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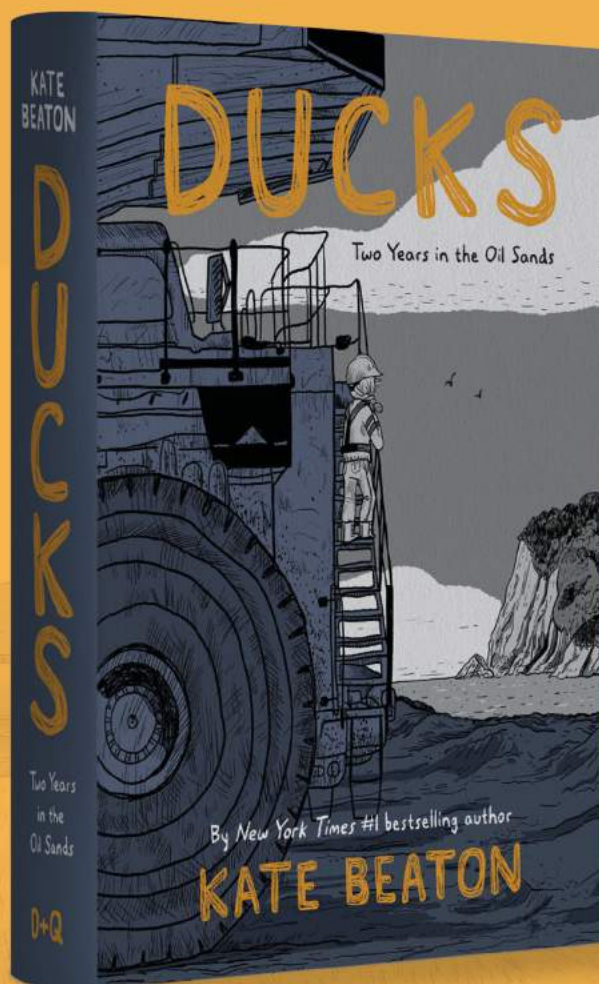
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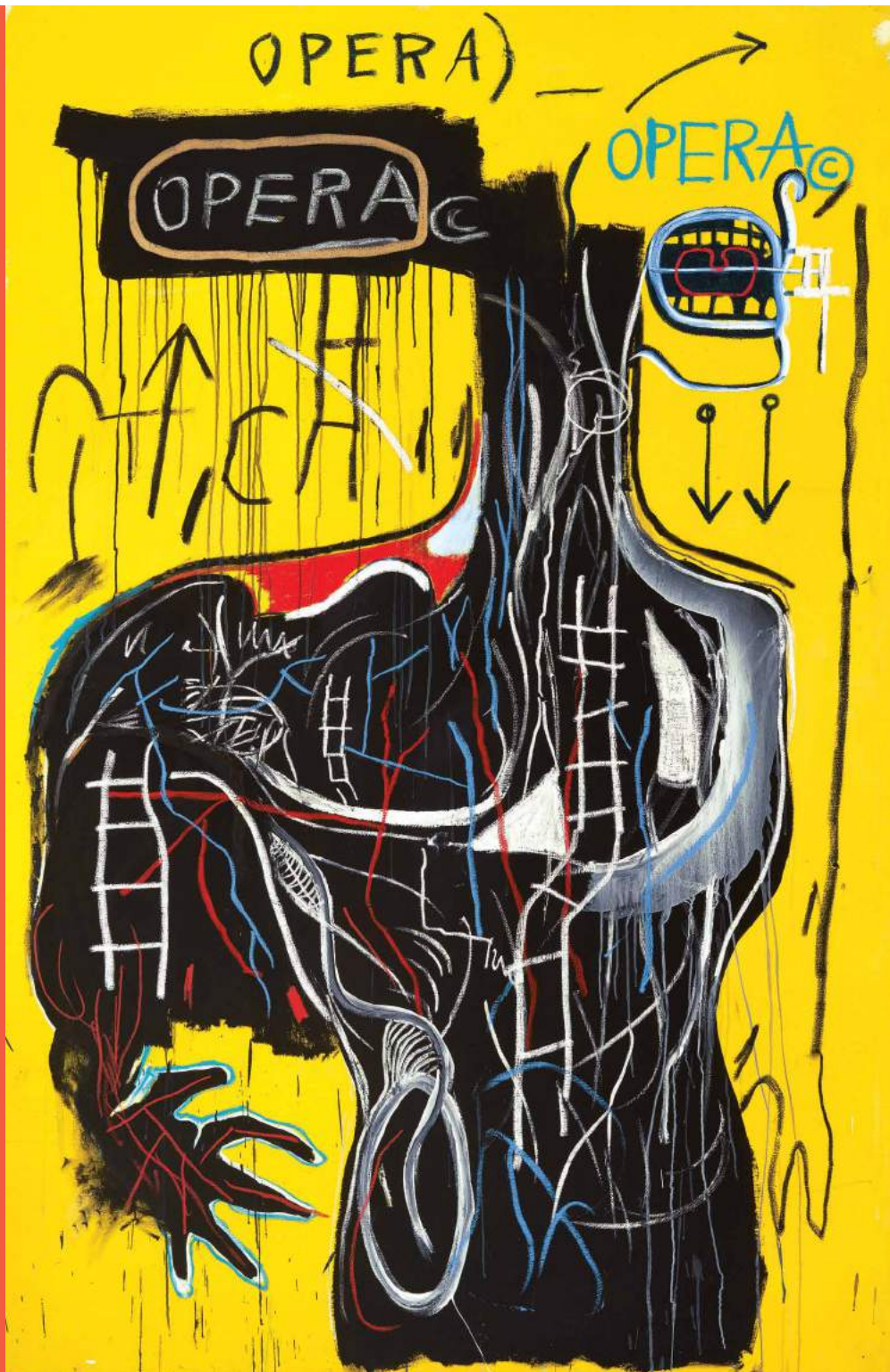
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Our year-end cover story is a Q&A with Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante about everything from her priorities and legacy to misconceptions about her and the occasional need to butt heads with the provincial government, by Tola Drimonis.

Cover photo by Ville de Montréal / Sylvain Légaré

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Cult MTL is...

Lorraine Carpenter
editor-in-chief
lorraine.carpenter@cultmontreal.com

Justine Smith
film editor
justine.smith@cultmontreal.com

Clayton Sandhu
food editor

Dave MacIntyre
contributing editor (music)

Savannah Stewart
contributing editor (arts)

Paul Desbaillets
contributing editor (football culture)

Chris Tucker
art director

Advertising
ads@cultmontreal.com

Contributors:
Stephan Boissoneault
Jacob Carey
Johnson Cummins
Toula Drimonis
Brandon Kaufman
Darcy MacDonald
Taylor C. Noakes
Natalia Yanchak

Special Thanks: Ashley Fish-Robertson

General inquiries + feedback
info@cultmontreal.com



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Mayoral check-in

BY TOULA DRIMONIS

With Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante just over a year into her second mandate, I had the opportunity to speak with her and discuss some looming post-pandemic challenges.

TOULA DRIMONIS: You're in year two of your second mandate. What do you consider to be your top 3 main issues to tackle?

VALÉRIE PLANTE: For sure I would say the ecological transition remains top on my list. We're doing everything we can to hasten it and taking as many steps as we need to treat it as a priority, and treat climate change as a reality we can no longer afford to ignore. Housing is, of course, a top issue for us, and one that we're continuing to work on since our first mandate. Finally, homelessness is an issue I take very seriously and has only gotten worse since the pandemic. And if I can add a fourth, I would say that making sure that the city remains welcoming and inclusive to all also remains a top priority for me.

TD: What has proven to be the most challenging part of your mayoralty so far? The issue that you didn't see coming — aside from the pandemic, of course.

VP: Well... everything *caused* by the pandemic. The domino effect it created, where one problem amplified another. COVID caused an explosion of homelessness, and increased problems with public transit. For example, before COVID, we were trying to find solutions for congestion on the Orange Line, and now it's the opposite; we're working super hard to get people back on the subway and on the buses. This has had a huge impact on the city's finances, but also the STM's finances. Before the pandemic, we had the wind in our sails, we were developing, we went from lineups at Berri-UQAM metro station to the opposite. So, for me, that was such a big change. Even if we knew why these issues were happening, it was still such a paradigm shift and the pandemic exasperated so many issues already present.

TD: A post-pandemic reality features rising inflation, rising cost of living, property taxes going up. Assessments for property tax are up by 32.4% on the island of Montreal, a steep increase that has many homeowners worried. Are you concerned Montreal residents will blame your administration for issues that may be beyond your control? What do you say to them?

VP: Inflation is hitting people hard and the precarity we're seeing is forcing more people into more difficult financial situations. The economy is still stagnant, so there's a lot of insecurity and it's very tough for citizens. What we want to do is reassure Montrealers that, since the beginning, we've always been very sensitive to their financial capacity. Even though we won't be able to freeze taxes this year like we did during the pandemic, we want to find a balance in between. It's tough because we know Montrealers will say that they don't want higher taxes, but at the same time inflation is totally hitting the city as well.

Whether it's gas for the trucks to remove the snow or for



Sylvain Legare

garbage collection, the cost to construct a pool or a sports centre, the costs for us exploded as well. For us, it's tough, too. It's important to raise awareness in terms of the city's financial capacity, and I'll do my best to communicate why we have no choice but to raise them. I know it's not a very sexy subject, but the fact of the matter is Montreal depends pretty much on property taxes [70% of city revenues come from property taxes], versus the government of Quebec that is sending cheques these days. I'm not saying that it's a bad idea, but if they send cheques to people, I'm hoping that the government will send us a cheque as well.

We don't want to raise taxes either. It's all the same pockets, ultimately. But there's no way that we will follow the inflation rate, which is currently around 8%. Increases are going to be between 3% and 6%, not more than that, because we know that it's difficult for people and we don't want to add an additional burden on people's wallets.

