycle. “There are fragments of them in flour, peanut butter, chocolate, in fruit and tomato juice, in beer. There’s a threshold of acceptability for insect fragments in a lot of products. When a tractor passes in a field, there’s no small arm that comes out and says ‘no crickets, no ladybugs allowed.’ So they end up in our Cheerios and Corn Flakes.”

Eating habits take time to change, and in the meantime, Tricycle is developing partnerships in other areas for its products, like animal food, snacks or protein supplements.

Within two years, they’re also planning to expand their facility and massively increase their production, thanks to automation, with the ultimate goal of breeding 20 to 50 times more insects. This would also help them reduce their price point to fend off the competition coming from Europe and China. Their bag of 50 grams of dried mealworms remains a relatively high-end product, selling online at \$7, the equivalent of \$140 a kilo.

“We’re at the dawn of a new industry,” concludes Normandin. “In the information sector, we’ve seen new technologies emerging, with wi-fi and cellular. Well in agriculture, the equivalent is insects. But like every revolution, it’s not going to be easy. In general, because of our hesitation to eat insects, I would say that Canada is about 10 years behind.”

Tricycle is doing its very best to catch up.



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# : best buds



BY DAVE MACINTYRE

After a brief detour into gel capsules last month, I'm back on the pre-roll train. Since the weather's finally getting nicer—minus the heavy rain in recent weeks — and vaccines are steadily rolling out, Montrealers are

chomping at the bit for summer days of drinking and smoking in their park of choice. As such, this is as good a time as ever to preview more pre-rolled joints you can easily pick up to-go from the SQDC, without the hassle of grinding and rolling them yourself.

Of course, not all pre-rolls are created equal, so here's what you can expect from these three bad boys in particular.

SATIVA: EDISON LIMELIGHT

When you get a strain that's anywhere between 20 and 27% THC, you know you're in for a time — whether that's a pleasant or stressful one. This is one strain that can definitely elicit both feelings, sometimes during the same high. With that in mind, moderation is strongly recommended for this one. The high is visceral, hard-hitting and definitely serves its intended purpose. It can also be anxiety-inducing, though I don't know if that was just me protecting because I smoked it while the Habs were losing 3-0 to the Leafs at a crucial juncture in this COVID-shortened NHL season. Either way, it causes me to lie down for about 10 minutes, and get under the covers while yawning uncontrollably. So yeah, this one packs a punch, especially if you overdo it. 7.5/10

INDICA: FIGR BLACK CHERRY PUNCH

Everything about this strain's packaging and presentation is deeply confusing to me. First off, it's not immediately obvious that you have to slide the top of the container toward you in order to open it. Until you realize this, trying to open it will be like solving a Cheech and Chong-themed Rubik's cube. Not only that, but the joints look wayyyy shorter than they should be, as there's a lot of twirl at the top of each joint where weed (ideally) should be. Sometimes less is more, people —and I mean the packaging, not the amount of cannabis present. That being said, it gives you a fairly pleasant head high, especially with almost 22% THC in the mix. It's not as lasting or as powerful as Limelight, however, despite a similar THC percentage. 6.5/10

HYBRID: ORCHID L'UNIQUE

Now for something a little different. As you'll see on the container, this strain is CBD-dominant, and the one I got contained only 3.4% THC with 8% CBD. Since that's more than twice as much, this will definitely put in more work relaxing you than getting you high. If your goal is to smoke away some anxiety rather than get knocked off your ass, this is the best strain of the three. It's also quite suitable for park hangs, particularly at nighttime, and goes quite well with music. I smoke it while watching a Tame Impala concert video, as one does. Not only do I get blissfully lost in the music — it was their performance of their debut, *Innerspeaker*, in its entirety — but I also develop serious wanderlust, given that it was performed in a house overlooking a beach in Australia. God, I miss travelling. 8/10

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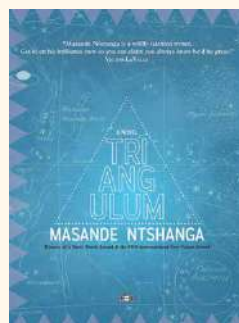


MAY 13, THURSDAY | 8 PM  
Alison Bechdel launches *The Secret to Superhuman Strength*, in conversation with Sophie Yanow



MAY 15, SATURDAY | 11 AM  
Esmé Shapiro launches *Carol and the Pickle-Toad*, Storytime and Q & A

MAY 27, THURSDAY | 7 PM  
Christopher DiRaddo launches *The Family Way*, in conversation with Rachel Giese



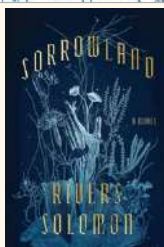
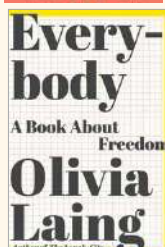
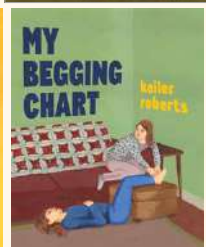
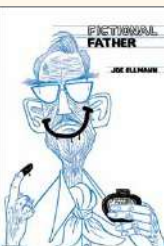
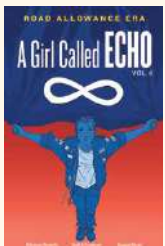
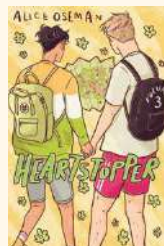
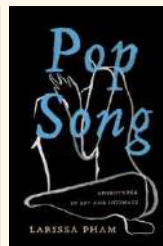
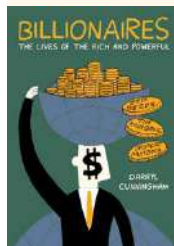
MAY 4, TUESDAY | 8 PM **TRUE READS**  
*Gay Bar: Why We Went Out* by Jeremy Atherton Lin

MAY 18, TUESDAY | 8 PM **STRANGE FUTURES**  
*Triangulum* by Masande Ntshanga

MAY 19, WEDNESDAY | 8 PM **GRAPHIC NOVEL**  
*Shadow Life* by Hiromi Goto



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# :the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

Just as you think the football world can't get any crazier, the football gods walk up to you and smack you right upside the head! This month saw some of the craziest things I will probably ever see in my football-viewing life.

Even if you're not into sports (perhaps living under a rock

the past few weeks...hiding from COVID), you must have heard those two words spoken: "Super League." What happened was the English Big Six — Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, ManCity, Manchester United and Tottenham — all agreed to join a breakaway football league that would compete with the leagues that they are currently part of.

The above mentioned were part of a 12-team consortium that came out with the statement of intent to break free of their respective leagues and create the Super League. This flipped the football world upside down, spun it in circles, smashed it into a garbage can and then launched it into space!

The Super League's stance was that 40% of young people

were no longer interested in football and that some clubs were losing €400-million, (closer to \$600-million CDN) because of the pandemic, and that this was a move to make everybody more financially stable.

Fans, governments and football governing bodies reacted as though this move would destroy every domestic league in existence and the football way of life as we know it today.

The Super League also argued that young people were no longer watching games in full, suggesting that they might adopt shorter games for the viewers. They also noted that they would improve refereeing and video review systems for the league's new tournaments. (Roughly 99.9% of fans dislike VAR, so this should have been an easy sell!)

