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2023



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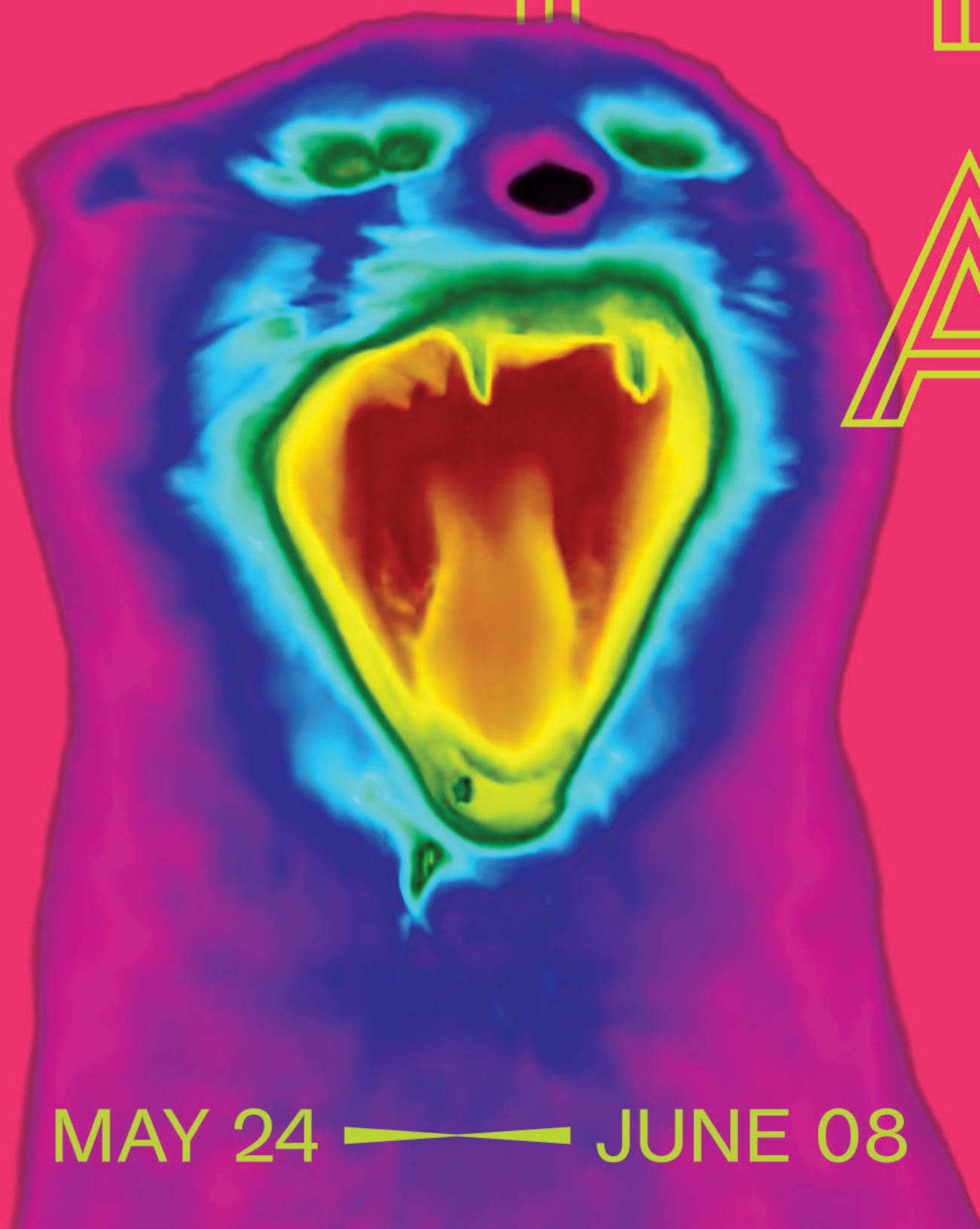
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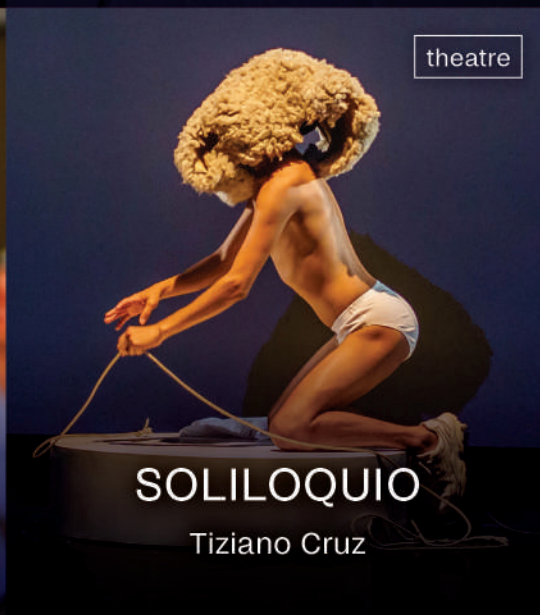
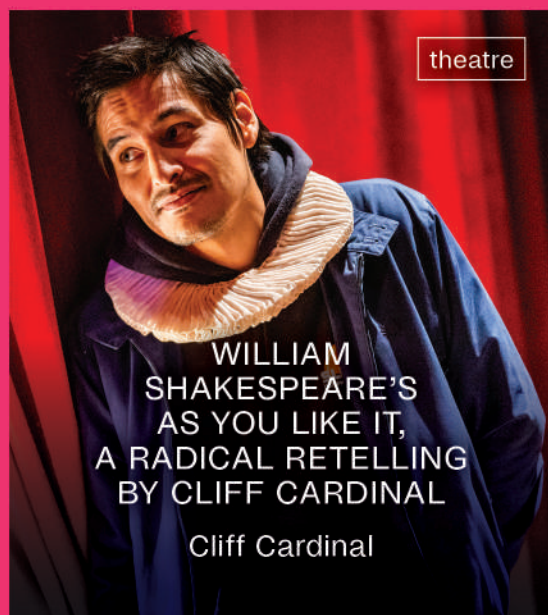
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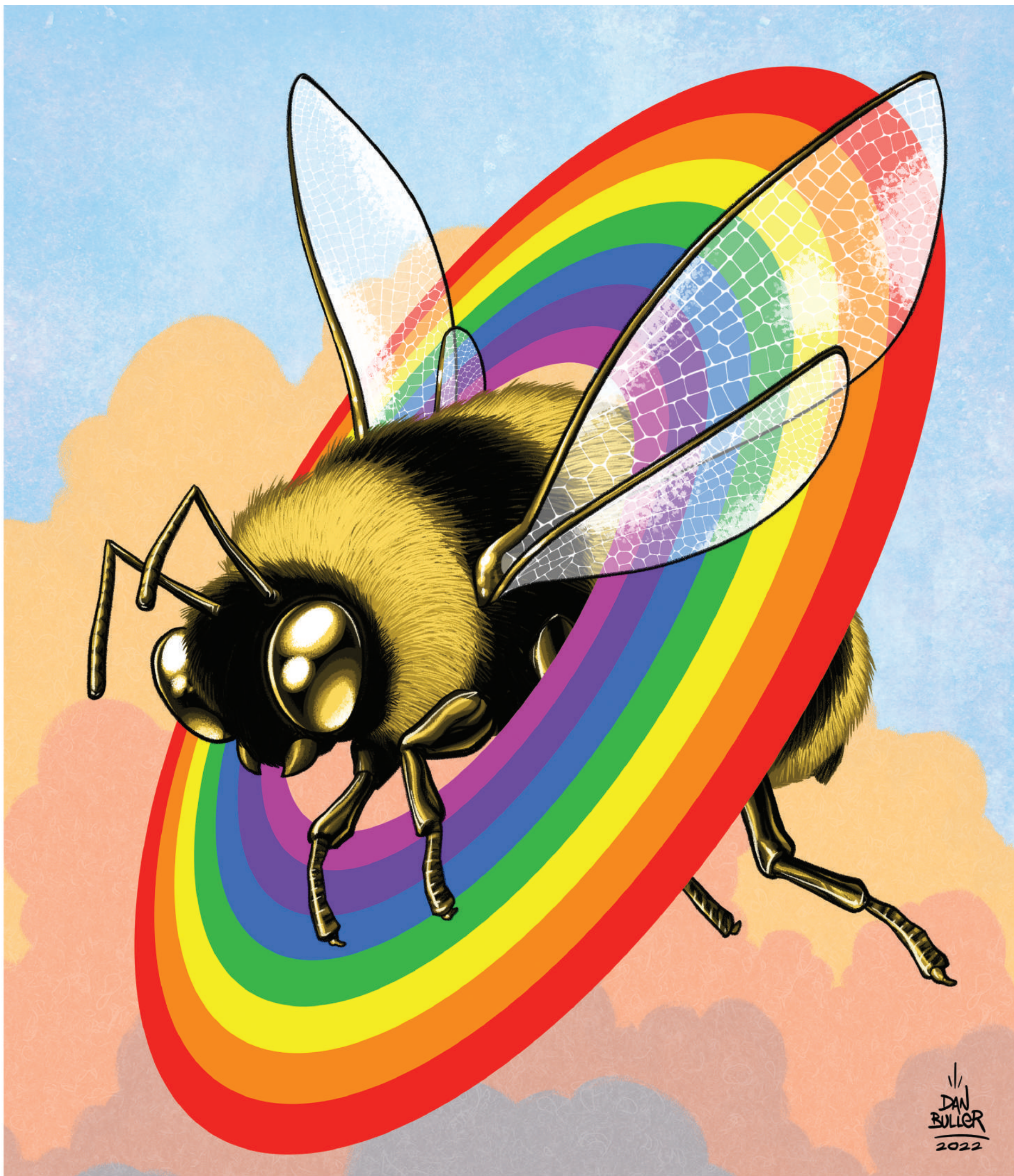
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Montréal