TD: What is your biggest challenge in dealing with a provincial government that often seems more focused on pleasing the regions? How do you communicate Montreal's needs for more financial support and the city's importance to Quebec's economic prosperity without necessarily burning any bridges?

VP: The government recognizes that Montreal is Quebec's economic engine. I've been saying it and I've been repeating it, making sure that it's clear and that we all share the same message. Pierre Fitzgibbon's appointment as the minister responsible for Montreal, who also has the economic development portfolio, is, I think, a good sign. For me it's about having a great relationship with that minister, and we've done great things in the past. I'd say, so far, we have

allies when it comes to the city's economic development.

I think the message that I carry all the time to any minister I meet is that anything related to Montreal's economic development is also good for its social development and we need to link the two together. When we want to build, we bring investors to Montreal, those new employees, that talent, those new students, well... they need to live somewhere. Social equity is an important priority for me, so when we discuss how a society grows, we need to make sure that it's handled from both an economic and social perspective and we tackle shortages in human resources. We need to come up with a great strategy, based on numbers, based on facts, and to see how having new people coming to Montreal is a great asset for economic development, but also for social development.

TD: Montreal is hosting the upcoming COP15 conference on biodiversity. [The 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, a UN Summit ratified by 196 countries, is taking place in Montreal from Dec. 7–19.] It's a huge international event that will necessitate massive security detail and bring protesters to the city but will also inject millions into the local economy. What are your expectations and concerns about such a big event? What do you hope Montreal will gain from hosting it?

VP: I would say the first challenge would be for people to understand what the COP is. It's a big, international event where there will be negotiations between countries about our objectives regarding biodiversity. What do we want to protect? A number that I often repeat because I find it very scary, but it's a fact, is that in 50 years, we have lost 70% of our wildlife on this planet. Seventy percent is gone. This

is very scary, and we need to act. As prime ministers and presidents and heads of state will meet, for me it's also an opportunity to position Montreal as a leader in protecting biodiversity and putting concrete actions forward, like we recently did with protecting the bees and the butterflies. [Montreal recently unveiled an ambitious [pollinator plan](#), ahead of the UN Summit.]

I also want to create a green legacy and I want Montrealers to gain something from the summit itself, like a "green gift." As far as security goes, there will be a perimeter around the Palais des congrès but it will be focused on that specific area. [Of note: Place d'Armes metro station will be completely closed from Dec. 1–20.]

People will still be able to circulate around that area. It's a Canadian event, essentially Canada is hosting the summit, so the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Sûreté du Québec (SQ), the SPVM and the City of Montreal are all involved here. But the SPVM will be very present outside the event site. Montreal is a city that's used to protests, so I hope everything unfolds peacefully, I think it's important to respect everyone's opinions. The summit will also be great for Montreal because close to 15,000 representatives will be coming to the city, and that means that restaurants and hotels will be full. We want our businesses to benefit, too.

TD: From a very young age, you were involved in green initiatives. Even your high school yearbook states that you wanted to be president of Greenpeace. How important to you is meeting environmental targets? I intended to ask if the ecological transition is still on top of your list of priorities, but you answered this question by including it in your top 3 priorities.

VP: Yes, but if I can just add to that, I also believe it's one of the main reasons why we got re-elected with such big numbers as well. [Plante had a decisive win last year when she earned 52% of the vote compared with 38% won by her challenger, former mayor Denis Coderre. In fact, Plante increased her share of the vote the second time around, indicating clear support for many of her party's policies and priorities.]

We've been very strong and bold and clear with Montrealers about our goals to do as much as we can to protect the environment.

TD: As a woman in politics, there are many challenges. Do you believe there are double standards for women, and that they often need to work harder to be respected? Do we still have a long way to go?

VP: It's always a tricky question to answer. I would like to be able to say that there's no double standard that exists, but at the same time it's hard to point to specific examples. It's no longer about, "Go back to the kitchen, woman!" It's much more subtle, but I do believe there are still stereotypes to tackle and there are still ways that both men and women behave towards women politicians or female leaders. I think we all, as a society, need to reflect on that.

I think there's been a lot of work for women to be more strategic and network better, and I do believe that the tools are being put in place and I see the way we're moving forward, but even though I wish I could say that it's exactly alike for a man and a woman to run for the mayoralty, it wouldn't be true. We're in a very progressive city and society in terms of sharing responsibilities, that's a great thing, but there are still things that need to be changed for sure. It's a tricky question but I still believe it to be relevant, that's why I keep answering it.

TD: Without asking too many cliché questions about female politicians, I still need to ask this one. We keep trying to encourage more women to run for politics, but regardless of how gender equality has advanced and how many more men are stepping up, studies continue to show that women continue to carry the overwhelming burden of childcare. You yourself are a mom of two teen boys, and many female politicians are mothers themselves. How important is it for women aspiring to a political career to have a supportive partner?

VP: I think it's a fair question to ask. It means having a

partner who understands and is also willing to make the sacrifices that a lot of women have made in the past. I generalize here, of course, but I think in the past there have been far more women who would sacrifice some aspect of their life to support their man's ambitions, so there needs to be more role models. We talk about more models of women leading, and more representation of women, regardless of the colour of their skin or their background, so other girls and women can identify with them. But I think it's also true for men. We need more models of men being supportive, being the trooper, being the caregiver, supporting a leader woman, so men can see that as a positive and acceptable role as well.

TD: What do you say to many Quebec anglophones and allophones, who because of recent declarations or legislation like Bill 21 and Bill 96 by the current provincial government may feel unheard and marginalized right now? Quebec's diversity is primarily found in Montreal. How do you reconcile working successfully with the government while listening to diverse communities and their needs?

VP: It's a very good question. For me, it's always about wanting Montreal to move forward. I aim to have good relationships with all my colleagues at other government levels, but the bottom line is this: I will always defend Montrealers' voices. When certain instances happened during the provincial campaign, the last thing a mayor wants to do is participate in a campaign at another government level, but sometimes a mayor's gotta do what a mayor's gotta do, right? We want to make sure that no one feels left out. Though I respect the CAQ's position on racism and systemic discrimination, for us in Montreal we decided to move forward.

[For more context: While Premier Legault and the CAQ continue to deny that systemic racism exists, Plante officially [recognized its existence back in 2020](#), following a report by Montreal's public consultation office. It's been a slow process for the city as well, with a consultation only happening after activist and mayoral candidate Balarama Holness delivered a petition demanding the public consultation at City Hall in 2018. Once the report was out, however, the acknowledgment was quick to come and Plante referred to it as a "collective awakening that systemic racism does exist," recognizing that the "report tells us in black and white that there's systemic racism, which includes the SPVM."

In 2019, Montreal City Council also unanimously passed a [declaration against Bill 21](#), Quebec's secularism legislation. At the time, Plante stated: "The message I want to send my population is that we are there. I want to bring their voice out saying, 'You have the right to have the same opportunities whoever you are, whatever you wear. It is our duty to speak up.'"

During the recent provincial campaign, Plante was also quick to react to comments made by then Immigration Minister Jean Boulet, who stated that "80% of immigrants go to Montreal, don't work, don't speak French and don't adhere to Québécois values." The Mayor immediately [tweeted](#): "Mr. Boulet needs to withdraw his comments, which go against all our efforts to integrate newcomers. Montreal is a land of welcome for immigrants, who contribute to the economic, social and cultural vitality and to the dynamism of French."

Throughout the course of her mayoralty, Plante has repeatedly [criticized](#) or cautioned against Premier Legault's efforts to reduce immigration, referring to immigration as an asset and pointing to historic labour shortages. While she recently refused to condemn Legault's comments about more immigration being "suicidal" for Quebec, she has called for a calm and factual debate on numbers and continues to push for Quebec to give Montreal access to new sources of revenue to tackle some of the challenges new arrivals can bring, with regards to additional housing and teaching needs.

VP: The entire city council was behind this position [the city's declaration on Bill 21] and I was proud to bring it forward because it's important for me as mayor to bring forward the voices of those who aren't heard as often, who are part of our society and who contribute and are so important. Montreal was built on these diverse paths. It's why Montreal is so special. I navigate through all this, but

Rapid-fire fun

Being a fan of the Proust Questionnaire, I ended the interview with a few lighter questions that have nothing to do with politics and would perhaps give us a glimpse into the lesser-known personality traits of our mayor.

1. Your favourite quality in a human being?

I really appreciate humility.

2. What is the worst job that you've ever had?

I worked for a few months in a gas station, it was awful. (Laughter...) and I even had a car then. (More laughter...)

3. What are you most proud of?

Being the first woman mayor of Montreal is something I'm very proud of. And being a mom... I know it's a cliché, but I love it.

4. How do you deal with stress?

I swim in the mornings.

5. What Montreal sound or smell do you love?

I love the smell of the mountain during winter when I go skiing in the morning. It's very close to silence. And with the snow, it creates this cushion. It's like a bubble.

6. What's the best piece of advice anyone has ever given you?

To learn how to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations.

7. What would you miss most about Montreal if you moved elsewhere?

The parks and all the people who love going to parks. I love both. I love this little micro-society in parks.

8. What do you think people get wrong about you the most?

That I hate cars. That I wake up in the middle of the night hating drivers. That's just not true. I don't do that. I do understand that in some parts of the city asking people not to use their cars isn't even an option, because there's no option. Sometimes, when you have the kids and there's a hockey game, you need to do what you need to do as a parent. But for me, it's about sharing the roads better. It's most certainly not about hating cars.

I believe my role, which I take very seriously, is to bring whatever data, experiences and conversations I can to the forefront and to my colleagues at other levels of government to raise awareness and sensitivity to maybe different realities in Montreal.

TD: WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR LEGACY TO BE? 30, 50 YEARS FROM NOW, WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER MOST ABOUT THE PLANTE ERA?