No matter the argument, nor what was presented to the public, within 48 hours, protests were seen on every level, all over Europe. By the time the yelling and rioting in the streets was done, the Big Six English clubs, starting with Chelsea FC, followed by Man City, removed themselves with a formal submission to back out of the newly presented league.

In the brief attempt at a coup d'état, people actually sided with UEFA and FIFA while they were on their soapboxes preaching to save football from GREED! The UEFA and FIFA positioning themselves as the good guys was something I thought I would never see.

The Super League was dead within 48 hours of being announced to the world.

I'm certain there will be more fall-out, firings, quitting(s) and repercussions for months, and maybe years to come from all of this bumfuzzle.

Add to the madness of that Monday/Tuesday, Spurs fired one of the biggest names in the echelons of football coaching: José Mourinho. Just as fast as he was fired and got paid out LARGE, he joined the TALK Sports broadcast team in the U.K. as a commentator for the 2020 Euros, which kicks off on June 11.

Montreal is already doing very well, with only three games played in the very early start of the new MLS season. We have reached the best part of the Champions League, where four teams battle to make it to the big stage of game finals in a one-off match for European football supremacy on May 29. Winner gets a smooth 20 million Euros for that match alone!

To wrap it all up, at the start of the month Arsenal legend, France striker and ex-CFM coach Thierry Henry removed himself from social media because of racism and bullying across platforms. He posted a message to his two million followers on Twitter saying the issue was «too toxic to ignore.» Henry said he would not return to social media until "companies regulate their platforms with the same vigour and ferocity that they currently do when you infringe copyright."

At the end of April, football clubs and professional footballers all over England took part in a movement to boycott social media, to force companies to tackle abuse and discrimination towards the pros on their platforms. From Friday, April 30 through Monday, May 3, in a show of community unity, supporters of the cause got off of their social accounts. This is all being done in anger over the ball not moving forward fast enough on these subjects.

Stay safe, stay smooth, watch some football!

"This greedy and callous move would spell disaster for our grassroots, for women's football and the wider football community only to serve self-interested owners, who stopped caring about their fans long ago, and complete disregard for sporting merit. Tragic."

— Former Portugal forward Luis Figo

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# food

## Vietnamese vision

BY CLAY SANDHU

Late last year, one of my favourite restaurants in Chinatown, Dobe and Andy, started posting on Instagram about a crimson-red, potent-looking chili oil. That was my introduction to Psthyme, the moniker of Michelle Vo, Montreal's self-described Vietnamese Street Food Dealer. I recently tried her food for the first time and after tasting it, it's now my opinion that Michelle is making the best Vietnamese food in Montreal.

Take a scroll through her feed and you'll see that I'm far from the only one who feels that way. People swear by her food — they're begging her to start a subscription service and they clammer to reserve the last bowl of noodles before she sells out for the week. What's most interesting, to me, is that Michelle doesn't cook the dishes we most associate with Vietnamese food. There's no *Bánh mì* or *Gỏi cuốn*, and though she's made countless bowls of noodle-soup in the last year, she hasn't made *Phở* once. Vo's food is regional and specific, highlighting dishes rarely seen in Montreal.

It would be easy to slot Psthyme into the narrative of the increasing relevance of regional cooking, but her food is so much more important than just happening to coincide with a shift in the scene.

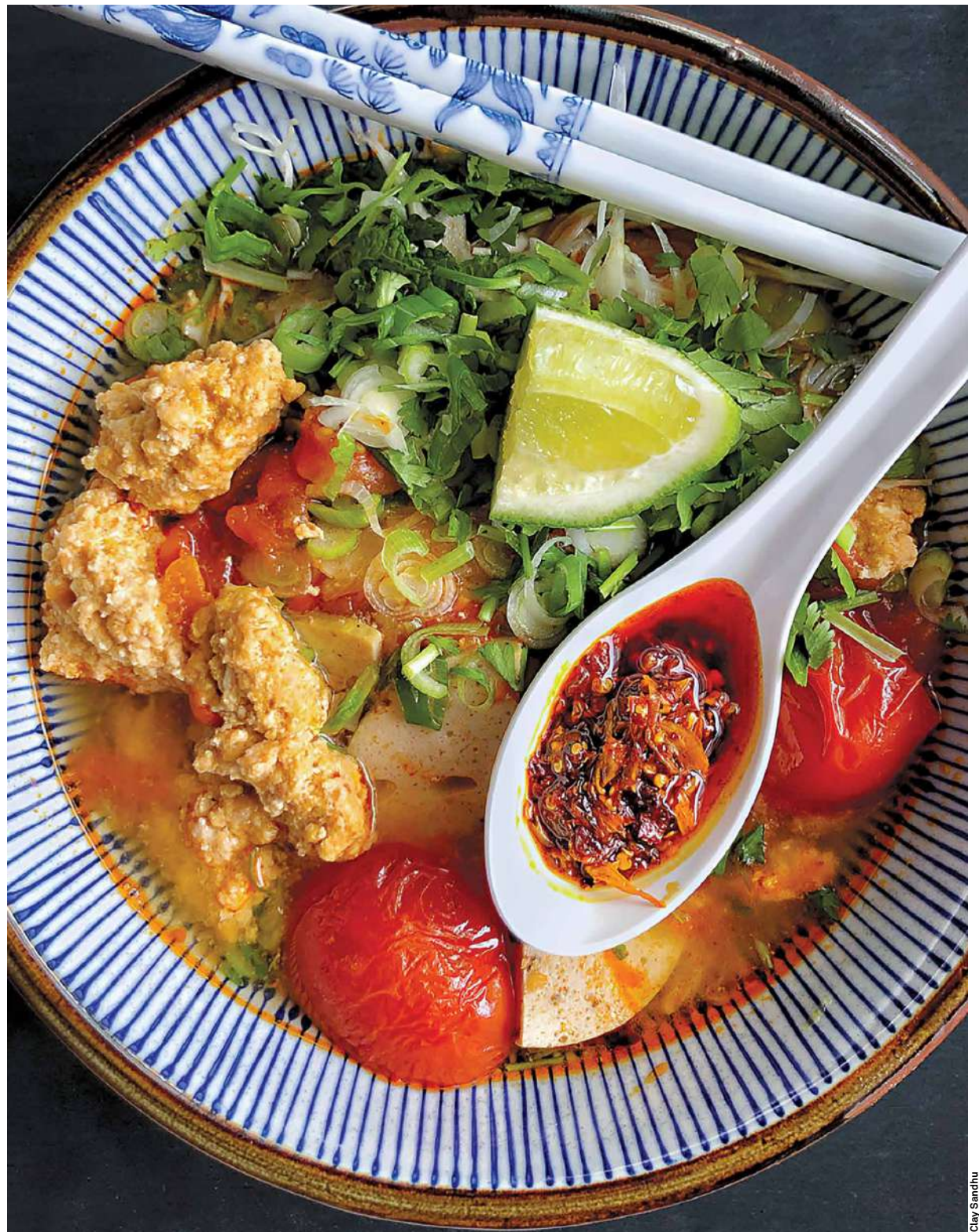
When I spoke with Vo, she shared an experience common to so many children of immigrants: school lunch embarrassment. That experience is often one of the first and most marking experiences of otherness that children of immigrants experience in their lives and it can contribute to a distorted relationship with food.