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Cult MTL is...



Sugar Sammy, on the cusp of launching his You're Gonna Rire 2 tour, was once again voted #1 Best Comedian in the Best of MTL readers poll.

Cover photo by Jocelyn Michel

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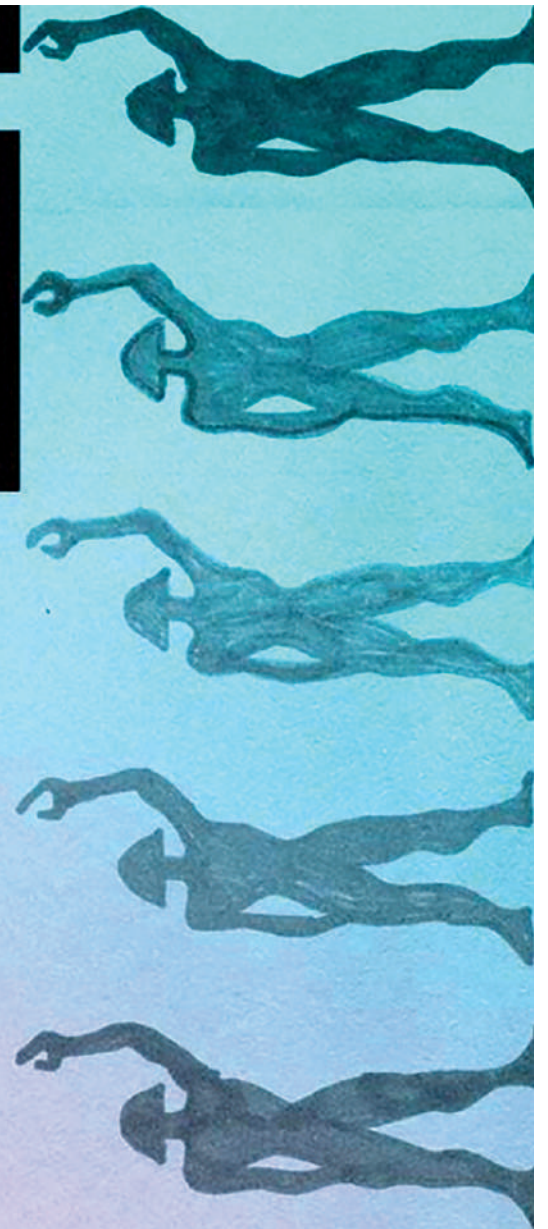
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05.04

ANABASINE + VERY J (NYC)

05.05

PRETTY PRIVILEGE
+ JAMES BENJAMIN

05.06

NUMEA DAZE + MAYALABAE

05.10

WENDING NIGHT (18H-21H)

N10.AS PRESENTS: LORENZO
BELLI'S RADIO SHOW FOR
EVERYONE (21H-1H)

05.11

ISA BOOM + TORRENTINO

05.12

LOOSE SCREWS : MARK
KNEKELHUIS + ALIX FERNZ
(LIVE) + PULSUP & KARAN (LIVE)

05.13

COZMIO PRESENTS :
AUTOMATICA MORE

05.17

JESSE MAC CORMACK EP
LAUNCH

05.18

WASA BIBI'S B-DAY BASH
W/ HUA LI + JULIEN

05.19

FERIAS PRESENTS :
GUTHRIE + ALINA + DERSY

05.20

FOFO PRESENTS : MOTHER ELLE
BARBARA'S B-DAY BASH

05.23

FAR IN WITH ON ONE

05.24

N10.AS PRESENTS :
FAUX SOMNULETS

05.25

SAUDADE

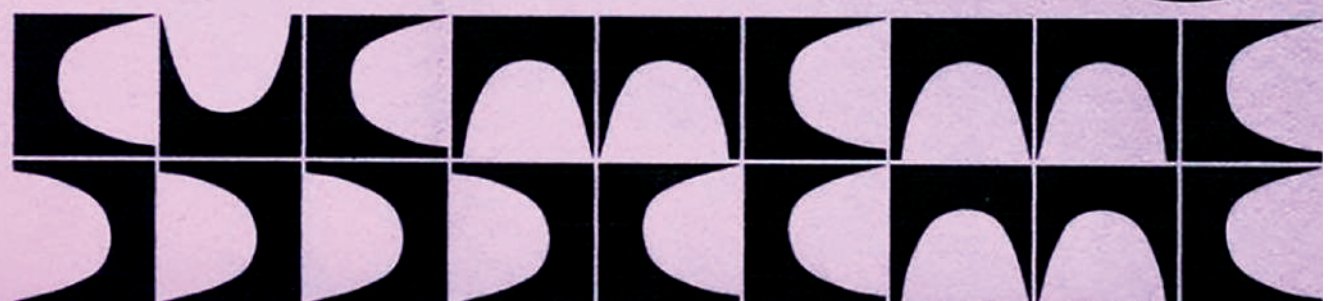
05.26

BÉZIER
(DARK ENTRIES, MIV. RECORDS)

05.27

CADENCE WEAPON

N10.AS



SYSTEME

7119 RUE SAINT-HUBERT



And the city has spoken.

Over the past four months, *Cult MTL* readers and other citizens who are invested in civic pride voted for their favourite Montreal things in the annual Best of MTL poll.

Most Montrealers have spent the past year emerging from their homes and their bubbles post-pandemic, enjoying the things that some people said would never be the same again. Some things have changed, some people are still in self-imposed isolation, but as Montreal has come back to life, this poll has served as a cheering section, a reminder, a connection to what we missed and what we're experiencing again after a lot of time away. So many of the things that make this city great have returned over the past year, and the upcoming festival season holds the promise of even more to celebrate — as summer in Montreal always does.

Here at *Cult MTL*, we're grateful for all our readers and all the voters who took the time to think about everything they love in this city to fill out this poll. As always, it's our mandate to salute the artists, promoters, organizers, reporters, restaurateurs and retailers who keep Montreal's heart beating.

The Best of MTL poll is open and democratic, with no editorial influence or interference. We are always glad to see so many people make an event of voting via social media campaigns, and while we love seeing third-party get-out-the-vote tweets, we remain neutral during the polling period.

Ballot-stuffing is automatically weeded out by our survey software. This year there were loads of votes for columnist and social media personality Murphy Cooper, comedian/radio host Julian Bernatchez, local label On A Roll Records (and friends), comedian Zak Kik and jack-of-all-trades Rocko Paolo in way too many categories.

Cult MTL has been running the Best of MTL readers poll for over a decade, but it bears mentioning that the survey follows in the tradition established by city's defunct but fondly remembered alt-weekly newspaper the *Mirror*. Respect.

Our website cultmtl.com will feature all the individual categories in this poll over the course of the year, showcasing every winner in all the Top 5s.

We thank everyone who voted and promoted the poll. Participation continues to grow every year, making the 2023 results more representative of the city than ever.

(Anglos, if you're wondering why you don't recognize some names in these lists, it's because the other 70 per cent of the population is now voting in a bilingual poll. Francos, désolé, les résultats sont unilingues.)

To all the winners: congratulations.

More than ever, we're proud to bring you the Best of MTL.