VP: I want to be remembered for being the first woman elected mayor in Montreal, but that's already done, so I guess I'd like my legacy to be about making sure that Montreal is greener when I leave office than when I entered it. That we deployed all the energy we could to ensure the protection of our parks, our waterfront and our shores, protecting all the island's biodiversity and making the city greener. Not only for residents' quality of life but also for protecting the territory for generations to come. That would be the thing I'm really hoping to leave as a legacy, and this is how our decisions are made, and we continue to work on that.

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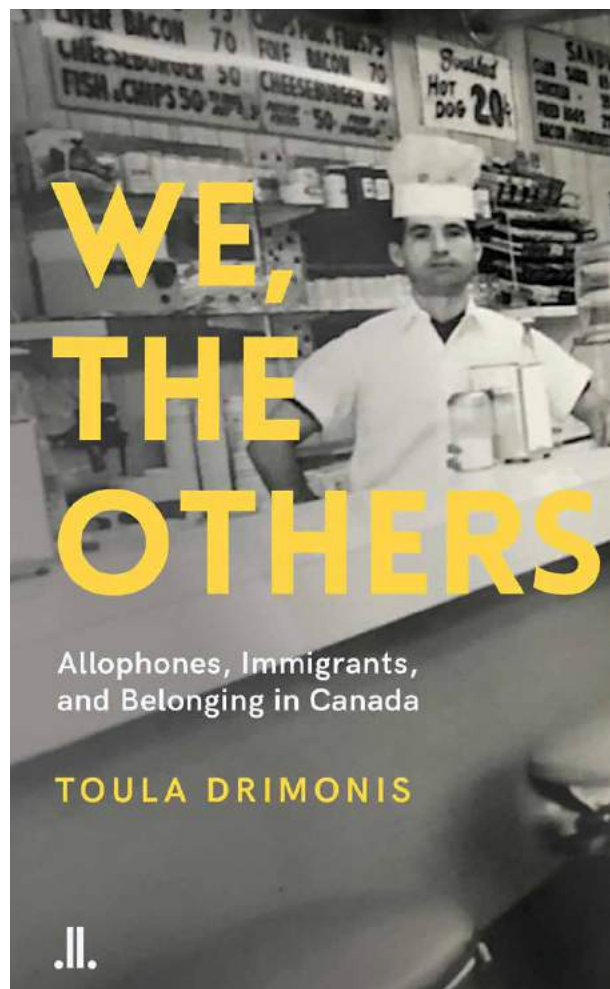
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BY TAYLOR C. NOAKES

It is the hallmark of an excellent writer that a reader with no obvious connection to the source material or subject at hand be made to feel not only welcomed by the text, but almost immediately absorbed by perspectives and life experiences wholly different from my own. Such was my experience reading Toulia Drimonis's *We, the Others*.

I am not “the other” Drimonis speaks of in her book, though I immediately found myself identifying with the growing segment of the national population that falls outside the false English/French dichotomy. The two ‘official’ founding peoples concept is a myth, a total fabrication, ironically woven deep into a national psyche ostensibly oriented towards multiculturalism that’s supposed to constitute both the nation’s inherent essence as well as its ultimate goal and aspiration.

As Drimonis points out early on, this myth ignores the multicultural Indigenous reality that preceded European colonization and settlement, as much as it obliterates the often painful memories of so many peoples who were just as foundational and yet who remain almost permanently ‘othered.’

This isn’t an abstract problem from Canada’s past either. Just the other day, a *Globe and Mail* editorial mentioned the fact “the transcontinental railway was built in only five years,” without mentioning the thousands of Chinese labourers who were paid far less than their white counterparts, given only the most dangerous jobs and without whom accomplishing the goal would have been impossible. Are they any less foundational?

This is some of the territory Drimonis covers in a



Toulia Drimonis

book that defies commonly accepted boundaries as well as expectations. It is open and accessible, largely a consequence of Drimonis weaving aspects of a personal memoir with a history of immigration (and more specifically, the historical treatment of immigrants, right up to the present), along with a journalist’s analysis of sociological, demographic and political trends. It’s not an academic book — which is good — but I could see it, or portions of it, as required reading in any number of university courses.

In a recent interview, Toulia Drimonis told me that the idea for this book had been percolating in her mind for nearly a decade. She had initially wanted to pay tribute to immigrants like her parents, but growing xenophobia and generalized anti-immigrant sentiment — in Quebec as much as practically anywhere else in so-called western civilization right now — shifted the tone and ultimately led to the final product: a book that shifts between memoir and ode to the immigrant experience, commentary on contemporary social, cultural and political issues and a highly accessible history of the immigrant experience in Canada.

“You would be surprised how many people have come up to me saying ‘I had zero clue about any of this.’ We’re just not teaching this. People seem completely oblivious to a lot of this stuff. They just don’t pay attention,” said Drimonis, referring to Canada’s long history of anti-immigrant policies, institutionalized racism and generalized xenophobia. “All of this nonsense that we’re hearing from so many people today is eerily similar to stuff that we’ve heard from previous waves of immigration. It’s not new. There’s nothing new here.”

Though Drimonis began writing the book over two years ago, the importance and relevance of the subject matter makes it feel like it could have been written last week. Given the glacial pace of social change in Canada, not to mention how ingrained toxic xenophobia is in our culture (as evidenced by the radical increase in anti-Asian and anti-Semitic hate in particular in just the last two years), I suspect the book will continue to feel relevant for quite some time to come.

I asked Drimonis who this book was written for, and whether she had a specific audience in mind when writing it. While, as any good author, she would like everyone to read it, her answer actually surprised me: “I hope that it resonates with everyone, but I definitely wrote it for allophones because I feel like there’s this frustration. When I speak to allophones or immigrants, whether they’re first, second or third generation, there’s this feeling of ‘When will we feel like we belong?’ ‘When will we be accepted?’ ‘Why is there this constant need to check enough boxes?’”

“Especially with this current (provincial) government, which has really ramped up identity politics, it feels like they’re trying to limit the definition of what a

Quebecer is. It’s like if you don’t check these boxes, if you’re not this, if you’re not that, if you don’t support Bill 21, if you’re not francophone, if you don’t speak French at home... then you’re not the ‘right’ type of Quebecer or you haven’t integrated enough. So I definitely wrote it for immigrants and kids of immigrants who feel othered and who feel like they are somehow failing to live up to this definition of what it is to be a real Quebecer.”

Drimonis said that a translated version of her book will be coming out next year, though that hasn’t stopped francophones, in surprising numbers, from reading her book. “It has so far received a very positive reaction from francophones who read it in English, and I do hope more francophones read it, even those who support the CAQ government or Bill 21... I want them to see another perspective and understand how counterproductive it is because, at the end of the day, I think everyone, all Quebecers, want successful integration and social cohesion. I mean, isn’t that what everyone wants?”

The frustration of being sidelined, ignored or (worse) othered and considered suspect, despite the ample and on-going contributions of immigrants and allophones to Canadian society, is palpable throughout the book. While present and unavoidable, Drimonis strikes a balance and avoids the pitfall of bitterness (which, given recent events in Canada and Quebec, would be understandable). There’s joy here, and the deep love and commitment to Canada and Quebec that all too often requires an immigrant or allophone’s perspective and worldview to eloquently express. It shouldn’t surprise people to learn that the most ardent defenders of Canada and what Canada might become are those who have often sacrificed everything to get here and have to fight tooth and nail to succeed here.

And while the book is not focused exclusively on Quebec, this province, being the place most different from all others yet paradoxically the laboratory of the grand national experiment, receives the added attention it deserves. “Quebecers have been othered by the rest of Canada, by the English elite,” said Drimonis, “but we don’t seem to understand that here we have an oppressed minority that’s oppressing other minorities.”

We, the Others is an easy read that will give you plenty to think about, and I think Drimonis achieved her goal of creating something that’s simultaneously accessible and impactful. As I finished the book I turned it over to consider the summary and what others had to say about it, and noticed two words in the top lefthand corner to help booksellers categorize it: non-fiction/immigrants.

I rolled the words around a few times. Separately they seemed out of place and a poor description of what I had just read, non-fiction being too generic, too obvious, too imprecise. Using the word “immigrants” seemed almost like the book was othering itself... Drimonis may have been inspired to write this in tribute to her immigrant parents and all the allophones out there, but it’s also very clearly intended for everyone who doesn’t fall into that category too. Labeling it ‘immigrants’ almost feels like the person who comes across a difficult to pronounce ethnic name and gives up before they try. File it under ‘immigrants’ and move along. Evidently none of this was deliberately intended to malign, offend or marginalize, but it made me think that we perhaps still have a way to go in adjusting our language — and how we think — to be more accommodating. Combining the words seemed like a far better description of the book’s ultimate statement: despite the many prevalent myths about immigrants in our society, immigrants and their children are in fact not the common fictions invented to assist in their othering.

I cannot recommend this book enough. If you don’t think there’s anything in it for you, you’re most likely in for a surprise. Buy it for that backwards uncle that makes family dinners awkward — he likely needs it most of all.

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The airing of grievances

BY DARCY MACDONALD

Expansions over the years notwithstanding, Concordia University's west-end Loyola Campus never really changes.

The quiet, west-end corner that Loyola has inhabited since the late 19th century is home to the university's Communications and Journalism departments and is of historic significance to the NDG district and to the institution alike. While not quite frozen in time, Loyola Campus invites a familiar sense of stability to students, graduates and residents of its surrounding streets.

On Thursday, Oct. 25, 1990, that familiarity was shattered by the tragic death of 14-year-old Paul McKinnon. The Loyola High School student was killed by a speeding police cruiser at the crosswalk between the entrance to the university's parking lot and the sports installations on the south side of the street. At the time, the high school occupied what is now home to Concordia's psychology department on the campus grounds.