Vo is among a growing number of second generation immigrants who are reclaiming their roots, taking pride in them and staking a claim for their ancestral cuisine as wholly legitimate, serious and worthy of praise. It's a move that her mom still questions: "Are you sure they'll like that?" she asks Michelle as she plans this week's menu — but when Michelle is cooking, they like everything. In a way, she is doing something that seemed unthinkable to generations of cooks before her: cooking real Vietnamese food, to her taste, without fear of judgment.

With projects like Psthyme, we tend to rally around the idea that the food is "authentic." But authenticity as a concept is difficult to grapple with because it's not definitive and is often used as a catch-all term that paints cooking as either black or white, which it isn't always.

Vo calls her food uncensored, which I like much better. To me, it's an expression that speaks to what we're really after when we talk about authentic food: dishes cooked in the chef's vision without compromise. Regardless of whether we're talking Roman pasta, Isaan *laab* or a Keralan fish curry, I want food that represents its maker. Psthyme delivers exactly that.

And don't get it twisted. Vo has plenty of appreciation for the *Phở* and *Bánh mì* spots in Montreal but she feels like the diversity of Vietnamese cuisine is sorely underrepresented. A perfect example of her style of cooking is the *Bún mắm*



Bún riêu cua

Clay Sandhu

I ate last week. *Bún mắm* (sometimes called Vietnamese gumbo) is a noodle-soup with a chicken broth base to which fermented fish, shrimp paste, crispy pork belly, eggplant, steamed fish and plump shrimp are added. "I don't go light on real flavour with any of my dishes," Vo assured me. "Put your fan on," she joked, "it's going to smell like seafood!" The flavours of the soup are deep, complex and endlessly satisfying. True to form, the dish is fragrant with the scent of seafood, but no more so than, say, a bowl of whole Matane shrimp, their caviar still intact.

The dish was abundant with flavour and, when garnished with a dollop of the chili oil, a full-body sensorial experience. And with that in mind, I would offer one small bit of advice: the chili oil is delicious, but believe her when she says it is fucking hot. If you're like me and have a decent tolerance for spice, you will enjoy it — with a modest amount of suffering. But for those with a palate more sensitive to spice, adding too much (or any at all) could ruin your experience. Be warned.

Part of what I loved most about my experience with Psthyme was being served by Vo herself. Like her food, she is uncensored and happy to tell you to go to hell (if you deserve it) but she is also the embodiment of hospitality, humility and gratitude. I'm speculating here, but maybe that's because she doesn't come from a restaurant background.

True to its name, Psthyme is something Vo does on the side — on the day-to-day, she manages a dental clinic, and has done so for over 11 years. Part of what makes her so successful is that she is a wonderful ambassador for her brand. I think of chefs like Chanthy Yen of Touk and Anita Feng of J'ai Feng who have carved out a place for themselves in Montreal's restaurant scene in which they can cook the food most meaningful to them. Vo's food, like that of Yen and Feng, speaks for itself but all three share something else in common: they are extremely likeable people. When customers order from Psthyme, they are investing in Michelle Vo as a brand — they want to see her succeed. That fact that the food is also incredible is just an added bonus.

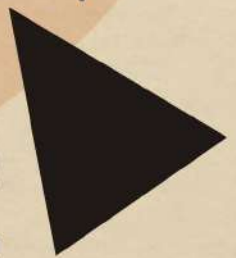
To order from Psthyme, follow the account on Instagram and send Vo a DM to reserve the dish of the week, but act quick as she commonly sells out shortly after announcing the menu. Each week there is one dish served with two spring rolls for the very reasonable price of \$18.50. The dish changes from week to week and while it might be tempting to wait for a more familiar dish, from speaking to people who eat her food regularly, the consensus seems to be that it doesn't matter what Vo is cooking, just get it — it's going to be good.



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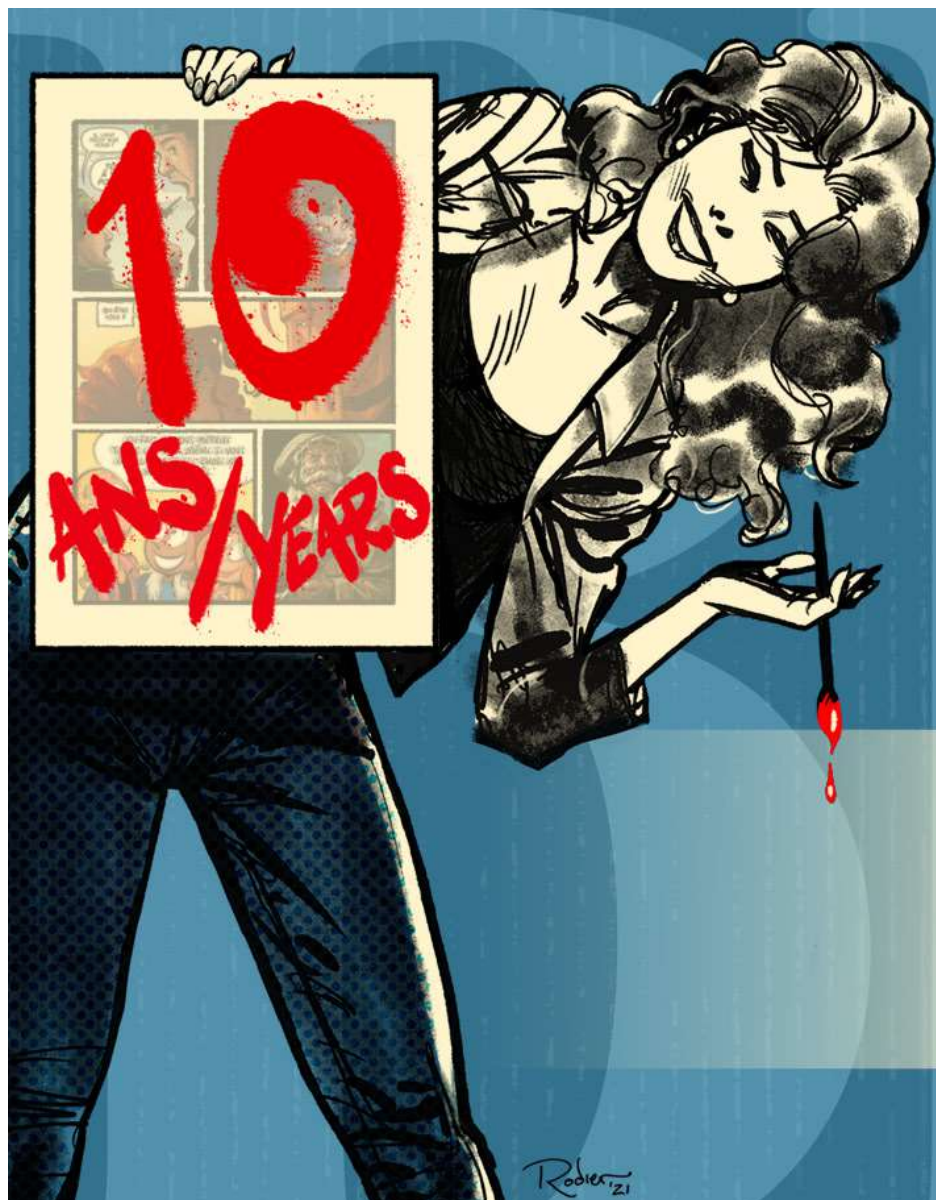


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## Outside in

BY YARA EL-SOUEIDI

It's the room where I spoke with Paul Jacobs that struck me first. Flowers were painted across the wall, a green carpet covered the floor. When I asked about it, he answered that he's been spending a lot of time in the house (due to the pandemic) and he wanted to replicate the outdoors.