People & Places

After NDG stole the Best Neighbourhood crown from Mile End last year, we have another first in this category in 2023: Verdun is #1! This win is most likely due to a convergence of a) ever-growing Best of MTL support for the neighbourhood's explosion of restaurants, bars, shops and personalities, and b) the recent media splurge-fest naming Verdun one of the coolest neighbourhoods in the world. But as much as this poll is about love, one thing that can always be counted on in this city is driver angst. The fact that so many people voted for potholes in Most Urgent Political/Social Cause and orange cones/construction in Most Heinous Scandal suggests that priorities need to shift and/or that things like télétravail, school buses and, uh, public transit ought to be considered by drivers to reduce this particular subset of road rage.

Hottest Montrealer

- 1. Justin Trudeau
- 2. Charlotte Cardin
- 3. Audrey Ivory
- 4. Sugar Sammy
- 5. Kayleigh Choiniere

Best-Dressed Montrealer

- 1. Murphy Cooper
- 2. Kayleigh Choiniere
- 3. Jay du Temple
- 4. Tranna Wintour
- 5. Da Angry Demon

Coollest Montreal Company

- 1. Ubisoft
- 2. Moment Factory
- 3. Lightspeed
- 4. Lufa Farms
- 5. Spooks & Spanks

Best Sports Personality

- 1. Carey Price
- 2. Cole Caufield
- 3. P.K. Subban
- 4. Nick Suzuki
- 5. Laurent Duvernay-Tardif

Tackiest Personality

- 1. François Legault
- 2. Céline Dion
- 3. Valérie Plante

- 4. Mado Lamotte
- 5. Justin Trudeau

Best Weirdo

- 1. Dan Marin
- 2. Julien Bernatchez
- 3. Zak Kik
- 4. Natacha Nebula
- 5. Uma Gahd

Most Urgent Political/Social Cause

- 1. Affordable housing / homelessness
- 2. Climate crisis
- 3. Black Lives Matter
- 4. Trans rights
- 5. Potholes

Best Politician

- 1. Valérie Plante
- 2. Manon Massé
- 3. Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois
- 4. Justin Trudeau
- 5. Balarama Holness

Slimiest Politician

- 1. François Legault
- 2. Justin Trudeau
- 3. Valérie Plante
- 4. Denis Coderre
- 5. Éric Duhaime

Most Heinous Scandal

- 1. AirBNB fire in Old Montreal
- 2. Orange cones / construction

- 3. COVID-19
- 4. Bill 96
- 5. REM

Best Neighbourhood

- 1. Verdun
- 2. NDG
- 3. Plateau
- 4. Mile End
- 5. Saint-Henri / Sud-Ouest
- 6. Rosemont-Petite-Patrie
- 7. Hochelaga
- 8. Villeray
- 9. Little Italy
- 10. Parc Ex



Samantha Blake

"As someone who adores our fabulous and sometimes infuriating city, it's always the biggest honour to be recognized by my fellow Montrealers. PS. I'm thinking about running for mayor in the next mayoral election, so keep those votes coming!" —Tranna Wintour, #2 Best TV Personality, #3 Best Twitter, #4 Best-dressed Montrealer

Best Park

- 1. Parc La Fontaine
- 2. Mount Royal Park
- 3. Jarry Park
- 4. Jeanne-Mance Park
- 5. Girouard Park

Best Place to Have Public Sex

- 1. Mount Royal Park / Cemetery
- 2. The Wiggle Room washrooms
- 3. Angrignon Park
- 4. Parc La Fontaine
- 5. Jarry Park

Best Tourist Attraction

- 1. Old Port
- 2. Mount Royal
- 3. Le Saint Motel
- 4. Biodôme
- 5. Botanical Gardens

Best Instagram Spot

- 1. Old Port
- 2. Le Saint Motel
- 3. Mount Royal
- 4. Belvédère Kondiaronk
- 5. Orange Julep

Best Metro Station

- 1. Lionel-Groulx
- 2. Berri-UQAM
- 3. Mont-Royal
- 4. Place-des-Arts
- 5. McGill

Media

Montreal's classic rock behemoth CHOM 97.7FM has taken the Best Radio Station mantle back from Concordia University's CJLO1690AM this year. But CJLO continues to fare well in that category at #2, while its show *The Gigi Brown Experience* made #1 Best Radio Show and its titular host came in at #2 in Best Radio Host — a category won for the first time by CHOM's Jason Rockman. Other firsts include latter-day Quebec TV vedette Tranna Wintour and comedian Arnaud Soly popping up in the Best TV Personality category (at #2 and #4, respectively), a debut for true crime in the Best Podcast category, with *Côté Sombre* sneaking in at #5, and the new category Best OnlyFans, led unsurprisingly by topless UQAM-girl turned porn-adjacent starlet Hélène Boudreau. And once again, big gratitude to our readers for voting us #1 Best Magazine, #1 Best Website and #2 Best Twitter!

Best Radio Station

- 1. CHOM 97.7FM
- 2. CJLO 1690AM
- 3. CKUT 90.3FM
- 4. The Beat 92.5
- 5. 95.9 Virgin Radio

Best Radio Show

- 1. *The Gigi Brown Experience* (CJLO 1690AM)
- 2. *The Andrew Carter Morning Show* (CJAD 800)
- 3. *Morning Detour* (CKUT 90.3FM)



"Wow. I'm really touched by this. I have been a radio listener since as far back as I can remember. Listening to radio giants like Too Tall, Paul Beuregard and Terry DiMonte on CHOM in the early days. Then falling in love with Picard on 99.9 The Buzz in the 90's. They all had something special. I still pinch myself that they let me in the building and pay me to play rock 'n' roll. It's a dream come true. Thanks Montreal for the pat on the back. Radio can be very lonely when you are talking alone in a room. Nice to see you're listening!" —Jason Rockman, #1 Best Radio Host (for CHOM 97.7FM, #1 Best Radio Station)

- 4. *Puisqu'il faut se lever avec Paul Arcand* (98.5 Montréal)
- 5. *Ashes to Ashes* (CJLO 1690AM)

Best Radio Host

- 1. Jason Rockman
- 2. Gigi Brown
- 3. Vinny Barruco
- 4. Paul Arcand
- 5. Mitch Melnick

Best Podcast

- 1. *Mike Ward Sous Écoute*
- 2. *Reference Point*
- 3. *A Very Serious Show*
- 4. *Chopvision*
- 5. *Côté Sombre*

Best TV Station

- 1. CTV
- 2. CBC
- 3. Radio-Canada
- 4. Global
- 5. TVA

Best Newscaster

- 1. Mutsumi Takahashi
- 2. Céline Galipeau
- 3. Patrice Roy
- 4. Laura Casella
- 5. Maya Johnson

Best TV Personality

- 1. Mutsumi Takahashi
- 2. Tranna Wintour
- 3. Véronique Cloutier

- 4. Arnaud Soly
- 5. Jean-René Dufort

Best Magazine

- 1. *Cult MTL*
- 2. *Also Cool Mag*
- 3. *Maisonneuve*
- 4. *Elle Québec*
- 5. *Urbania*

Best Newspaper

- 1. *The Gazette*
- 2. *Le Devoir*
- 3. *Journal de Montréal*
- 4. *Journal Métro*
- 5. *24 heures*

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MAYDAY

May 3-4-5 — 7 p.m.

Winner of the Grand Prix
de la danse de Montréal 2021

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Photo: © Frédéric Veilleux

LES LIMITES INFINIES DE LA PEAU

CAROLINE LAURIN-BEAUCAGE
Lorganisme

May 10-11-12 — 7 p.m.
May 13 — 4 p.m.

A living laboratory

LES MONDES PARALLÈLES

CATHERINE GAUDET

May 17-18-19 — 7 p.m.
May 20 — 4 p.m.

An exceptional duet

Photo: © Julie Artacho

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"Wow. Merci d'avoir voté pour moi dans les catégories meilleur comédien, meilleure personnalité télé et meilleur Instagram. En tant que Montréalais d'origine, c'est un honneur de faire partie de cette liste mythique!" —Arnaud Soly, #2 Best Comedian, #2 Best Instagram, #4 Best TV Personality

—



NOI²⁴ STOP²⁴

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OF NIGHTLIFE
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GRAND QUAY
OF THE PORT
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Greene

Kiernan
Laveaux

Randomer

Tigerhead

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dileta b2b
Lis Dalton

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Lia Plutonic

Quan & James
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Ramzilla

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Nightlife

If you'd told me five years ago that Champs would dominate three categories in the Best of MTL Nightlife section in 2023, I would've assumed that the Montreal scene had gone post-apocalyptic — which is somewhat true, but it's the new management's maintenance of the sports-bar vibe and addition of lesbians, *Drag Race* and DJs that has raised the temperature of this longstanding St-Laurent Blvd. bar. Despite the size of Montreal's anglo community, the support for new(ish) venues, multi-purpose spaces and fresh recurring events in the Best Comedy Club and Best Comedy Night categories reflects the vibrancy of the scene, confirming that Montrealers don't have to wait for big festivals to come around to enjoy some solid stand-up. And congrats to the recently relocated alt-enclave Cabaret Berlin and uptown Arbutus Records-affiliated resto-bar-club Système for making the Best Club list for the first time, at #5 and #4, respectively.