In the days, months and years that followed, McKinnon's family and the Loyola and NDG community rallied for justice, prevention and for each other.

Paul's younger brother Alex was only 10 years old. He came home from school that day, saw his family gathered and asked where his brother was. His mother gave him the news. From that moment, the younger McKinnon says he began losing all personal recollection of his big brother, his memories hijacked by the trauma around him and the ensuing legal battles, media coverage and the spotlight surrounding his brother's death.

In early 2022, his four-part CBC podcast series, *Sorry About the Kid*, was released to widespread critical acclaim, becoming one of the most popular new Canadian series of the year.

McKinnon intended the podcast to be a journey of personal reconciliation, to take his memories back and honour Paul as the person he had been and not the collection of stories he had become in his younger brother's imagination.

"My family remembers him a lot. I don't. Or I didn't before this process," McKinnon said.

"I've always been grieving the loss, not who I lost, and how I saw it affecting my parents, my sister and the community. It felt like a void, or something missing. I couldn't focus on, 'Oh, I'm so upset that we're never gonna go camping again,' because of a good camping trip that I remember, or stuff like that. Stuff I could miss. I started losing that before-and-after aspect.

"And for a long, long time after, I wasn't grieving Paul's death. I was grieving what it cost."

McKinnon, himself a Loyola High School grad and a Concordia journalism alum who has worked extensively in film and television production, was planning a return move to his hometown with his wife and firstborn child when he began experiencing unsettling feelings about the prospect of coming back to Montreal full-time after eight years in L.A.

"I was driving a U-Haul back from L.A. to drop off some of our stuff in Montreal, and I remember driving through New York when it really started to hit me," McKinnon recalled.

"It was the fall, in early October. And for me, the fall in northeastern cities — and especially Montreal — just brings back all of that stuff. The sound of dried leaves on the ground reminds me of the row of kids in Loyola and Royal West attire



Alex McKinnon

Caithin Taylor

shuffling their feet to the funeral. The smells. Everything reminds me so much of that time.

"When I went away to L.A., I didn't feel that. I felt lighter and freer and my relationship with Paul and his death changed a lot.

"That drive back, not wanting to come back to Montreal and not knowing why I didn't want to come back... I couldn't vocalize it. Seeing the leaves changing colours in New York and into Vermont, it just all came back to me. I remember the moment. And there and then, I thought, I've gotta do something. I've got to change this relationship I have with Paul, with his death and with the city."

Initially conceived as a TV series, when McKinnon began conducting candid one-on-one interviews with family members, his brother's friends and witnesses from that day, he realized that *Sorry About the Kid* was better suited to be a podcast.

The raw intimacy people displayed off-camera, so many years after the tragedy, was what McKinnon chose instead to share with the world. And his instinct was confirmed.

"The reaction when the podcast was released had a ripple effect. The first people that reached out to me were family and friends. And then it expanded. And eventually, it got to this cohort of people that I might not know really well, who were like, 'I was on the bus, and I saw it happen.' Or, 'I was in the street, and I saw it happen,'" he said.

"That really hit me. Because they were basically saying they had never felt they had the licence to grieve, because it wasn't their brother or their family or best friend. Like, can you fuckin' imagine? I can't imagine. Seeing it happen — what that does to you emotionally as a kid, to be so confronted with death, so young, in a different way than I was. I wasn't there. I didn't see him die. None of my family saw Paul die."

The results of this exercise in memory retrieval are still hard

for McKinnon to truly assess.

But his proximity to the story, coupled with a journalistic intention to tell it without any sugar coating, gave him a new appreciation for the impact his brother's death has had on the people who were a part of Paul's young life, and their relationships with grief and trauma.

In that sense, *Sorry About the Kid* is not only a brave accomplishment in riveting audio storytelling but also a therapeutic advancement for McKinnon's own sense of place in a story that, until now, had felt to him almost as if it belonged to everyone but him.

"My memories have always really started from (the day Paul died) and that first thing my mom said to me. And then the funeral, and the eulogies, and the tributes. You start to kind of deify a person and that's suddenly what you remember.

"I was very conscious while making the podcast that this is gonna be canon. This is gonna be what my grandkids and their grandkids hear. So I wanted to get it straight. I wanted to talk about Paul almost having sex and smoking. Because it's important. It makes someone a fuller person."

Since the podcast was released, McKinnon has heard from people around the world who share the same experience of grief-related memory loss. He cites these interactions as hugely therapeutic learning experiences in their own right.

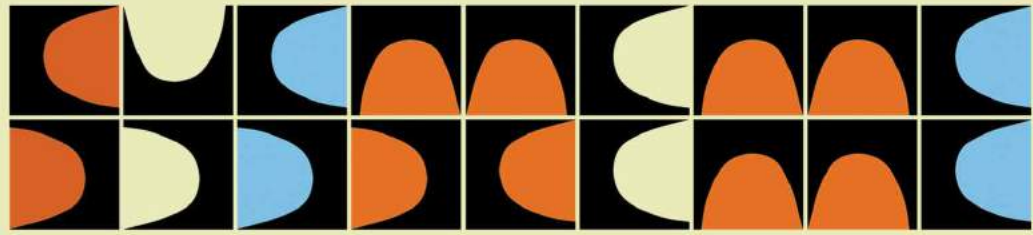
"Everyone grieves their own way. There's no right or wrong way to grieve. It's a survival instinct. And if it's to not talk about (loss), then that's okay. And that might change later on, and it's fine if it does change.

"There's this idea of a set way to grieve — you 'move past it.' But you don't move past it. And you can't judge someone for the way they grieve."

→ *Sorry About the Kid* is available on all major streaming platforms and podcast apps.

2009

Décembre



<p>MEUR 30 NOV</p> <p>FAUX SOMMETS INVITES: LEXIS</p>	<p>JEU 1 DEC</p> <p>MARSA D.TIFF</p>	<p>VEN 2 DEC</p> <p>LOLA 1:2 (LIVE), FIREBALL KID (LIVE) BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD</p>	<p>SAM 3 DEC</p> <p>WILL DIMAGGIO LIS DALTON</p>
<p>MEUR 7 DEC</p> <p>NICE TO HEAR: NEW GIRL</p>	<p>JEU 8 DEC</p> <p>VINBAI PRESENTS: MRS. BABY & FRIENDS</p>	<p>VEN 9 DEC</p> <p>WASA BIBI AKANTU</p>	<p>SAM 10 DEC</p> <p>MATA SOUND W/ SIMI, SOFTMATTER, BAD JUJU & DATA MOTOR SYSTEM</p>
<p>MEUR 14 DEC</p> <p>TESS ROBY</p>	<p>JEU 15 DEC</p> <p>DJ D.DEE</p>	<p>VEN 16 DEC</p> <p>FIT SIEGEL GENE TELLEM</p>	<p>SAM 17 DEC</p> <p>IMMOTIMYHISTORY GLOWZI</p>
<p>MEUR 21 DEC</p> <p>OJPB</p>	<p>JEU 22 DEC</p> <p>JULIEN'S BIRTHDAY JAM WITH AUDREY BELANGER</p>	<p>VEN 23 DEC</p> <p>ALESSANDROID JALIL HEX P</p>	<p>SAM 24 DEC</p> <p>FERME</p>
<p>MEUR 28 DEC</p> <p>ORIGINAL RECIPE</p>	<p>JEU 29 DEC</p> <p>HOMEGROWN HARVEST SOUNDSYSTEM</p>	<p>VEN 30 DEC</p> <p>BRAD DJ NEO EDO</p>	<p>SAM 31 DEC</p> <p>MARIE DAVIDSON, FEU ST-ANTOINE LASH (LIVE)</p>