"It looked like a dentist's office, somewhere really sterile, so I needed to uplift it," he says. "Then I put on a green carpet. So it almost looks like you're outside."

This gives us a glimpse of Jacobs' artistic mind, one that always thrives to make different things. This shows through his music. Every record he releases is different from the last, revealing a new side of his personality. With his latest release, *Pink Dogs on the Green Grass*, he goes a step further, pushes boundaries and explores a genre that will grow with him.

"I feel like I'm getting older and I just kind of want to do something that I'm able to do. I can't be going crazy in my 50s and being a punk in my 50s or anything like that. I don't know. Either way, I enjoy this type of music. I just wanted to do it. So I just did it."

Jacobs is a well-known figure in the Montreal music scene. He's the drummer for post-punk band Pottery, as well as a solo act since 2017. His solo career is defined by its particular sounds, reminiscent of Kurt Vile, Modest Mouse and Cass McCombs. Jacobs mentions Modest Mouse's drummer, Jeremiah Green, as an inspiration during the recording of his album.

"I was inspired by the Modest Mouse drummer a lot. Even with the album, I was thinking back a lot to being a kid. I guess maybe those influences did spark up through that. Modest Mouse is also kind of folksy. But, you know, in a weird way."

*Pink Dogs on the Green Grass* is strong with nostalgia. While his newest album is a reminder of the good times, Jacobs still mentions those awkward moments we don't want to go through. He doesn't shy far from uncomfortable memories and always tries to imbue them with humour, which he achieves with his music videos. Jacobs is behind every one of them, from the storyboard to the animation. Taking more time to perfect this peculiar art was part of Jacobs' pandemic learning.

"I learned how to use these programs. And I don't know, it's all easy for me. I just like to stay busy. I don't force myself to really do anything. It just comes naturally, I guess. Doing those animations was a lot of work, but I told myself I would do it, so I knew I would do it."

Jacobs contemplates the opportunity he had of having this much time to work on an animated music video, and not knowing if this chance will ever come again. He explains that if he had been working as usual, making a video would have taken way more time.

"It takes me like a month to animate a video. So it would have taken me like, yeah, two months for one video because I would have to do it in between work."



Paul Jacobs

Christopher Vincent

Jacobs' solo career is constellated with references to his multidisciplinary art. From music to visual art, he gives himself to what he wants to create, what feels the most like him at a certain time. He constantly wants to make better, do better and work on new ideas and projects. While he never regrets his projects and is always happy with the final product, he never feels fully represented by his albums. This prompts him to do more.

"It's almost like, whenever I make something, I like it at the time, but then right away, I want to do something better. So I am happy with the album, but I feel like I'm ready to do more. So I could never say, like, 'Look at the album — this is me, completely. This is the best I'll do. I'm happy with this. I don't need anything else in my life.' Because I still want to make more stuff. I am happy with the way it turned out. And I feel like I don't cringe at anything I did through releasing any art or any of the music. I don't regret it. I guess it represents me, at least in the time."

When he started recording and working on *Pink Dogs on the Green Grass*, Jacobs was on the road with Pottery. When the pandemic struck, he started recording from his apartment in Rosemont. This unexpected turn of events helped him explore organic sounds.

"It's just something I can do on my own. Making music on my own is just something I like to do. I like to play the drums. I like to play guitar, play bass, piano. It's just like painting or drawing or anything. You get to make something at your own pace, your own freedom, whatever. It's just a good way to express yourself."

While making music alone is something he loves, he expresses that he still really enjoys playing with Pottery. Each band member has their own ideas and efforts are made to ensure that everyone is represented in the music they're playing. While Jacobs has the opportunity to express himself with the band, he notes that everyone is expressing themselves in a band. The two projects — his solo career and his band — are very different, but great on their own.

Jacobs thinks about his newest album. The release is an opportunity for him to show his work, but also to move on to other creative endeavours, ones that will push him even further. For the moment, he just feels like he wants to connect with people.

"I really felt like trying to connect with people in a way. You know what I mean? Like trying to have an honest feeling with music is what I appreciate from it. Creating a feeling — that's all it's about, to me."





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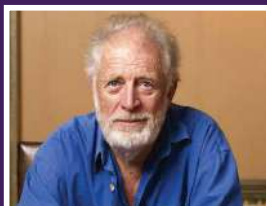
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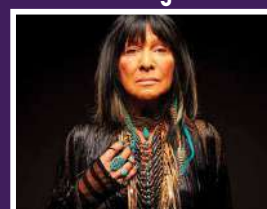
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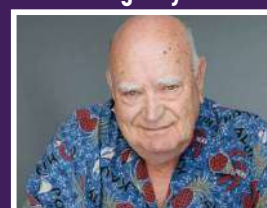
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# Album reviews

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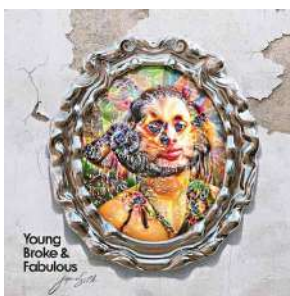
**SUNRISE**  
RECORDS



Wake Island, *Born to Leave* (Independent)  
A gradual two-year buildup of one-off singles for the Montreal/NY duo has culminated into a cohesive album, and when you take a step back and absorb the journey as a whole, the result is undeniable. The natives of Lebanon have taken a long emotional, physical and musical trek to reach where they are now. They built Laylit, a community around the music of the Middle Eastern diaspora, which informs the rewarding sonic turns taken on the primarily electronic *Born to Leave*. It's an album about the places we call home: the physical spaces, the memories, the people and the things we long to experience again. Nothing is taken for granted and victories are hard-earned. The album Wake Island was born to make. 10/10 Trial Track: "Nouvelle Vague" (Erik Leijon)

Porter Robinson, *Nurture* (Mom+Pop)  
Making art about the creative rut you're in is certainly one way to get out of it, and this is exactly what Porter Robinson does to stunning effect on his sophomore LP. The North Carolina native's first album since 2014's mesmerizing *Worlds* is a more personal and introspective effort than its sonically grandiose predecessor. Here, Robinson meditates largely on his bouts with depression and writer's block, as well as his brother's battle with cancer. Tracks like "Get Your Wish" and "Musician" drive these themes home, with "do-re-mi-fa-sola-ti-do" and album closer "Trying to Feel Alive" symbolizing the rediscovery of his creative thirst and passion for music. Standout track "Look at the Sky" is lyrically full of hope and confidence in the future. With piano, strings, Zelda-like synths, pitched-up vocals and glitchy effects all adding colour to the instrumentation, Porter Robinson finds a sweet spot