"It is a huge honour to be featured on this list, and to be recognized for my work. Montreal is an epicentre of world class burlesque and it means the world to me to hold this special place in my community. Montreal, thank you for supporting the arts and my work, and for voting! I hope I get to keep entertaining you for many more years to come!" —LouLou la Duchesse de Rièrre, #1 Best Burlesque Performer

Best Bartender

- 1. Ram Krishnan (Grumpy's)
- 2. Kat Anderson (Champs)
- 3. Alex Morris (The Wiggle Room)
- 4. Zach Oskrdal (Hurley's)
- 5. Sergio da Silva (Turbo Haüs)

Best Bar

- 1. Champs
- 2. Turbo Haüs
- 3. Grumpy's
- 4. Hurley's
- 5. Bar de Courcelle

Best Sleazy Dive

- 1. Barfly
- 2. Champs

3. Grumpy's

- 4. Café Cléopâtre
- 5. Turbo Haüs

Best Wine Bar

- 1. Buvette Pompette
- 2. vinvinvin
- 3. Pullman
- 4. Buvette Chez Simone
- 5. Le Plongeur

Best Club

- 1. Stereo
- 2. Club Unity
- 3. Rouge
- 4. Système
- 5. Cabaret Berlin

Best Terrasse

- 1. Terrasse St-Ambroise
- 2. Terrasse Nelligan
- 3. Hurley's
- 4. Turbo Haüs
- 5. Terrasse Bonsecours

Best Live Music Venue

- 1. MTELUS
- 2. Turbo Haüs
- 3. Corona Theatre
- 4. Bell Centre
- 5. Foufounes Électriques

Best Promoter

- 1. Evenko
- 2. Blue Skies Turn Black

3. Extensive Enterprise

- 4. Rickey D Events
- 5. Kickdrum

Best Strip Club

- 1. Café Cléopâtre
- 2. Club Wanda's
- 3. Chez Parée
- 4. Cabaret les Amazones
- 5. Cabaret Kingdom

Best LGBT Club / Bar

- 1. Champs
- 2. Notre Dame des Quilles
- 3. Club Unity
- 4. Cabaret Mado
- 5. Bar le Cocktail

Best Burlesque Performer

- 1. Lou Lou La Duchesse de Rièrre
- 2. Audrey Ivory
- 3. Joy Rider
- 4. Roxy Torpedo
- 5. Scarlett James

Best Drag King or Queen

- 1. Rita Baga
- 2. Gisèle Lullaby
- 3. Uma Gahd
- 4. Mona de Grenoble
- 5. Barbada

Best Bowling Alley

- 1. Quilles G plus Rose Bowl
- 2. Notre Dame des Quilles
- 3. Laurentian Lanes
- 4. Darling Bowling
- 5. Quilles G plus Le Forum

Best Comedy Club

- 1. Comedy Nest
- 2. 3rd Floor Comedy Club
- 3. Le Bordel Comédie Club
- 4. Diving Bell Social Club
- 5. Brass Door Pub

Best Comedy Night

- 1. Kickback MTL
- 2. The World’s Smallest Comedy Night
- 3. Laval’s Got Jokes
- 4. Best of Saturdays at 3rd Floor Comedy Club
- 5. Stand Up Comedy in Girouard Park

Best Karaoke Bar

- 1. Pang Pang Karaoke
- 2. Champs
- 3. 3 Minots
- 4. Le Date Karaoke
- 5. Notre Dame des Quilles

Best Recreational Drug

- 1. Cannabis
- 2. MDMA
- 3. Mushrooms
- 4. Cocaine
- 5. Ketamine

Best Cocktail Bar

- 1. Le 4e Mur
- 2. Atwater Cocktail Club
- 3. Cloakroom
- 4. Snowbird Tiki Bar
- 5. Bar le Record



Cindy Lopez

“Champs would like to thank the #1 Best Bar clientèle in Montreal and our amazing team for helping us build a vibrant, queer-friendly community over the past year and a half. We hope to continue hosting the wildest nights in town for years to come!” —Rob Jennings, General Manager at Champs, #1 Best Bar, #1 Best LGBT Bar, #2 Best Bartender (Kat Anderson, pictured), #2 Best Sleazy Dive

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MAY 19-21



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Music

Well, a certain local-ish band that's been embroiled in scandal has slipped down (but not off) the Best Band list to #3 this year, making way for perennial runner-ups the Damn Truth and Half Moon Run to move on up to #1 and #2, respectively. Backxwash retains an iron grip on both the Freakiest and Heaviest categories, but slips to #2 in Best Hip Hop Act, where Mike Shabb makes his debut at #1. The Best Club DJ category has experienced a bit of an overhaul, with only DJ Blaster remaining from last year's Top 5, making way for new alt-scene faves Syana Barbara and Mint Simon as well as the renowned Poirier and multidisciplinary artist Glowzi. And congrats to Dominique-Fils Aimé for graduating from #4 to #1 in Best Jazz Act, to Charlotte Cardin for taking the #1 spot in Best Singer-songwriter and to On A Roll Records for winning Best Label.

Best Band

- 1. The Damn Truth
- 2. Half Moon Run
- 3. Arcade Fire
- 4. Strange Fruits
- 5. Hundred Footers

Freakiest Act

- 1. Backxwash
- 2. Screaming Demons
- 3. Hubert Lenoir
- 4. Big Sissy
- 5. Bad Uncle

Most Pretentious Act

- 1. Arcade Fire
- 2. Godspeed You! Black Emperor



"Stand free, just like jazz. It's always such an honour to be recognized for my art and I think it's a sign we should do more of what we need to express and less of what we think people want to hear and see. Please allow yourselves to create just like when you were kids: without self-judgement or focusing on the outcome. I promise it's worth it! We are all born creators. Thank you Cult MTL!" —Dominique Fils-Aimé, #1 Best Jazz Act

- 3. Hubert Lenoir
- 4. Bud Rice
- 5. Coeur de Pirate

Heaviest Act

- 1. Backxwash
- 2. Cell Press
- 3. Dopethrone
- 4. Tonnes
- 5. BIG|BRAVE

Best Hip Hop Act

- 1. Mike Shabb
- 2. Backxwash
- 3. Loud
- 4. Nate Husser
- 5. Strange Fruits

Best Club DJ

- 1. DJ Blaster
- 2. Syana Barabra
- 3. Poirier
- 4. Mint Simon
- 5. Glowzi

Best Electronic Act

- 1. Kaytranada
- 2. Turbine
- 3. Marie Davidson
- 4. Pelada
- 5. Jacques Greene

Best Country / Folk Act

- 1. Lil' Andy
- 2. Bud Rice
- 3. Bumarang
- 4. Ol' Savannah
- 5. Vanille

Best Jazz Act

- 1. Dominique Fils-Aimé
- 2. Colin Stetson
- 3. Backwater Township
- 4. Dave Gossage Septet
- 5. Urban Science

Best Singer-Songwriter

- 1. Charlotte Cardin
- 2. Patrick Watson
- 3. Bud Rice
- 4. Safia Nolin
- 5. Paul Cargnello