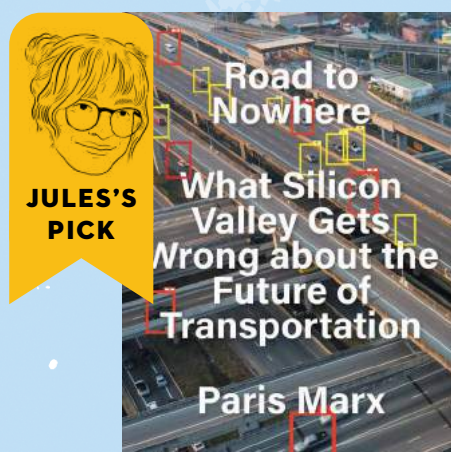
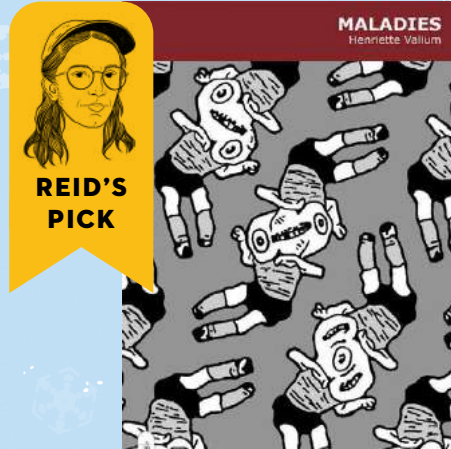
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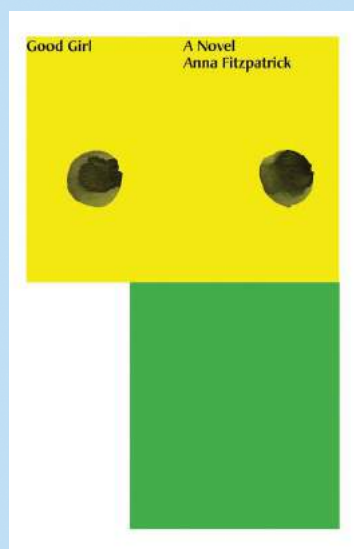
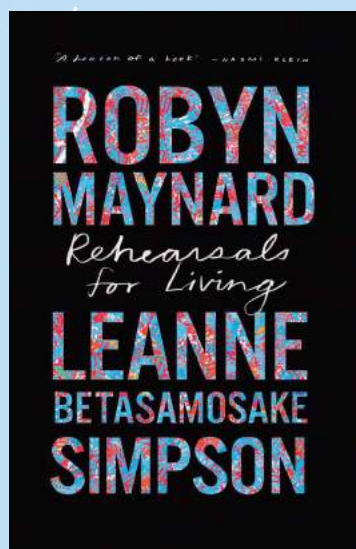
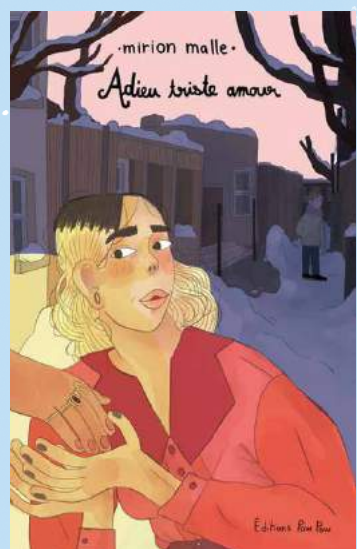
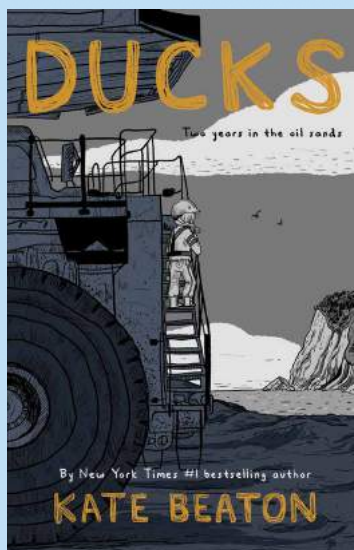
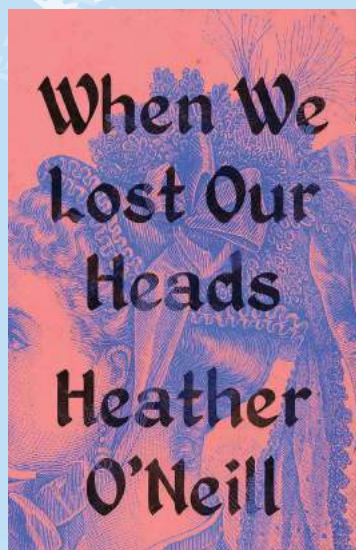
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KIDS PICKS ♥ CHOIX D'ENFANTS



OUR 2022 BESTSELLERS!



Staff illustrations by MARIANA MORENO CARO

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Canada

:the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

Continuing in our year-end tradition, here are highlights of what went down in the wonderful world of football in 2022, listed in no particular order.

- FIFA suspended Russian men's and women's teams from international competition because of the war in Ukraine.
- The Canadian Women's National soccer team clinched a berth to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.
- Ronaldo left Manchester United at a financial loss of 17-million pounds.
- Liverpool FC and Manchester United started the process of looking for buyers of their respective clubs. (With price tags in the billions.)
- Chelsea FC was bought by American billionaire Todd Boehly and a consortium of investors in May, in a \$5.25-billion deal.
- Chelsea fired Thomas Tuchel after a slow start to the season and appointed Graham Potter as the new gaffer.
- Zinedine Zidane rode a skateboard for the Adidas/

Y3 Clothing collaboration with London-based skate brand PALACE.

- Canada qualified for this year's World Cup. The first time they made an appearance was in Mexico in 1986.
- Belgium beat Canada in their opening World Cup group match winning 1-0. 3.7 million Canadians tuned in to watch.
- Canada played Croatia and lost 4-0, being eliminated from the World Cup after only two games.
- Alphonso Davies scored the first ever men's World Cup goal for Canada.
- Atiba Hutchinson made his 100th international appearance for Canada.
- Christine Sinclair scored her record-breaking 185th goal against St. Kitts and Nevis in January, and has scored in five World Cups.
- Arsenal FC is at the top of the Premier League table at press time.
- The English Premier League returns on Boxing Day, Dec 26 (*Everyone back to the Burgundy Lion?)
- Apple TV+ acquired the exclusive rights to the MLS for \$2.5-billion in a 10-year deal.
- CFM made the MLS Playoffs while making MLS history at the same time.

- CFM were eliminated from the playoffs by NYFCFC.
- The CFM re-branded again. The team removed the controversial snowflake logo from the crest.
- Gareth Bale joined the LAFC, who won the MLS Cup.
- Lorenzo Insigne joined Toronto FC at \$14-million a year, and did not make the playoffs.
- Haaland made his debut in the English Premier League and did not disappoint. He is on track to break records.
- Pep Guardiola extended his contract with Manchester City for another two years.
- Karim Benzema won the Ballon d'Or.
- Xabi Alonso starts his managerial career with Bayer Leverkusen.

It has been a wild year in sports, and in general.

There are of course many other football moments in 2022 that should have been added to this list but rather than dwell unnecessarily on the past, the idea is to look to the future — hopefully a very bright future filled with peace and harmony in some form or other.

I wish everybody a positive, safe and healthy 2023. May your goals be reached, your memories be joyful and your company enjoyed year-round.

Take the time to enjoy the moments while you can.

*With good cheer,
The 1st half*

"I once cried because I had no shoes to play soccer, but one day, I met a man who had no feet." — Zinedine Zidane

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Jaha Koo

Lolling and Rolling

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S'appuyant sur son propre apprentissage linguistique et sur des archives vidéo d'époque, qu'il manipule comme un VJ, **Jaha Koo** poursuit sa réflexion sur l'hégémonie culturelle occidentale et les duretés de la société sud-coréenne, qui ont en commun d'écraser les minorités et les classes défavorisées.

24 → 26 JAN

*Based on his own language-learning experiences and archival footage, which he manipulates like a VJ, **Jaha Koo** continues his reflection on Western cultural hegemony and the harsh aspects of Korean society, both of which crush minorities and the working classes.*

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food

The holiday table

BY CLAY SANDHU

Every year, around this time, I set myself the goal of writing on a topic that examines a unique aspect of the holidays.

Lord knows there are more than enough recipe listicles and overly opinionated manifestos on “how to cook the perfect turkey” — I’ll save you the trouble: dry brine the bird and cook the white meat and dark meat separately.

This year, I opted to look at our personal and varied holiday food traditions. The holidays are inextricably linked to tradition. Some are archetypal, religious or cultural traditions and others are just the things we seem to do year after year because they represent small but essential roles in a grand holiday production. For many, this year will be the first time since 2019 that the holidays will be somewhat back to normal. While the last three years have been about making do in the new normal, I can hardly think of a better avatar for the old normal than a holiday dinner.

The holiday table is unique in that it is very often a product of both abundance and compromise. That is to say that these tables, generally speaking, are set with far too much food and take into account the varied tastes and preferences of each person sitting at it — a rare instance where it’s not one or the other, it’s both. On a personal level, I love hearing about other people’s holiday traditions. More often than not, the descriptions are of the most unpretentious, comforting, guilty-pleasure foods — that even a dish that in any other setting would be bad, when coloured by the haze of holiday euphoria, can be incredible.

With that in mind, I spoke to three of my favourite chefs and asked them to describe their ideal holiday table. The parameters were essentially non-existent. Their tables could be set with dishes they cook, favourite dishes from restaurants, something cooked by a relative who’s no longer with us — anything really. Invariably, they chose joyful and humble food — dishes that evoked memories. Their tables aren’t necessarily meant to serve as inspiration for your own table (although why not?) but are meant to be an affirmation that holiday traditions, whether traditional or not, are worth celebrating. Or, alternatively: Chefs — they’re just like us!

LOUIE DELIGIANIS (BISTO LA FRANQUETTE)

“I’m someone who’s usually more comfortable in other people’s family settings. My mom passed away on Christmas Eve — Christmas was pretty much cancelled after that. So it was kind of perfect when I met (my partner) Renée (Deschenes, co-owner of Franquette). We usually go to her mom’s for Christmas. (Renée’s mom) is a hardcore, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebecer, she’ll usually make tourtière and we’ll help her, which is fun because it helped bring (Christmas) back for me. (Renée’s mom) judges me for how much I eat when she makes it — like, I scare her. She’s like, “Oh my God, you eat for six!”

“She makes it in a large le Creuset pot — the orange one. She wakes up in the morning before everyone and rolls out the dough, the night before she cuts up all the meat — it’s just beef and pork, potato, onions and salt and pepper. In the morning, she bakes it and I’m pissed that I can’t eat it right away. It comes out five hours later and then sits on the stove. She makes this salad — it’s just cream and chopped green onion on iceberg lettuce — and she’ll put out Heinz ketchup



Ariana Sauder

and a homemade ketchup a family friend makes. I always grab the Heinz and someone makes fun of me.

“The best meal that I’ve ever had with a bunch of my friends around Christmas time is Tripolis. I’ve got to have a big ol’ mess of thick, succulent, grilled lamb chops — some of them are medium, some of them are well-done, some are a little rare — that’s what I want! I just like eating them with my hands, grabbing them by the bone and just gnawing on lamb chops. I’ve also got to have the t-bone.

“For sides, I need the Greek potatoes and a fat chunk of feta — like, too big of a chunk of feta. I obviously need the classic Village salad — dried oregano, big chunks of tomato and olives with the pits. Taramasalata and Tzatziki with pita will probably come a bit later on, and for dessert — the loukoumades. The grandma just sits by the kitchen and when it’s time for the loukoumades, you just see her get up and she’s fryin’ and they’re just fucking perfect — I’ve never had them any better.

“And that’s it — that’s my Christmas. We play horrible board games and drink too much red wine.”