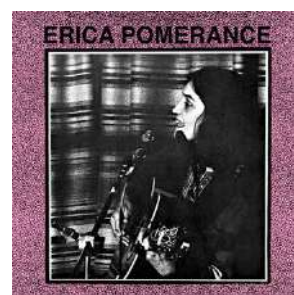
between his personal struggles and a musical emphasis on beauty that has long been his trademark. 9/10 Trial Track: "Look at the Sky" (Dave MacIntyre)



produced "Don't Go" with Montreale LIA. In true chameleon style, there's more to the record than just earworms, yet it never fails to sound like the here and now (minus a Daft Punkish tribute, but that's always in style). The left turns don't feel out of place and serve the greater good of songwriting. Silk has an ear to the pop landscape, and can pick/pull elements as needed. 8.5/10 Trial Track: "Somebody Like You" (Erik Leijon)

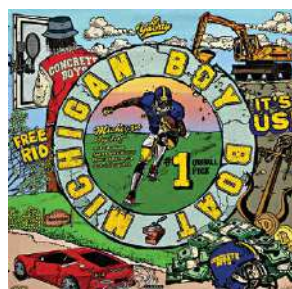
Erica Pomerance, *En concert au Petit Québec Libre* (Tour de bras/Trésor National)  
Montreal filmmaker and folk singer Erica Pomerance had only released one record before this session was unearthed by the fine folks at Trésor National. 1973's *En concert* is a pretty different experience from her 1969 free-folk freakout on ESP. It's a pared-down, righteous set sung entirely in French that crackles with electric fury. As Pomerance herself insists, she's no Joni Mitchell — the songs are closer to raw talking

Jaymie Silk, *Young, Broke & Fabulous* (Pelican Fly)  
The erstwhile Montreale in Paris is in the midst of a prolific run of distinct releases based in club and experimental sounds, with this latest serving as a de-facto pop and R&B entry point. Following a brief introduction, the album kicks immediately into his most realized pop tune yet, the hook-laden and crisply



blues mixed by East Village hippie experimentalism (i.e. the Fugs) and a dash of Patti Smith. Though the recording itself is fairly barebones and lo-fi, *En concert au Petit Québec Libre* is an inestimable document of a singular voice in the Quebec musical landscape. 7/10 Trial Track: "J'ai mon voyage" (Alex Rose)

Snoop Dogg, *From tha Streets 2 tha Suites* (Doggystyle)  
Snoop Dogg has been prolific over the past decade, dropping a whopping 11 albums, both solo and collaborative. Released on 4/20, *From tha Streets 2 tha Suites* is a low-stakes effort with plenty to offer. There are no star-studded features or producers this time around, nor a bloated track list. Instead, Doggy Dogg keeps it simple, working with all but 10 beatmakers over the project's 10 tracks to create some steady G-Funk slappers. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. This is Snoop's best body of work since 2015's *BUSH*. 7/10 Trial Track: "Roaches in My Ashtray" (feat. ProHoeZak) (Mr. Wavvy)



Lil Yachty, *Michigan Boy Boat* (Quality Control/Motown)  
Detroit has been slowly rising as one of hip hop's most intriguing scenes. Lil Yachty, an Atlanta native who calls Michigan his second home, pays a tasteful tribute to the Midwest on his latest mixtape. The nautically-named lyricist is far from a culture vulture, bringing Detroit greats like Tee Grizzley and YN Jay along for the ride. *Michigan Boy Boat* is a wickedly fun project that you will probably forget about within a day of listening to it. There is nothing inherently bad about it, yet nothing striking enough for it to have replay value. 6.5/10 Trial Trak: "Dynamic Duo" (feat. Tee Grizzley) (Mr. Wavvy)

## :hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

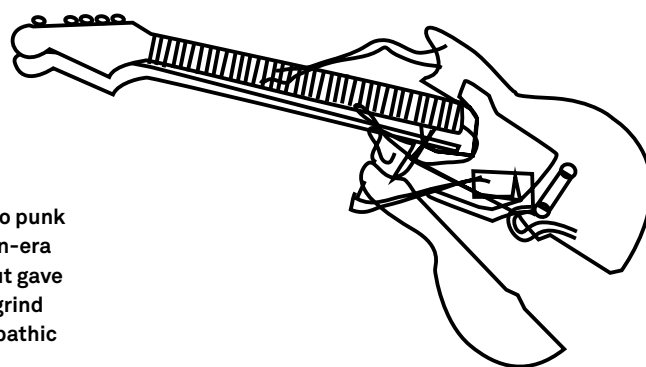
With COVID celebrating a year of holding us live music fans captive, I have now fallen victim to YouTube rabbit holes with my newfound free time. I have invested hours on genres I didn't even know existed.

Most of these have been futile dives into things like the vapid and irony-fuelled Vaporwave, which barely made a blip five years ago, or the occult-steeped witch house, which, uh, sounds exactly as you would expect, along with other tired genres that had the moustachioed vintage skateboard crew doing the electric boogaloo for a week in 2015. Eventually, though, I did hit pay dirt when I steered into the extreme sounds of Japanese hardcore, which held me spellbound.

I was sort of hip to Japanese hardcore bands like G.I.S.M. and Lipcream as well as a rash of D Beat bands, but in all fairness I am definitely late to the party here. Cleansing the palate of Vaporwave, Japanese hardcore came barreling in uninvited and

in many cases actually improved on the U.K. anarcho punk scene of the early '80s, as well as D Beat, the Reagan-era USHC scene, the sonic blast of Swedish hardcore but gave it a signature sound with ample elements of noise, grind and thrash metal that resulted in full throttle sociopathic dementia.

Released in the last week are two records on Relapse Records from one of the scene's forefathers, Cherry Nishida. The first Nishida title to get a new lease on life is his former band Zouo's *Agony Remains*. This collection of early '80s recordings is everything hardcore was meant to be. If you can imagine the pummel of early Discharge with the psychedelic vocal effects and psych sounds of Hawkwind/Butthole Surfers, you may be getting warm. In fact, it's the impossibility of trying to describe the ballast blast of Zouo that makes them so fucking good. Formed in the early '80s around a bored skateboard crew, this misanthropic blast could never have happened in London or Southern California. If you would like a good starting point to hear just how lethal Zouo is, just check out their obliterating slabs like "Sons of Satan," "You Like It That Way" or "No Power" and marvel at how Nishida & co. can make something as devastating as Sweden's Skitsystem sound like fifth wave ska. Although Zouo knew the hardcore golden rule of keeping the thrash blast under the minute mark, it's when they stretch things past the four-minute mark that they really burrow into your frontal lobes.



The second Nishida related release is his current band S.H.I. (Struggling Harsh Immortals), which borrows heavily from Al Jourgensen's first metallic foray, hair metal as well as the usual suspects like Killing Joke and just about every pre-Nirvana "alternative" band that had distorted guitars. Compared to the Zouo's full frontal assault, S.H.I. is a bit predictable, despite having members that solely play noise and samples. I don't mean to completely shit on Nishida's new jams as he sounds as lethal as ever and the ever-present theremin effect does recall Hawkwind and 13th Floor Elevators but things are a bit too polished here to completely launch for the jugular.