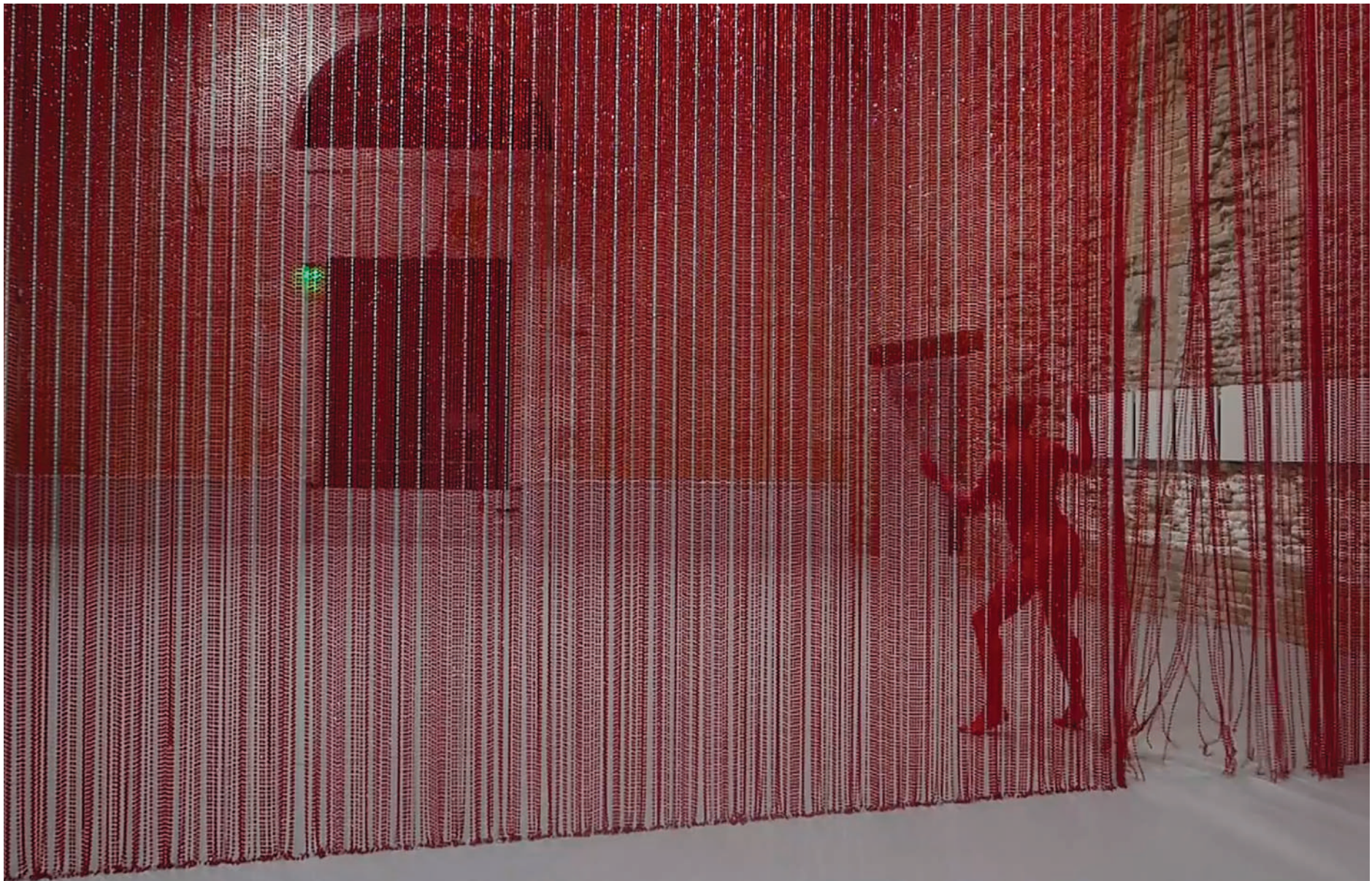
Best Label

- 1. On A Roll
- 2. Bonsound
- 3. Secret City
- 4. Constellation
- 5. Arbutus



Alocha Schneider

"Thank you to Cult MTL for this acknowledgment, I'm very touched. It's a pleasure to be recognized amongst these wonderful artists." —Charlotte Cardin, #1 Best Singer-songwriter, #2 Hottest Montrealer



LILI REYNAUD DEWAR

MAY 18 -
SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

MACM.ORG

 **MAC**

AT PLACE VILLE MARIE

Lili Reynaud-Dewar, *I Want All of the Above to Be the Sun (Dancing with Myself, Venice)* (still), 2018, single-channel video, colour, 15 min 39 s. - Artwork produced at the Punta della Dogana, Venice, during the exhibition *Dancing with Myself* - Works from the Pinault Collection, 2018. Artworks in the background: *Untitled (Blood)*, 1992, and *Untitled (7 Days of Bloodworks)*, 1991, by Felix Gonzales-Torres.

Film & Arts

Good on Sarah Watts and Mark Slutsky (#3 Best Filmmaker) and their queer coming-of-age (in a religious community) film *You Can Live Forever* (#2 Best Local Film of 2022–23), a big hit in the poll this year. Though the Film & Arts section has a lot of recurring #1s — namely Jay Baruchel, Denis Villeneuve, the MMFA, PHI Centre, Heather O'Neill, Aislin, Sugar Sammy, Ubisoft and the Jazz Fest — it's refreshing to see so many talented Best of MTL first-timers, like J-F Savaria (Best Photographer #1), École de Pensée (Best Fashion Designer #1), Kezna "Teenadult" Dalz (Best Visual Artist #2) and the #4 and #5 Best Actors Sophie Nélisse and Michael Mando, no doubt supported by voters for their extraordinary work on *Yellowjackets* and *Better Call Saul*, respectively. And congrats to the Concordia-based documentary lovers at Cinema Politica for making #1 in Best Film Screening Series, a category we've whittled down to exclusively showcase recurring movie events.



"They say whatever's bad for humanity is great for comedy, so I decided to come back to Quebec. This next year's gonna be fun." —Sugar Sammy, #1 Best Comedian, #4 Hottest Montrealer

Best Local Movie of 2022–2023

- 1. *The Dinner Party*
- 2. *You Can Live Forever*
- 3. *Viking*
- 4. *Le plongeur*
- 5. *Noémie dit oui*

Best Play

- 1. *Ciseaux*
- 2. *The Prom*
- 3. *Rome*
- 4. *What Rough Beasts*
- 5. *King Dave*

Best Dance Company

- 1. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens
- 2. Marie Chouinard
- 3. Rubber Band
- 4. East2West
- 5. Parts+Labour_Danse

Best Film Screening Series

- 1. Cinema Politica
- 2. Artloft Cinéma Soirée
- 3. Le CinéClub: The Film Society

Best Theatre Company

- 1. Centaur Theatre
- 2. Segal Centre
- 3. Mainline
- 4. Geordie
- 5. Théâtre du Nouveau Monde

Best Museum

- 1. Museum of Fine Arts
- 2. Pointe-à-Callière
- 3. Canadian Centre for Architecture
- 4. Musée d'Art Contemporain
- 5. McCord Stewart Museum

Best Gallery

- 1. PHI Centre
- 2. S16 Gallery
- 3. Arsenal Contemporary Art
- 4. Art Mûr
- 5. BBAM! Gallery

Best Multi-disciplinary Art Space

- 1. PHI Centre
- 2. MAI
- 3. Usine C
- 4. SAT
- 5. Diving Bell Social Club

Best Living Author

- 1. Heather O'Neill
- 2. Dany Laferrière
- 3. Michel Tremblay
- 4. Jean-Philippe Baril-Guérard
- 5. Michelle Franklin

Best Visual Artist

- 1. Miss Me
- 2. Kezna "Teenadult" Dalz
- 3. MONK.E
- 4. Julie Brown
- 5. Nico Williams

Best Photographer

- 1. J-F Savaria
- 2. Eric Branover
- 3. Marisa Parisella
- 4. Susan Moss
- 5. Richmond Lam

Best Cartoonist / Comic Artist

- 1. Aislin
- 2. Michel Rabagliati
- 3. Patrick Gauthier
- 4. Keenan Poloncsak
- 5. Andrina Learmonth

Best Comedian

- 1. Sugar Sammy
- 2. Arnaud Soly
- 3. Mike Ward
- 4. Ben Cardili
- 5. Zak Kik

Best Video Game Company

- 1. Ubisoft
- 2. WB Games
- 3. KO_OP
- 4. Behaviour Interactive
- 5. EA

Best Fashion Designer

- 1. École de Pensée
- 2. Denis Gagnon
- 3. Jennifer Glasgow
- 4. Ève Gravel
- 5. Lucas Stowe

Best Graffiti Artist/Crew

- 1. Stikki Peaches
- 2. MissMe
- 3. Kong
- 4. Squidgee
- 5. K6A

Best Festival

- 1. Jazz Fest
- 2. Just for Laughs
- 3. OSHEAGA
- 4. POP Montreal
- 5. Fringe Festival

Best Actor / Actress

- 1. Jay Baruchel
- 2. Karine Vanasse
- 3. Kelly Craig
- 4. Sophie Nélisse
- 5. Michael Mando

Best Filmmaker

- 1. Denis Villeneuve
- 2. Xavier Dolan
- 3. Sarah Watts & Mark Slutsky
- 4. Stéphane Lafleur
- 5. Adam Reider