ANITA FENG (J’AI FENG)

“For me, any time I think of a celebration or a family gathering, the first thing that comes to mind is always hot pot. When I think about a hot pot meal, the room is full of steam, there’s a very aromatic smell in the air and things are cooking all the time. Generally speaking, when it comes to hot pot, the more things we have on the table, the better. It represents the wealth of the family.

“In my family, especially during Chinese New Year, let’s say, we’ll have a lot of stuff on the table. Like, we’re four (in my family) but probably ten people could be around the table and we’d still have food left over for the next day.

“Our hot pot has a straight divider and we’ll always have two broths. Usually, my dad will go with a Cantonese type of hot pot — basically, it’s just chicken broth with some goji berries and some Chinese dates. This is more for my mom and dad who eat less pungent and spicy flavours. The other side is more for my sister and me — we’ll have the spicy Sichuanese version: tons of pepper, with beef fat and spices. You really get the Yin Yang effect. There’s an almost clear broth on one side and a very deep-red colour on the other side.

“My mom isn’t a big meat eater so she’ll keep a lot of vegetables for herself on her side. We’ll have watercress, lettuce, cabbage, bok choy, daikon, tons of mushroom — shiitake, king oysters, enoki — that would be all for her. My sister, she’s more of a seafood person so she’ll have all the shrimp, the fish — sometimes, if my dad has some extra bucks, he’ll get us some lobsters for the hot pot. Me and my dad are really the meat eaters, I would say. I love all the sliced meat. We’ll always have a mix of lamb slices, pork slices and beef slices — tons of meatballs and plenty of tofu on the table — I love all the tofu that soaks in the broth. My dad is a big chicken eater, so there’s usually a whole chicken in the middle of the table. He’ll butcher the chicken, there’s the head and the feet, and then he’ll debone the rest of the meat and marinate it with salt, oyster sauce, a little bit of soya, a little sugar and a few chunks of green onion and ginger. (After a few hours, he’ll take the meat out of the marinade and put it in the centre of a plate and place back the head, the wings and the feet. Usually, we’ll also have some tripe and some boudin, which my sister calls ‘red tofu.’

“My sister and my mom aren’t really alcohol drinkers. My mom will have a sip just to say she drank something and my sister will have a glass to clink but that’s it. Usually, we’ll have some Bajiu, but my dad is a big scotch drinker — that’s what he’ll usually have with the meal. I join him sometimes, or sometimes I’ll bring a bottle of wine.

“For dessert, my mom will always prepare some kind of sweet soup with red bean but, to be honest, we barely touch it. We eat for a good four to five hours and we eat so much that dessert is the last thing on our minds — usually, we’ll eat it the next day.

“Sometimes when Dad will try and make something else for our holiday and it’s not hot pot, I get really disappointed. Hot pot is what we want! We get to prepare a bunch of things together — it’s playful, it’s very cozy and it’s a good way to spend time with family.

DANNY SMILES (THE WILLOW INN)

“There are a lot of kids now. My life changed (after I had kids) and now I see the holidays through a different lens, you know? I just really love to see what the kids like. We just put up our Christmas tree and they went crazy. We’re all really excited for the holidays.



“My mother-in-law makes these crazy stuffed *conchiglie*, which are the big shells. She makes two of them: there’s the meat filling, with a lot of minced meat and cheese, and then she does a ricotta and spinach one. When the shells come out, everyone’s happy. My mom makes *tortellini alla Gigi*. It’s super Italian but not like an authentic dish. For some reason, we always have it at Christmas. It’s tortellini in a rosé sauce with big chunky bits of prosciutto. It’s just delicious! It’s kind



of funny that it’s part of our Christmas tradition.

“For Italian families, the pasta course is essential. So many times, I’ll be like, ‘Ah, let’s do something else,’ but we always need a pasta course. And for me, it has to be those two pastas for Christmas.

“My favourite thing is the *bacala*, which is salted cod that we cooked in a simple tomato sauce with some olives and

big chunks of onion — very rustic. One thing that we haven’t done since my grandma passed away is *Zeppoli Calabrese*. It’s basically like a savoury fried doughnut with anchovies inside. It’s like having a basket of bread but it’s also like beignets — man, I could eat so many of those. My oldest son’s favourite thing, if you ask him, is shrimp cocktail. We live in Hudson now and we go to Mon Village — that’s our family restaurant — and they have a shrimp cocktail, so I’ll have that on my holiday table, too.

“Growing up, the holidays were always about the grandmas coming together with their recipes. My Egyptian grandma used to make vine leaves. You soak the leaves and then you dry them and then you fill the leaves with meat and rice and roll them and then you bake them in this beautiful consommé. In my family, we have it with this minty cucumber yogurt.

“The main course would be a leg of lamb — we always have lamb for the holidays. We’ll put some raw potatoes at the bottom of the pan and roast the lamb over it so they cook in the juices. It’s really, really nice. Then we just slice the meat off the bone and serve it with a little lamb stock. That’s my dad’s thing, he loves to make that.

“For dessert, my aunt used to make this crazy dessert — it was nuts. It’s made with phyllo dough and it’s basically like a Nutella millefeuille, but in cake form — I love it so much. She also used to just cut up a bunch of fruits in a bowl and then pour jello mix over top and then when it set, she’d put sliced almonds on top. I’m a huge jello fan, I don’t know what it is — I love it!

“I have to have *crispelle*, too. My grandma would take all the scraps from her *pasta all’uovo*, shape them into little ribbons, fry them until they’re crispy and cover them with powdered sugar. That comes out when you’re having the limoncello and grappa. That’s very Christmas-y for us.”

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STEPHAN BOISSONNEAULT

BEST ALBUMS

Yoo Doo Right, *A Murmur*, *Boundless to the East* (Mothland)

Fontaines D.C., *Skinty Fia* (Partisan)

Open Mike Eagle, *a tape called component system with the auto reverse* (Auto Reverse)

Sunglacers, *Subterranea* (Mothland)

Angel Olsen, *Big Time* (Jagjaguwar)

Big Thief, *Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You* (4AD)

Cate Le Bon, *Pompeii* (Mexican Summer)

Saba, *Few Good Things* (Saba Pivot LLC)

Viagra Boys, *Cave World* (Year0001)

Weyes Blood, *And in the Darkness, Hearts Aglow* (Sub Pop)

BEST CONCERT

Spiritualized at Théâtre Corona, Sept. 19

I saw so many concerts in 2022, probably more than any year I've been alive, but the one I still have flashbacks from is Spiritualized. The setlist was perfect, drawing from the fantastic new album *Everything Was Beautiful* as well as Jason Pierce & co.'s older material like *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space*. The visuals were also mind-expanding and put me in a welcome trance. If you don't know the name Spiritualized — and maybe you don't as the venue wasn't even at full capacity — do yourself a favour and check it out. It's psychedelic music that makes you question anything and everything, and it's even better live. I'm glad I saw Pierce and his band live because you really never know when a guy like him, leading a life like his, will stop making music altogether. He's one of the best in his genre, even if it's for a niche audience.

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

Kendrick Lamar collaborating with Kodak Black on *Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers* just sours part of the album for me.

JACOB CAREY

BEST ALBUMS

Orville Peck, *Bronco* (Sub Pop)

The Weeknd, *Dawn FM* (XO)

Pusha T., *It's Almost Dry* (GOOD Music/Def Jam)

Alex Cameron, *Oxy Music* (Secretly Canadian)

Kendrick Lamar, *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (Top Dawg/Aftermath/Interscope)

Post Malone, *Twelve Carat Toothache* (Republic)

The Sheepdogs, *Outta Sight* (Dine Alone)

Arcade Fire, *WE* (Columbia)

Steve Lacy, *Gemini Rights* (RCA)

DVSN, *Working on My Karma* (OVO Sound)

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

The Weeknd skipping Montreal on tour

BEST CONCERT

Roger Waters' "This Is Not a Drill" tour was one of the most impressive concerts that I've had the pleasure of attending in recent years. It was not necessarily Waters' captivating stage presence or his repertoire of endless classics that kept the audience enthralled for a near three-hour set, but the sheer production value alone that made it so spectacular.

In July, the Pink Floyd alumnus brought his 360-degree set to the Bell Centre, giving viewers in any seat a great view of the show. Viewed from above, the set would resemble an X made up of floating displays the size of movie theatre screens. For every tune, Waters had different visuals to accompany them. Some were full-on videos that could have been short films in themselves, others contained incredible high-end animation (the rich pig dancing along to "Money" was a favourite), while many others featured just trigger words or phrases meant to thought-provoke the audience. Whether or not you agree with Waters' politics is another story altogether, but there is no denying the amount of effort that has been put into creating an incredibly memorable spectacle for one of the few remaining living legends of the '70s rock 'n' roll era.

JOHNSON CUMMINS

BEST ALBUMS

PJ Harvey, *B-Sides, Demos & Rarities* box set (Island/Universal)

Off!, *Free LSD* (Fat Possum)

The Beatles, *Revolver* Special Edition Super Deluxe (Apple/Capitol)

Spiritualized, *Everything Was Beautiful* (Fat Possum)

Spoon, *Lucifer on the Sofa* (Matador)

Darkthrone, *Astral Fortress* (Peaceville)

Boris, *Heavy Rocks* (Relapse)

Locrian, *New Catastrophism* (Profound Lore)

Guided by Voices, *Crystal Nuns Cathedral* (GBV Inc.)

Neu!, *50!* box set (Grönland)

BEST CONCERT

Low at Théâtre Fairmount, April 2

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

On Nov. 5, one of the greatest singers and songwriters of all time, Mimi Parker, lost her battle with ovarian cancer. Parker is best known for sharing the songwriting and singing duties with her husband Alan Sparhawk in the "slo core" band Low.