If you're looking into getting into some Japanese hardcore that is deeply rooted in dementia 13, check out G.I.S.M.'s Detestation, Gauze's *Genkai-Wa Doko Da*, Anti Septic's *First Last* — even then, you will be barely scraping the surface.



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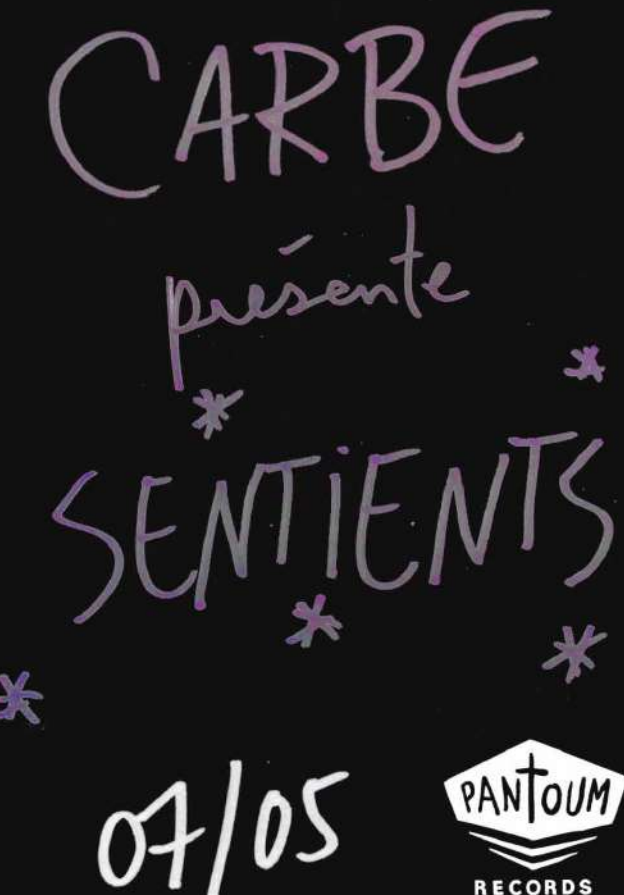
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# film

## On Screen



A Quiet Place II



Monster

BY ALEX ROSE

Even if things seem to be picking up and the light at the end of the tunnel seems visible (for the time being, anyway), the movie release schedule continues to be in general disarray. Decisions made at the height of the pandemic have left mostly scraps for theatres to fight over while streaming platforms have begun trotting out their bigger guns.

*Spiral: From the Book of Saw*, a sequel/reboot of the *Saw* franchise conceived by and starring Chris Rock, is coming out on May 14 — one full year after its announced release. Rock and Max Minghella play a couple of cops who get roped into murder games from notorious murderer Jigsaw in the film directed by Darren Lynn Bousman, who helmed *Saws* 2–4. It's probably the biggest theatrical release of the month unless you count Craig Gillespie's *Cruella*, which unfurls both theatrically and on Disney Plus on May 28. Emma Stone stars as the titular character, who has been reimagined as a twisted fashion designer on the hunt for dalmatian furs; Emma Thompson, Paul Walter Hauser and Kirby Howell-Baptiste co-star.

Joe Wright's *The Woman in the Window* has also been delayed nearly two years — its troubles began way before COVID-19 was a thing. Adapted from the novel of the same name by A.J. Finn, the Amy Adams-starring thriller fared very poorly with test audiences in 2019, forcing a re-edit and an eventual cancellation of its theatrical release. It'll now come out on Netflix on May 14. Netflix is also pushing *Monster* out this month (May 7); the Kelvin Harrison Jr.-starring legal drama premiered at Sundance in 2018, but its distribution changed hands a few times before finally



Spiral: From the Book of Saw

finding its way to Netflix. A great supporting cast that includes Jennifer Hudson, Jeffrey Wright, Nas and a pre-fame John David Washington should be of interest to many.

John Krasinski's *A Quiet Place II* had a world premiere on March 8, 2020 — I had even personally RSVP'd to the preview screening when everything went to shit a few days later. Krasinski is back in the director's chair for the sequel to his surprise hit horror/thriller starring Emily Blunt — it's out in theatres on May 28 and will be available a month and a half after that on the Paramount+ streaming service. Mélanie Laurent stars in *Oxygen*, a claustrophobic sci-fi thriller in the vein of *Buried* or *Locke* from director Alexandre Aja that comes out on Netflix on May 12; she plays a woman who wakes up in a mysterious space pod with a rapidly dwindling source of oxygen.

Guy Ritchie reimagines the 2004 French heist thriller *Cash Truck* as *Wrath of Man* (May 7), in which Jason Statham poses as an armored truck robber in order to find the men who killed his son. Zack Snyder prepares for his second lap around the track in 2021 with *Army of the Dead*, a combination zombie / heist flick starring Dave Bautista that hits Netflix on May 21. Mads Mikkelsen gets his very own *Taken* in the form of *Riders of Justice*, a revenge thriller from director Anders Thomas Jensen (*The Green Butchers*, *Men & Chicken*) that's out on May 21.

There are also a handful of local movies hitting theatres soon after their premieres as part of the RVQC film festival. First up is Simon Lavoie's *Nulle trace*, a moody drama in which a smuggler (Monique Gosselin) must guide a young woman (Nathalie Doumar) and her child across a border. It's followed on May 14 by Denis Côté's *Hygiène sociale*, a strange microbudget comedy filmed in four days with socially distanced actors who remain completely socially-distanced on-screen. Finally, Paul Doucet and Patrick Labbé star in the dramedy *Les vieux chums* (May 21) from veteran filmmaker Claude Gagnon (*Kenny*, *Kamtaki*).

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## Unkept promises



Ninga Minèh

Denis Farley

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

*Ninga Minèh* is Anishinaabemowin for “promise.” It’s also the title of multidisciplinary artist Caroline Monnet’s first solo exhibition in Canada, showing now at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Curated by Sylvie Lacerte, the exhibition consists of 18 artworks reflecting on a long history of unkept promises by the Canadian government towards Indigenous peoples. Monnet, an artist of Anishinaabe and French heritage, used common building materials and vibrant patterns inspired by Anishinaabe craftwork to create pieces that speak to the sub-par living conditions in Indigenous communities.

“The inequality (facing Indigenous communities) interests me and it enrages me — the fact that there are such stark inequalities on our planet, and in a country as developed as ours,” she explained at the MMFA’s virtual vernissage for the exhibition on April 23.

In the wake of the pandemic, we’ve lived through stay-at-home orders and been advised at length of the importance of handwashing. But with *Ninga Minèh*, Monnet highlights that even those basic rights, a safe home and access to clean water, are not a given for many Indigenous peoples.

**Housing in many Indigenous communities was hastily built**

with improper materials, and communities today struggle with overcrowding. Despite the federal government’s promise that they will eradicate all drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities before March 2021, Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller said in December 2020 that over 20 communities will still be without clean water after that deadline.