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LAUNDRY OF LEGENDS II



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Water street ,	Manhattan	1
Coenties slip		2
Broad street		3
Broadway at Morris street		4
Dey street		5
Crosby street		7
21 st street		8
Washington street		9
25 th street		11
Broadway at 22 nd street		13
54 th street		15
United Nations Plaza		16
53 rd street		17
6 th Avenue		19
Park Avenue		21
54 th street		23
115 th street		25
23 rd street ,	Brooklyn	26
Gale Avenue ,	Brooklyn	27
38 th street ,	Brooklyn	29
40 th street ,	Brooklyn	31
27 th street ,	Brooklyn	33

Thomas Hunt 1984

THE LIVES OF DOCUMENTS
, PHOTOGRAPHY AS PROJECT

3 5 2023 - 3 3 2024



Lara Almarcegui, Lewis Baltz, Gabriele Basilico, Stefano Boeri, Bernd Becher, Hilla Becher, Lynne Cohen, Luigi Ghirri, Dan Graham, Jan Groover, Guido Guidi, Naoya Hatakeyama, Takashi Homma, Roni Horn, Douglas Huebler, Annette Kelm, Gert Jan Kocken, Aglaia Konrad, Susanne Kriemann, Sol LeWitt, Armin Linke, Ari Marcopoulos, Gordon Matta-Clark, Richard Misrach, Marianne Mueller, Bruce Nauman, Michael Schmidt, Thomas Struth, Tokuko Ushioda, Jeff Wall, Marianne Wex

Selected by Stefano Graziani and Bas Princen

Goods & Services

It's novel to find the vintage/vintage-inspired shop Kitsch'n Swell take the top spot in Best Clothing store, a place typically dominated by big international (or sometimes national) brands, though it's equally unusual to see the same store out of the Best Vintage list. As for brand new categories, congrats to Candy Nail Bar for winning Best Nail Salon, PEAU'ésie for winning Best Facial Treatments and (though it feels strange congratulating a chunk of ice, despite the number of people behind it) Montreal's answer to Rockefeller Center, Esplanade Tranquille, for winning Best Ice Skating Rink. New to the Best Bookstore list (and to the city) this year is Maktaba Bookshop, which came in at #5. New to the Best Jewellery Store category is Gold Grillz MTL, whose specialty is right there in their name — at #5, they round out a category that also includes Tiffany; nice to see some diversity in the bling department.



"PEAU'ésie is truly an extension of my love for skin and poetry intertwined, a conceptualized dream turned to reality. As I gear up to celebrate my one-year anniversary for PEAU this June, with every fibre in me, to every single guest that I've been able to pamper and those to come, thank you for recognizing me with this incredible honour of winning the Best Facial Treatment category in Montreal. It'll always be people before the products, and as I always say, PEAU is better with you in it. This is for us together." —Despina from PEAU'ésie, #1 Best Facial Treatments

Best Clothing Store (New)

- 1. Kitsch'n Swell
- 2. Simons
- 3. Uniqlo
- 4. Winners
- 5. Frank & Oak

Best Vintage Clothing Store

- 1. Boutique Eva B
- 2. Renaissance
- 3. Village des Valeurs
- 4. Tricky Inc.
- 5. Annex Vintage

Best Hair Salon

- 1. Salon Freyja
- 2. Danny's Coiffure Unisexe

- 3. Two Horses
- 4. Funky Toque
- 5. Bizarde

Best Barbershop

- 1. Blue Dog Barbershop
- 2. La Section
- 3. Salon Freyja
- 4. Savvy Barbershop
- 5. Au Barbershop

Best Tattoo Parlour

- 1. DFA Tattoos
- 2. Saving Grace Tattoo
- 3. Adrenaline
- 4. Locust Tattoo Collective
- 5. Studio Artease

Best Tattoo Artist

- 1. Aimee Boucher (Morning Gory)
- 2. Angus Byers (DFA Tattoos)
- 3. Ivelle Nightmare
- 4. Alex K'eh (Saving Grace)
- 5. Melissa Valiquette (DFA Tattoos)

Best New CD / Vinyl Store

- 1. Aux 33 Tours
- 2. Sunrise Records
- 3. Cheap Thrills
- 4. Le Vacarme
- 5. Phonopolis

Best Used CD / Vinyl Store

- 1. Cheap Thrills
- 2. Aux 33 Tours
- 3. Death of Vinyl
- 4. Encore Books & Records
- 5. PDonopolis

Best Musical Instrument Store

- 1. Steve's Music
- 2. Long & McQuade
- 3. Archambault
- 4. Jimi's Music Store
- 5. Twigg Musique

Best Internet Service Provider

- 1. Vidéotron
- 2. Fizz
- 3. Bell
- 4. EBOX
- 5. oxio

Best Electronics Store

- 1. Best Buy
- 2. The Source
- 3. Apple
- 4. Addison Électronique
- 5. Canada Computers

Best Movie Theatre

- 1. Cinéma Cineplex Forum & VIP
- 2. Cinéma du Parc
- 3. Cinéma Beaubien
- 4. Cinéma Banque Scotia Montréal
- 5. Cinéma Guzzo Méga-Plex Sphèrettech

Best Bicycle Shop

- 1. 514 BMX
- 2. BicyclesMcW
- 3. C&L Cycle
- 4. Bikurious
- 5. Cycle Paul

Best Ice Skating Rink

- 1. Esplanade Tranquille
- 2. Atrium Le 1000
- 3. Auditorium de Verdun
- 4. Parc La Fontaine
- 5. Beaver Lake

Best Bookstore (New)

- 1. Librairie Drawn & Quarterly
- 2. Indigo Books & Music
- 3. La Librairie de Verdun
- 4. Librairie St-Henri Books
- 5. Maktaba Bookshop


Best Bookstore (Used)

- 1. Encore Books & Records
- 2. The Word Bookstore
- 3. S.W. Welch
- 4. Phoenix Books
- 5. Cheap Thrills

Best Comics Store

- 1. Crossover Comics
- 2. Librairie Drawn & Quarterly
- 3. Capitaine Québec
- 4. 1,000,000 Comix
- 5. Librairie Planète BD

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Cheap Thrills, #1 Best Used CD / Vinyl Store #1, #3 Best New CD / Vinyl Store, #5 Best Bookstore (Used)

**Best Drug
Paraphernalia
Store**

- 1. Prohibition
- 2. Boutique Rock
- 3. Psychonaut
- 4. High Times
- 5. SQDC

**Best Fitness
Club/Gym**

- 1. Éconofitness
- 2. YMCA
- 3. Énergie Cardio
- 4. Midtown Athletic Club Sanctuaire
- 5. Sweat440

Best Yoga Studio

- 1. Modo Yoga
- 2. Naada Yoga
- 3. Ashtanga Yoga Montreal
- 4. ensō yoga
- 5. Idolem Hot Yoga Chaud

Best Nail Salon

- 1. Candy Nail Bar
- 2. Ongles Asiana
- 3. Joli Nails
- 4. My lil nailz fantasy
- 5. Château des ongles

**Best Massage
Spot**

- 1. Tan Jai
- 2. Bota Bota, spa sur l'eau
- 3. Strøm Spa Nordique
- 4. Ovarium
- 5. In Good Hands

Best Hotel

- 1. The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal
- 2. Hotel Nelligan
- 3. Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth
- 4. Four Seasons Montreal
- 5. Hotel William Grey

**Best Kitsch
/Antique Store**

- 1. Marché Underground
- 2. Marché aux Puces St-Michel
- 3. Kitsch'n Swell
- 4. Renaissance
- 5. KitschÀ l'Os... ou pas

Best Jewellery

- 1. Inchoo Bijoux
- 2. Tiffany & Co.
- 3. Maison Birks
- 4. Deux Lions
- 5. Gold Grillz MTL

Best Florist

- 1. Dragon Flowers
- 2. Westmount Florist
- 3. Fleuriste Monarque
- 4. Kyoto Fleurs
- 5. Art et Fleurs

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A family's struggle
in seeking asylum
to remain in Canada

IN THEATRES MAY 26

DESVÍO DE NOCHE

(NIGHT DETOUR)

A FILM BY
ARIANE FALARDEAU ST-AMOUR
AND PAUL CHOTEL

FESTIVAL DU
NOUVEAU CINÉMA
DE MONTREAL
compétition officielle 2022

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2022
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IN THEATRES THIS FALL

Food & Drink

As you'll see in his annual poll critique Resto Wrongs on p. 36, our Food Editor Clay Sandhu wasn't thrilled by the lack of evolution and adventure in this section this year (I can imagine, based on his recent scathing review, that seeing Au Pied de Cochon at the top of Best Fine Dining was especially egregious), but he also couldn't argue with the strength of many of the mainstays. Places like Portuguese chicken joint Ma Poule Mouillée, quintessential French restaurant l'Express, vegetarian go-to Aux Vivres, Mile End staple turned chain Café Olimpico, Middle Eastern specialists Falafel St. Jacques and St. Viateur Bagel (no disrespect to Fairmount) are always here for a reason. The new categories in this section are Best Dim Sum and Best Salad, so congrats to their respective winners Kam Fung and Mandy's, and welcome to all the very fresh establishments in the Best New Restaurant category.