Gently creeping out of the sleepy burg of Duluth, Minnesota in the '90s, Low flew in the face of the fuzz-driven decibel squelch of the Lollapalozers by playing at a snail's pace while delivering hushed anthems of the heart. While Parker possessed one of the sweetest voices ever to tickle the ear, she also cast out some lyrical pearls that would reduce even the most callous listeners to a puddle. It was when she perfectly meshed her sweet and oozing-honey voice with Sparhawk's that things really soared. Watching the wife and husband duo in full-flight harmony is one of the most electrifying things I have ever witnessed. Despite seeing them numerous times, it never failed to get me.

It might be selfish to lament that I will never spend an afternoon discovering a new Low record or feeling the emotional heft of seeing Parker, with brushes in hand, gently croon over Sparhawk's strum, but this one really hurts.

BRANDON KAUFMAN

BEST ALBUMS

Beyoncé, *Renaissance* (Parkwood Entertainment/Columbia)

Una Rose, *Myth Between* (independent)

Les Rallizes Denudes, *Mars Studio 1980* (Phoenix)

The Chats, *Get Fucked* (Bargain Bin)

Conway the Killer, *God Don't Make Mistakes* (Shady)

Benny the Butcher, *Tana Talk 4* (Griselda/Black Soprano Family/Empire)

Badge Époque Ensemble, *Clouds of Joy* (Telephone Explosion)

Joni Mitchell, *The Asylum Albums (1972–1975)* (Rhino)

Vince Staples, *Ramona Park Broke My Heart* (Motown/Blacksmith)

Harvey Sutherland, *Boy* (Clarity)

BEST CONCERT

Omar S at Pknic Électronik (Aug. 28)

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

Kendrick Lamar's *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* — though I hope (and suspect) the years will age this take poorly. As it stands, the record seems designed for this explicit purpose: a cobbling together of so many disparate ideas and sounds in the hope that they will sort themselves out. (The Polaroid approach: give it a second, a unified image is just around the corner.) Kendrick's discography has shown how overrated an idea "consistency" is; its generative use of aesthetic dissonance is part of what makes *DAMN.*, for example, so great. Nothing here seems to amount to much. Kendrick's last album on TDE, *Mr. Morale* introduces sounds and features and samples that obscure more than they reveal — obscures not by posing questions but by providing every possible formulation of an answer.

DARCY MACDONALD

BEST ALBUMS

Kendrick Lamar, *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (Top Dawg/Aftermath/Interscope)

Lisa Leblanc, *Chiac Disco* (Bonsound)

JID, *The Forever Story* (Dreamville/Interscope)

Danger Mouse & Black Thought, *Cheat Codes* (BMG)

DOMi & JD Beck, *NOT TIGHT* (Aphesit/Blue Note)

P'tit Belliveau, *Un homme et son piano* (Bonsound)

billy woods, *Aethiopes* (Backwoodz Studioz)

Backxwash, *HIS HAPPINESS SHALL COME FIRST EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SUFFERING* (Ugly Hag)

OFF!, *Free LSD* (Fat Possum)

Phife Dawg, *Forever* (Smokin' Needles)

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

Kendrick's *The Big Steppers* world tour bypassed Montreal but two-stepped into TO for a pair of shows in August. But hey — at least everyone still loves Arcade Fire!

BEST CONCERT

Having to pick the single best performance of 2022, as we welcomed a return to full-capacity gatherings and restriction-free concerts, seems almost unfair. So for this year, my choice is democratic: the performance I enjoyed the most at a live music event this year was yours, show-goer.

You bought tickets at exorbitant prices despite inflation, understanding full well that postponements were possible, cancellations would happen and festival headliners could (and would) be replaced. You risked joining massive, non-distanced crowds, masked or unmasked, sometimes suffering the consequences. When you had to stay home, you stayed home, braving disappointment because that's just how it goes. You danced under infernal heat at ÎLESONIQ. You pretended to be just a little more excited about Tik Tok stars at Osheaga than you needed to. You partied as hard and as often as you could at Jazz Fest and lost your mind with the Roots during what was possibly the best free outdoor show in the festival's history. You celebrated the human experience regardless of hardships and uncertainties every person endures. You brought smiles, friendships, laughter and love to put on the greatest spectacle anyone could ask for. Bravo.

DAVE MACINTYRE

BEST ALBUMS

Alex G, *God Save the Animals* (Domino)

Alvvays, *Blue Rev* (Polyvinyl)

Dry Cleaning, *Stumpwork* (4AD)

Fontaines D.C., *Skinty Fia* (Partisan/Rough Trade)

Nilüfer Yanya, *Painless* (ATO)

Phoenix, *Alpha Zulu* (Loyauté/Glassnote)

The Smile, *A Light for Attracting Attention* (XL)

Steve Lacy, *Gemini Rights* (L-M/RCA/Sony)

Sunglaciers, *Subterranea* (Mothland)

Wet Leg, *Wet Leg* (Domino)

BEST CONCERT

Phoebe Bridgers at Parc Jean-Drapeau, June 8

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

I don't know how any musical disappointment can possibly top the sexual misconduct allegations against Arcade Fire's Win Butler. As a longtime massive fan of his and of the band, the news hit me like a bomb, and I'm still struggling to collect my thoughts about it months later. Between this and the six counts of sexual assault charged against Rex Orange County, plus the anti-Semitic and/or right-wing dumbfuckery of both Kanye West and M.I.A. (both of whom took photos alongside Candace Owens this year), 2022 really was a massive bummer as far as being disappointed by artists I once adored.

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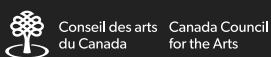
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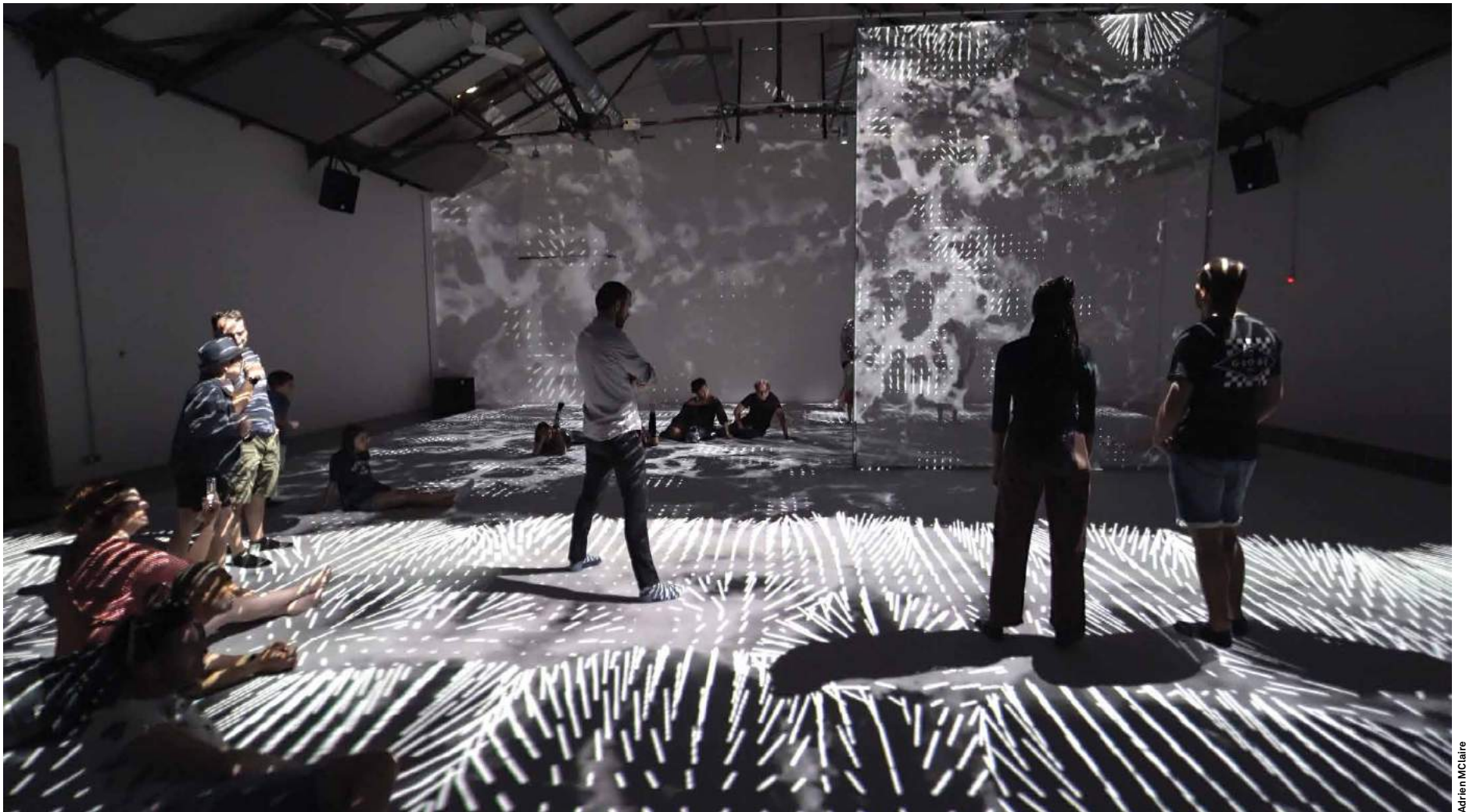


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Montréal

The beginning and the end



Adrien McClaire

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

For Claire Bardainne and Adrien Mondot, the birth of their second child was an especially pivotal time – just a few weeks after the death of Bardainne’s father.

As she and her family spread his ashes, she could feel the new life growing inside her, kicking at the confines of the womb. This was the catalyst that led them to consider a tricky question.

As Mondot puts it: “What is the sensation of passing from not living to living, and from living to dying?” How is it experienced, at the most basic level of our being?

With *Dernière minute*, a piece they co-created that is showing now at PHI Centre, they attempt to answer that question.