“What happens when your home isn’t safe?” Monnet asks, standing among the pieces of the exhibition.

The piece “We Shape Our Homes and Then Our Homes Shape Us” provides an answer to this question. Made out of weaved sill gasket insulation, the material is embroidered with a colourful design and the words of the piece’s title. It reminds us that we are inevitably affected by the environment we live in, and an unhealthy environment will have consequences on our overall health. Monnet explains that the piece also speaks to the need to mobilize for better housing.

“Havoc” is an artwork composed of square segments of gyprock on which black mould has been colonized to create an intricate black and white pattern. The mould on the artwork is no longer active, but when still alive it is toxic to live with, and it can be found in houses on Indigenous communities. The title refers to mould as well as other issues with the repercussions of unsafe housing on physical, emotional and spiritual health.

**Monnet worked with a laboratory in Joliette to create the**

pieces since mould is a dangerous substance. “It kept me on my toes,” she laughs. There’s also a metaphor in the idea of “colonizing” the mould on the gyprock, and the fact that the mould could not be completely controlled as it also developed in some unintended places.

Despite the severity of the issues Monnet is highlighting with the exhibition, the vibrancy of the colours used and the intricate, at times very delicate patterns adorning the materials also evoke pleasant, playful emotions. This is because, while speaking to unkept promises, Monnet wanted to impart a feeling of hope: a promise for a better future. This double meaning to the notion of promises can be seen throughout the different artworks.

“It’s important to me that the exhibition stays accessible to a broad public,” says Monnet. There is an important political message to the works, but also a revelling in the beauty of the designs, the poetry of circular and square shapes meeting in one piece, the unexpected grace of standard building materials turned into works of art.

Monnet says she is grateful that she is able to bring this important conversation to the halls of the MMFA where the works can be seen by a wide audience. As Monnet continues to assert her place in Quebec and Canada’s arts scene, this may be her first solo exhibition in Canada, but it is undoubtedly not the last.

→ *Ninga Minèh* is on at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts through Aug. 1.



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# :play recent



## Timeless time



black midi

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Album, "Hommage à M. Cusson Pour M. Höek,"  
*Album* (Telephone Explosion Records)

The Yellow Pages is an unseasonable anachronism. It's hard to fathom, but only two — certainly no more than three — decades ago, a large yellow book containing the telephone numbers of local businesses was published and distributed for free to each and every telephone-owning household. For a long time, the phone book was the sole resource for contact information for everything from Astra to Zeneca. And because entries were listed alphabetically, many businesses went out of their way to give themselves titles beginning with either A or Z, to place their listings first or last in the big Yellow book. The theory was that people were too busy or lazy or whatever to do a thorough search and would simply riffle right to the front or the back, choosing their products or services arbitrarily. Hence it was common to see ads for AAAardvark Muffler, say, or ZZZZ-Top Pancake House. Something like proto-search engine optimization.

The new and wildly cool jazz-tronica band from Hull, Album, have done themselves zero favours by naming both their outfit and its debut album, *Album*. That is, aside from some inevitable Abbot and Costello meets Beavis and Buttthead-like chatter amongst a handful of Mile End music nerds, it's going to be difficult to peruse the vast and unforgiving internet for Album's album without first knowing exactly what you're looking for. Or was that the plan?

Giant Claw, "Disworld" (vocals: NTsKi), *Mirror Guide* (Orange Milk Records)

I remember being enthralled with a film installation called *City Self/Country Self* by the Canadian artist Rodney Graham upon my first visit to the Musée des beaux-arts after moving to Montreal in 2004.

As well as I can recall because it's not available anywhere online (reportedly, a DVD numbered 2/4 sold at auction in 2017 for a whopping £56,250), the four-minute loop depicts a 19th century scene of a rural peasant walking bewildered around the streets of Paris. The loop begins and ends with the character picking up his top hat after being kicked in the arse by a "citified dandy." Graham embodies both the peasant and gentry roles. So, the obvious critical interpretation is that it's something about conflict between class and power structures, rural versus urban, ignorant versus educated, poor versus wealthy and so forth. But what is really going on *on paper*, or celluloid as it were, is an artist literally kicking his own arse every four minutes. It's a perpetual motion machine reminding us of the absurd modern necessity for our own perpetual motion.

black midi, "John L," *Cavalcade* (Rough Trade)

I like black midi like Uncle Junior of *The Sopranos* likes his oncologist, Dr. John Kennedy. Kennedy's character is arrogant, downright rude at times, ignores Junior's frantic answering machine messages, his hairdo is too manicured, he plays golf, he talks into a handheld memo recorder, he's a pretentious prick. But his name is John F'ing Kennedy.

Regardless of their ambitious King Crimson wishes and unsettling Mahavishnu Orchestra dreams, black midi, by virtue of their name alone, whether capitalized or diminutive, and by additional virtue of their music having the least bit to do with the industry technical standard otherwise known as the Musical Instrument Digital Interface — much less the impenetrable electronic music genre called Black MIDI — eternally endear themselves to me. When there's news of a new black midi record, I'm waiting like patience on a monument.

Populous, "Luna Liquida," *Stasi* (La Tempesta Dischi)

"The failure of the 21st century," said Mark Fisher in a 2014 interview for *Nero*, "is that the 21st century has yet to really

start." For the West, the 21st century started abruptly in 2016 with Donald Trump's election in the U.S. and Brexit in the U.K. But the future was put on hold again in the twilight's last gleaming of 2019 by a virus that took on that year in its very name: COVID-19. And so again, the 2020s have yet to really begin. With nowhere to go, there is only the melancholy remembrance of better days to occupy our thoughts.

19 doesn't just refer to 2019; it harkens back to the 20th century, the 1900s, arguably the last truly lived century in human history. Capitalism ultimately aspires to endless repetition — a perfect circuit of production and consumption that expands predictably until it inescapably collapses its environment. Capitalism is now in the business of reproducing time itself, as measurable units of the past. As the present increasingly reiterates the past, the past outpaces the future. The future becomes obsolete, an antiquated notion of modernity's unnecessary forward drive. Not long ago, some future, *any future*, seemed certain. Nowadays, progress spells stasis at best.

Andy Stott, "Hard to Tell," *Never the Right Time* (Modern Love)

In the Pet Shop Boys' nostalgia-laden 1990 single "Being Boring," the glad lads sing throughout the chorus: "We were never being boring / We were never being bored." Lyricist Neil Tennant correctly characterizes the bourgeois state of boredom as equally boring for the observer and the observed. There is nothing more boring than reading a review by a bored music critic. We get the newest, coolest, most technologically advanced, most avant-garde, cutting-edge, smart, sexy sounds plugged into our ears on the daily as if we were aristocrats, or worse, their ancestry. Any critic who isn't right now wildly interested by everything that comes across their desk, whether or not it resonates with them personally, doesn't deserve to hold a pencil. Boredom is a luxury in the 21st century — the conspicuous consumption of other people's time.