"Every service, we're grateful for the chance to return some of the warmth Montrealers have shown us over the years. Especially given all the hardships our industry's endured over the last few years, we're just so happy to be a part of this city's culinary fabric." — Andrew Korstvedt, Chef de Cuisine at Nora Gray, #1 Best Italian

Best Chef

- 1. Danny Smiles
- 2. Antonio Park
- 3. Antonin Mousseau-Rivard
- 4. Johnny Hamilton
- 5. Massimo Piedmonte

Best New Restaurant

- 1. Buvette Pompette
- 2. Nomi
- 3. Cabaret l'Enfer
- 4. Anemone
- 5. Zaffran

Best New Food Trends

- 1. Korean
- 2. Arepas
- 3. Vegan
- 4. Ramen
- 5. Pizzaggetti

Most Beautiful Restaurant

- 1. Maison Boulud
- 2. Damas
- 3. Bar George
- 4. Nomi
- 5. Monarque

Restaurant With the Best Vibe

- 1. Keela
- 2. Bocadillo
- 3. Satay Brothers
- 4. Kyo Bar
- 5. Thésaurus Thérarium

Best Pub Grub

- 1. McKibbin's
- 2. Hurley's
- 3. Ye Olde Orchard
- 4. Burgundy Lion
- 5. Bishop & Bagg

Best Hotel Bar or Restaurant

- 1. KYO Bar Japonais
- 2. Terrasse Nelligan
- 3. Maison Boulud
- 4. Bar George
- 5. Marcus

Best Cheap Eats

- 1. Ma Poule Mouillée
- 2. Bocadillo
- 3. Nilufar
- 4. La Belle Province
- 5. Patati Patata

Best Fine Dining

- 1. Au Pied de Cochon
- 2. Île Flottante
- 3. Maison Boulud
- 4. Damas
- 5. Le Mousso

Best Late Night Eats

- 1. La Banquise
- 2. Harvey's
- 3. Boustan
- 4. McDonald's
- 5. L'Express

Best Breakfast / Brunch

- 1. Janine
- 2. Arthur's Nosh Bar
- 3. Régine
- 4. Bagel St-Lo
- 5. La Binerie Mont-Royal

Best Afternoon Tea

- 1. The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal
- 2. Cardinal Tea Room
- 3. Thésaurus Thérarium
- 4. Salon Rosie-Lanoi
- 5. Gryphon d'Or

Best Meal Kit Company

- 1. Good Food
- 2. Hello Fresh
- 3. Cookit
- 4. Menu Extra
- 5. WeCook

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Best Delivery App

- 1. Uber
- 2. Doordash
- 3. Skip the Dishes
- 4. Radish Coop
- 5. Amazon

Best Chinese Restaurant

- 1. Dobe & Andy
- 2. Mon Nan
- 3. Aunt Dai
- 4. Maison VIP
- 5. Kam Shing

Best Greek Restaurant

- 1. Estiatorio Milos
- 2. Marathon Souvlaki
- 3. Marven's
- 4. Panama
- 5. Arahova

Best Japanese Restaurant

- 1. Kazu
- 2. KYO Bar
- 3. Kyomi
- 4. Sushi Momo
- 5. Jun I

Best Mexican Restaurant

- 1. El Rey del Taco
- 2. Tacos Frida
- 3. Escondite
- 4. La Capital Tacos
- 5. 3 Amigos

Best African Restaurant

- 1. Queen of Sheba
- 2. Le Nil Bleu
- 3. East Africa

Best Eastern European/Russian Restaurant

- 1. Euro-Deli Batory
- 2. Stash Café
- 3. Avesta
- 4. Chez Anna

Best Indian Restaurant

- 1. India Rosa
- 2. Le Palais d'Ajit
- 3. Bombay Mahal
- 4. Classic India
- 5. Pushap

Best Korean Restaurant

- 1. Mon Ami
- 2. Luna
- 3. KUI
- 4. Comon
- 5. Chez Bong

Best Middle Eastern Restaurant

- 1. Damas
- 2. Boustan
- 3. Sumac
- 4. La Sirène de la Mer
- 5. Alep / Petit Alep

Best Caribbean Restaurant

- 1. Boom J's
- 2. Lloydie's
- 3. Caribbean Food Factory
- 4. Seasoned Dreams
- 5. Kwizinn

Best French Restaurant

- 1. L'Express
- 2. Au Pied de Cochon
- 3. Leméac
- 4. Maison Boulud
- 5. Vin Mon Lapin

Best Italian Restaurant

- 1. Nora Gray
- 2. Geppetto
- 3. Pasta Casareccia
- 4. Impasto
- 5. Pizzeria No. 900

Best Latin American Restaurant

- 1. Bocadillo
- 2. Sabor Latino
- 3. Arepera du Plateau
- 4. El Chalateco
- 5. La Carreta

Best Portuguese Restaurant

- 1. Casa Minhota
- 2. Ma Poule Mouillée
- 3. Viana
- 4. Romados
- 5. Chez Doval



Mirela's
MAGIC
PALACE



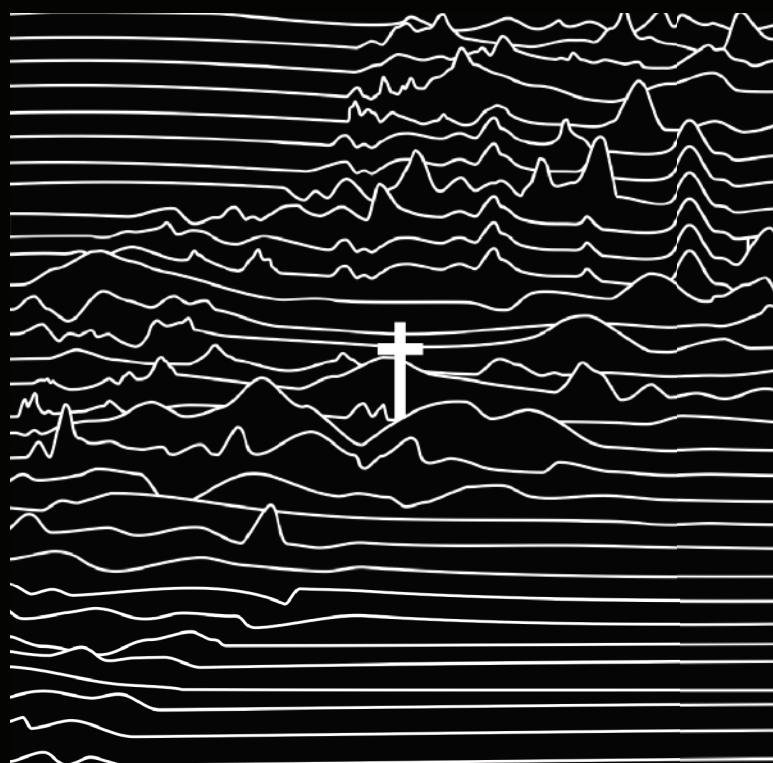
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MURRAY LIGHTBURN (the Dears) PRUE (Puberty Well)

THE NILS TJ Plenty & Paul Remington (Asexuals) Alec McElcheran
Jason Rockman (Slaves on Dope) Tina Trons & more ind surprise appearances!