In a 30-minute work of film and sound, projected onto the walls and floor of a closed, inviting room, the piece invokes those sensations of our first and last moments alive, and serves as a reminder that our end isn’t really the end, in a sense.

“It’s an experience, first and foremost, an experience that we lived through and that we wanted to share and transmit,” says Mondot.

Mondot and Bardainne developed this installation through their company, Adrien M & Claire B, through which they collaborate with many others to accomplish projects like *Dernière minute*.

Viewers are free to move around the room as they please while the artwork is running, and it includes an interactive component as well — the piece reacts to the movement of the audience through the space. Walk, run, dance, sit, play; you are free to experience the moment in whichever way feels best.

“We decided to bring the reactive component into the piece to say to the audience ‘Look, this piece is for you, you are a part of it,’” says Mondot.

We as humans are made up of the same things as the earth, the plants, the air. We are a drop of rain, or the spark of a fire. The elements in their smallest, most primitive form feature prominently in the piece. They are what constitutes us, after all.

“I love when families come and bring their children. The parents are shy about the reactive component of the piece, but the kids just run with it. I think it’s more fun to watch the kids playing than to play yourself.”

While Bardainne is a visual artist, Mondot’s practice sits at an intersection between art and technological innovation. Some of the video we see in *Dernière minute* was recorded with a camera, and some of it was created artificially using computer-generated programs.

At the same time as the footage plays, a soundscape composed by Olivier Mellano plays. Working on the soundscape with Mellano informed the filmography and vice versa, Mondot explains. He and Bardainne wanted to reach a blending of the two, so the viewer can “see the music and

hear the images.”

Mellano rose to the occasion and lived up to their “crazy intentions,” according to Mondot.

As a piece that reflects on and celebrates life, families are welcome and encouraged to attend. For the holiday season, PHI is offering \$10 entry for kids under 12.

To bring another dimension to this piece, some showings are accompanied by a live performance within the space. There are three sessions per day on Dec. 3 and 17, Jan. 14 and Feb. 11 that will be enhanced by live performers dancing to the immersive piece.

If the experience of *Dernière minute* fosters a sense of connection with the earth, with those of have passed and those yet to come, then Mondot and Bardainne will have accomplished their goal.

“What I hope sticks with people when they leave is how crazy it is that we are all living here in this world,” says Mondot. “That every single atom in our bodies existed before our lifetime, and they will continue to exist afterwards, in a different form. And that we came from the earth, yes, but before that, the atoms in our bodies are the remnants of distant stars, long since gone.

“In this time where people are at war, and the end of humanity might not be that far away, we need to find reasons to say, ‘You know what? It was worth it to be here while we were.’”

→ *Dernière minute* is on at PHI Centre (315 St-Paul) through March 5.

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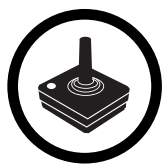


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: game jam



BY NATALIA YANCHAK

Winter is inarguably the best time to stay inside and play video games. Besides, all the forced family and friend interactions over the holidays could always benefit from some ice-breaking cooperative gaming.

Couch or local co-op games are games that are played on a single system, where players have to be physically in the same room. These games generally fall into two categories: games where you have to cooperate to complete a task (think *Heavenly Bodies*, *Overcooked*, *Heave Ho* or *Snipperclips*) and adversarial games, which are generally battle games like *Gang Beasts*, *Brawlhalla* or *Stick Fight*.

With winter setting in, my 10-year-old asked to download *Ultimate Chicken Horse*. Having never played this game, I abided. It hit a lot of the things we like in couch co-op: single screen, problem solving, strategy and, most importantly, customisable cute animals.

Ultimate Chicken Horse is not a new game. Released by Montreal indie studio Clever Endeavour back in 2016, it's a "party platformer game where you build the level as you play, placing traps and hazards to screw your friends over, but trying not to screw yourself." But it's really this balance of having to play *with* and *against* each other at the same time that sets the game apart.

When I spoke to one of Clever Endeavour's studio founders, Richard Atlas, about *Ultimate Chicken Horse*, he echoed this sentiment. "It's that core game loop where players have to build the level, try and run through it, and then build the level again. And the key there is: how do I make the level hard enough that it's too hard for (my) friends but easy enough for (me)."

Atlas is quite modest about the game's trajectory. When asked about the game "blowing up," he responded: "If it has blown up, I'll take that." However, using the highly speculative Boxleiter method (a calculation based on the number of reviews a title has received on Steam), *Ultimate Chicken Horse* has sold over a million copies on Steam alone.

"The game launched in March 2016 and during the first (Steam) Summer Sale, which was June or July, we saw a big uptick." It helped that *Ultimate Chicken Horse* had some heavyweight Twitch streamers and YouTubers playing the

game. This includes the likes of Markiplier, Ssundee, Spanish Youtuber ElChurches and more recently, Socksfor1 and Slogo. In their first year, the visibility on *Ultimate Chicken Horse* was huge. Atlas notes that "baseline sales went up, and by the (December 2016 Steam) Winter Sale we saw a much bigger spike and it just kept kind of growing from there."

Understandably Atlas was tight-lipped when asked about what Clever Endeavour is working on next. "From 2019 to 2022, we would work for half the year on new projects and then work maybe less than half the year on a new update." Switching between prototyping and *Ultimate Chicken Horse* has allowed the team to put out at least one update every year since its launch in 2016. "It's tricky because we need to make sure the community understands that we do have to work on other things."

If you like playing games with your kids, or feel like asking grandma to pick up a Joy-Con, *Ultimate Chicken Horse* is a definite recommendation. It's also not much of a time sink, and after about an hour it gets a bit grindy. Luckily well-paced level and character unlocks, combined with a trove of updates and community levels, have kept us coming back to this title.

What are Atlas's favourite couch co-op games? "From the beginning-beginning, it was playing N64 games with friends, *Mario Kart* especially, and *Mario Tennis*." He also said the Clever Endeavour team played a lot of *TowerFall*, *Move or Die*, *Duck Game* and *Treadnauts* when researching for UCH. But his latest recommendation? The recently released *King of the Hat*, made by Hat Games here in Montreal, that's been described as a single-button Super Smash Bros.



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On Screen



Avatar: The Way of Water



Babylon



I Wanna Dance With Somebody



The Whale

BY JUSTINE SMITH

Nearly a decade after smashing every box-office record with the first *Avatar*, James Cameron's *Avatar: The Way of Water* (Dec. 16) finally hits screens this holiday season. With some not-too-covert ecological themes, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) now lives with his family on the planet of Pandora. With the island in peril, Jake must work with Neytiri and the army of the Na'vi race to protect their planet. If the relatively sparse December release schedule is any indication, people are expecting this film to be as big a dominating force as the original.

One of the year's most controversial films, Darren Aronofsky's *The Whale* (Dec. 23), hits screens just in time for Christmas. Based on a play of the same name, the film is about an obese English teacher and his attempts to reconnect with his estranged teenage daughter. The film has been accused of being miserabilist and fat-phobic by its detractors and embraced as transcendent by its fans. Everyone seems to agree, though, that Brendan Fraser gives one of the best performances of the year.

The other big auteur vision hitting screens this month is Damien Chazelle's *Babylon* (Dec. 23), starring Margot Robbie, Brad Pitt and Tobey Maguire (among others). Set amid the excess of 1920s Hollywood, before the stock-market crash, and built around vignettes following multiple characters, the film portrays Hollywood as a land of drugs, ambition and unbridled decadence.

For those who look to December for some holiday carnage, *Violent Night* (Dec. 2) is just for you. David Harbour stars as Santa Claus in this bloody action-comedy. When a group of mercenaries attack the estate of a wealthy family, Santa Claus must step in to save the day (and Christmas).

If ultraviolent Christmas movies aren't your thing and you want something the whole family can enjoy, there's *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (Dec. 21). With a bit of an animation makeover, the beloved Shrek character Puss in Boots returns to the big screen after a long hiatus. Our titular feline has exhausted nearly all of his lives and is ready for a peaceful retirement, which turns out to be not so peaceful.

While many of the Oscar heavy hitters have already been released, there are still some to come. Sam Mendes's *Empire of Light* (Dec. 9) is yet another love story to the movies. Starring Olivia Colman, the film is a complicated romance set in and around an old cinema on the South Coast of England in the 1980s.

In any other year, Will Smith might have been considered a strong candidate for a best actor nomination, but after the

slap (followed by a Best Actor win)... it seems unlikely. His new film *Emancipation* (Dec. 2 in theatres and Dec. 9 on Apple TV+) is inspired by the true story of an enslaved man who risks his life to escape and return to his family.

Reviews aren't out yet for the Whitney Houston biopic *I Wanna Dance With Somebody* (Dec. 21). The references to the writers of *Bohemian Rhapsody* in the trailer don't necessarily bode well, but from a purely popular cinema perspective, *Rhapsody* cleaned up at the box office. Naomi Ackie, who played Jannah in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*, plays the lead role.

With *White Noise* (Dec. 2), Noah Baumbach (*Marriage Story*) adapts a novel by Don DeLillo — an almost Herculean task. *White Noise* dramatizes a contemporary American family's attempts to deal with the mundane conflicts of everyday life while grappling with the universal mysteries of love, death and the possibility of happiness in an uncertain world. The film stars Greta Gerwig, Adam Driver and Don Cheadle.

There are lots of documentaries on the horizon, too. Luca Guadagnino follows up *Bones and All* with *Salvatore: Shoemaker of Dreams* (Dec. 2) about the life of Italian shoemaker Salvatore Ferragamo, who created shoes for Hollywood stars and iconic films during the silent era. Concordia alumnus Jacquelyn Mills releases her meditative portrait of Sable Island, *Geographies of Solitude* (Dec. 16). H el ene Choquette's *Une histoire sur le go t de la langue* (Dec. 9), examines the evolution and diversity of the French language in Quebec.

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