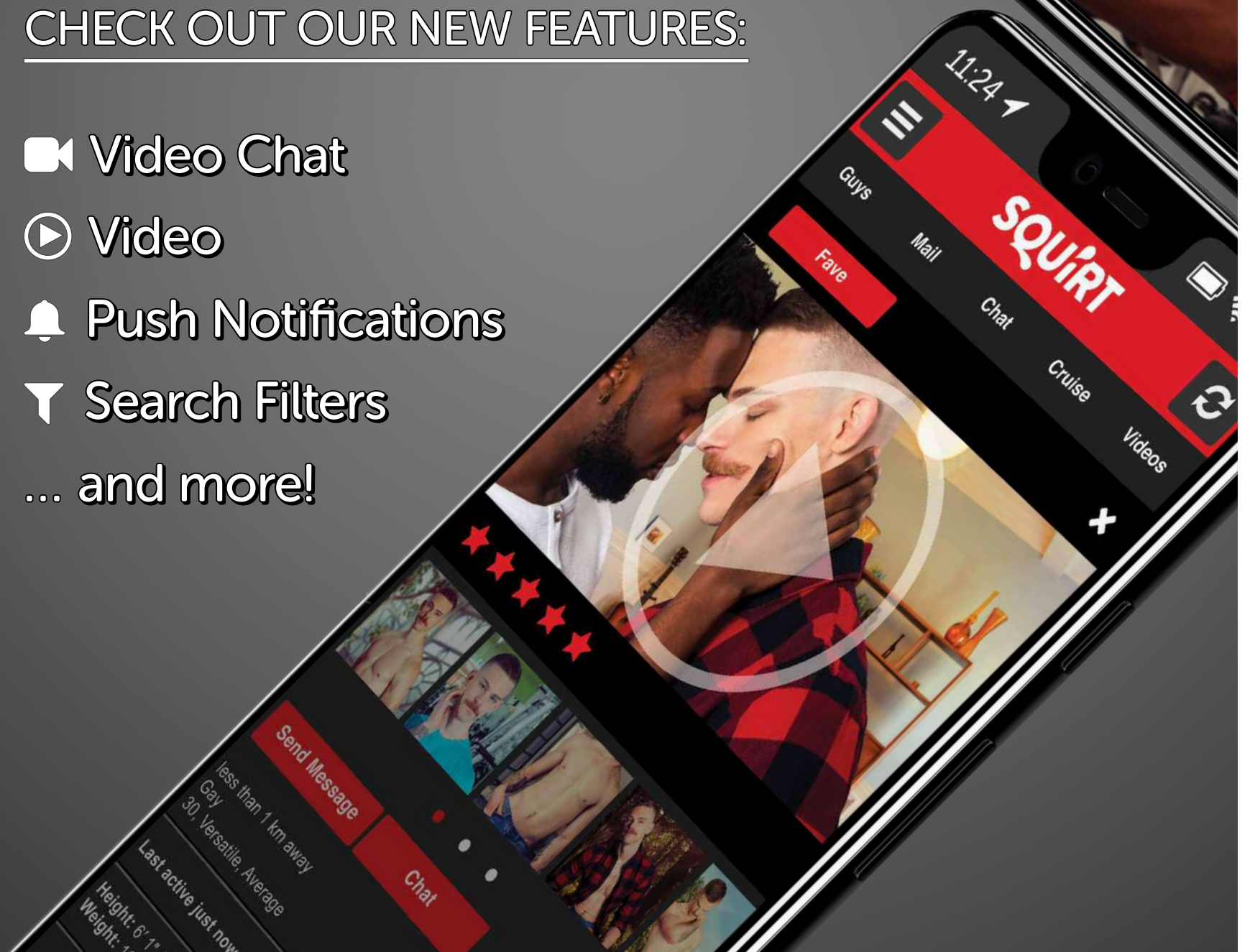
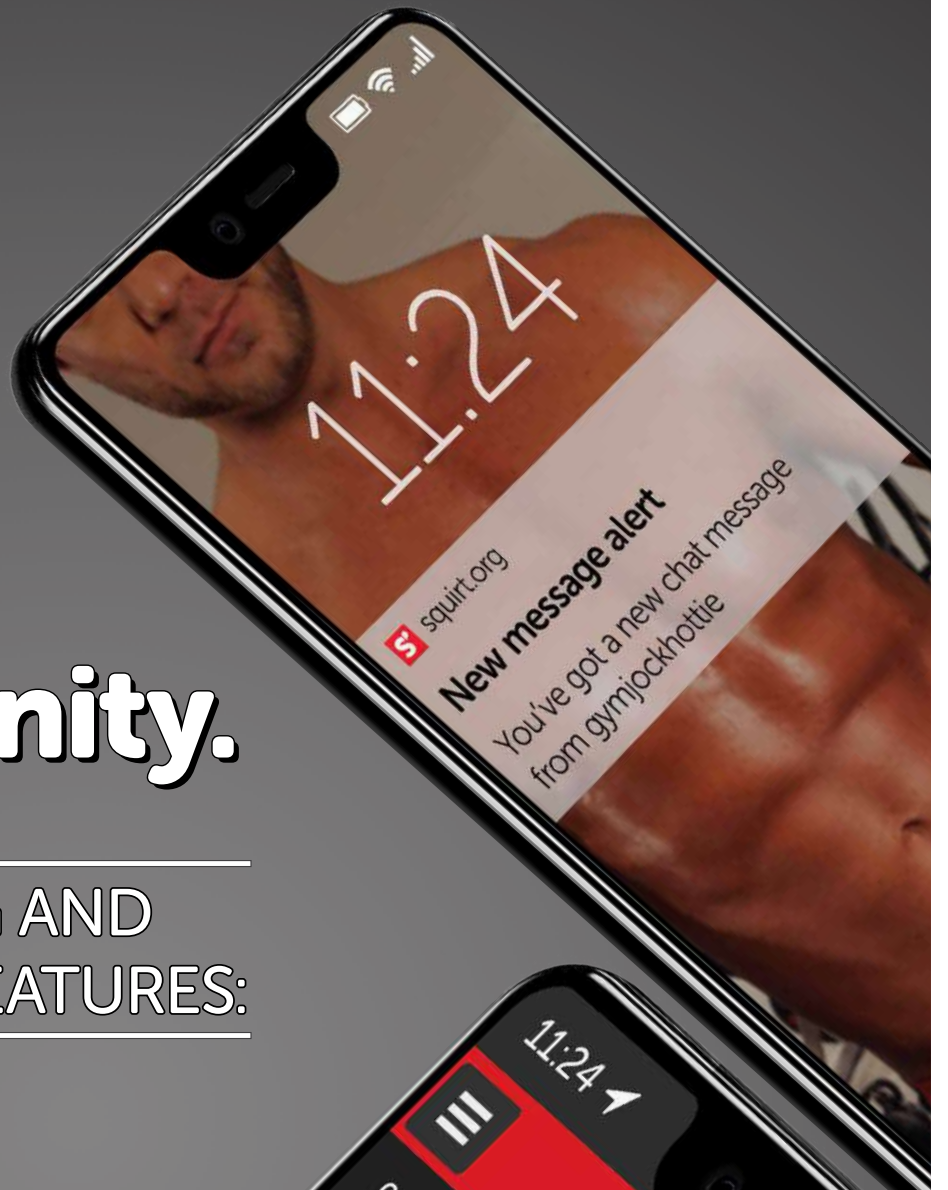
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