“This award definitely means a lot to us. There are so many great Chinese restaurants in the city and to be voted by the people to be the top? It really warms our hearts that the public feels this way about us. There is a lot more work to do though. We strive to be better every day. Just want to give a shout-out to the team and we want to thank everybody who voted.” — Eric Ku, co-owner of Dobe & Andy, #1 Best Chinese

Clay Sandhu

Best Spanish Restaurant

- 1. Tapeo
- 2. Ibéricos
- 3. Tinc Set
- 4. Ibérica
- 5. La Croqueteria

Best Vietnamese Restaurant

- 1. Co Ut
- 2. Mi Bao
- 3. Pho Bang New York
- 4. Pho Bac 97
- 5. Pho Tay Ho

Best Burger

- 1. Notre-Boeuf-de-Grâce
- 2. Uniburger
- 3. Bocado
- 4. Burger de Ville
- 5. Harvey’s

Best Thai Restaurant

- 1. Pumpui
- 2. Pichai
- 3. Pamika
- 4. Thammada
- 5. Mae Sri

Best Bagel

- 1. St-Viateur
- 2. Fairmount
- 3. Wellington Bagels
- 4. Bagel St-Lo
- 5. Dizz’s Bagel & Deli

Best Chicken Wings

- 1. Buffalo Bill’s
- 2. La Cage
- 3. Cunningham’s Pub
- 4. Brass Door Pub
- 5. Hooters

Best Dim Sum

- 1. Kam Fung
- 2. Yum Yum Soupe Dumpling
- 3. Imperial
- 4. Ruby Rouge
- 5. Tong Por

Best Donut

- 1. Bernie Beigne
- 2. Léch  Desserts
- 3. Krispy Kreme
- 4. La Beignerie
- 5. Doughnats

Best Dumplings

- 1. Sammi & Soupe Dumpling
- 2. Yum Yum Soupe Dumpling
- 3. Qing Hua Dumpling
- 4. Harbin Dumpling
- 5. La Maison de Mademoiselle Dumpling

Best Falafel

- 1. Falafel Yoni
- 2. Falafel St. Jacques
- 3. Nilufar
- 4. Boustan
- 5. La Panth re Verte

Best Fast Food

- 1. Harvey’s
- 2. McDonald’s
- 3. A&W
- 4. La Belle Province
- 5. Five Guys

Best Fish and Chips

- 1. Brit & Chips
- 2. Comptoir 21
- 3. Hurley’s Irish Pub
- 4. Burgundy Lion
- 5. Ye Olde Orchard

Best Fried Chicken

- 1. Jack le Coq
- 2. Olivia’s Authentic Chicken
- 3. Mon Ami
- 4. Bucky Rooster’s
- 5. Roch le Coq

Best Fries

- 1. Frites Alors
- 2. McDonald’s
- 3. Patati Patata
- 4. Smoke Meat Pete’s
- 5. Maison Boulud

Best Hot Dog

- 1. Montreal Pool Room
- 2. La Belle Province
- 3. Lafleur
- 4. Dirty Dogs
- 5. Decarie Hot Dog

Best Mac and Cheese

- 1. Le Cheese (RIP)
- 2. Dinette Triple Crown
- 3. Seasoned Dreams
- 4. Tavern on the Square
- 5. Macbar et Fromage

<u>Best Montreal Beer</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amiral IPA 2. Messorum Bracitorium 3. St-Ambroise 4. Dieu du Ciel 5. 4 Origines 	<u>Best Pizza</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pizza Bouquet 2. La Maison des Pâtes Frâiches 3. Pizzeria No. 900 4. Pizza Toni 5. Fugazzi 	<u>Best Ramen</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kinton Ramen 2. Yokato Yokabai 3. Tsukoyomi 4. Umami 5. Misoya 	<u>Best Salad</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandy's 2. Falafel St-Jacques 3. Abe & Mary's 4. Omnivore 5. Liv Salades 	<u>Best Shish Taouk</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boustan 2. Amir 3. Basha 4. Sumac 5. Omnivore
<u>Best Pad Thai</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pumpui 2. Yum Yum Soupe Dumpling 3. Co Ut 4. Chu Chai 5. Mama Bangkok 	<u>Best Poké</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boîte Geisha 2. Poke Monster 3. Le Poke Station 4. Maui Poké 5. Olu Olu 	<u>Best Ribs</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bâton Rouge 2. Icehouse 3. Le Cordon 4. Scores 5. St-Hubert 	<u>Best Sandwich</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bossa 2. Capitaine Sandwich 3. Bocadillo 4. Clarke Café 5. Dépanneur le Pick Up 	<u>Best Smoked Meat</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schwartz's Deli 2. Main Deli Steak House 3. Smoke Meat Pete's 4. Dunn's Famous 5. Lester's Deli
<u>Best Pho</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co Ut 2. Pho Lien 3. Pho Tay Ho 4. Pho Bang New York 5. Pho Bac 97 	<u>Best Poutine</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. La Banquise 2. Ma Poule Mouillée 3. La Belle Province 4. Patati Patata 5. Poutineville 	<u>Best Rotisserie Chicken</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chalet Bar-B-Q 2. Ma Poule Mouillée 3. Côte St-Luc BBQ 4. Romados 5. Au Coq 	<u>Best Seafood</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. La Sirène de la Mer 2. Estiatorio Milos 3. Maestro SVP 4. Lucille's Oyster Dive 5. Rayan 	<u>Best Steak</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gibby's 2. The Keg 3. Rib'N Reef 4. L'Express 5. Tavern on the Square

YOUR NEXT THEATRE OUTING

IS ONE CLICK AWAY

DIGITAL CALENDAR

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scan to learn more!



"Thank you, Montreal and everyone who took the time to vote in this year's poll! Thank you to our incredible team who continue slingin' the best sandwiches in the city! We are honoured to serve this beautiful city each and every day!"
— Daniel Lo Manto, chef/owner of Bossa, #1 Best Sandwich

Best Sushi

1. Sushi Momo
2. Boîte Geisha
3. Jun I
4. Park
5. RYU

Best Taco

1. T & T Tacos and Tortas
2. La Capital Tacos
3. Tacos Victor
4. Tacos Frida
5. El Rey Del Taco

Best Vegetarian / Vegan

1. Aux Vivres
2. Sushi Momo
3. Lola Rosa
4. Hello 123
5. Sweet Hart Desserts

Best Bakery

1. Le Toledo
2. Guillaume
3. Boulangerie Habib
4. Louise
5. Automne

Best Café (for ambiance)

1. Café Reine Garçon
2. Café Olimpico
3. Crew Collective
4. Tommy Café
5. La Graine Brûlée

Best Café (for coffee)

1. Café Olimpico
2. Myriade
3. Reine Garçon
4. Dispatch
5. Café St-Henri

Best Teahouse

1. Cardinal Tea Room
2. Camelia Sinensis
3. Thésaurus Thérarium
4. Maison de Thé Cha Noir
5. Salon Rosie-Lanoi

Best Fromagerie

1. Fromagerie Hamel
2. Fromagerie Atwater
3. Fromagerie Copette & Cie
4. Yannick Fromagerie
5. Bleu et Persillé

Best Ice Cream

1. Iconoglace
2. Kem Coba
3. Unicone
4. Ca Lem
5. Le Patio Bar Laitier

Best Chocolate / Sweets

1. Les Chocolats de Chloé
2. Juliette et Chocolat
3. Sweet Hart Desserts
4. Chocolats Favoris
5. Lecavalier Petrone

Best Butcher

1. Mc Cormack Meats
2. Boucherie Lawrence
3. Chez Vito 11
4. Pascal le Boucher
1. Boucherie Grinder

Best Grocery Store

5. Supermarché PA
6. IGA
7. Marché Eden
8. Segal's
9. Adonis

Best Produce Store

1. Supermarché PA
2. Marché Eden
3. Jean-Talon Market
4. Rachelle Béry
5. Supermarché Mile End

Best Organic Food Store

1. Les Marchés TAU
2. Marché Eden
3. Rachelle Béry
4. PA Nature
5. Marché Branche d'Olivier

Best Health Food Store

1. Les Marchés TAU
2. Marché Eden
3. Marché Branche d'Olivier
4. Rachelle Béry
5. GNC

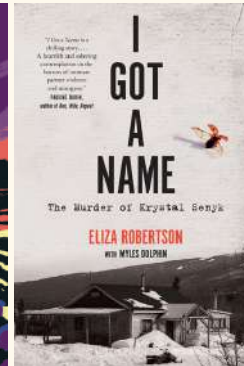
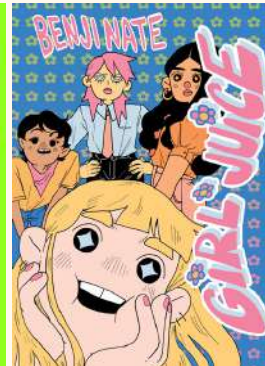
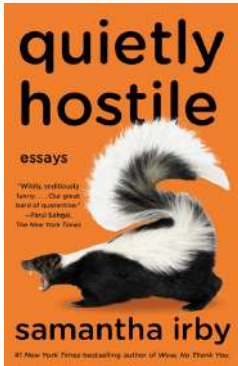
Best Fishmonger

1. Poissonnerie Atwater
2. Poissonnerie Sami
3. Étoile Waldman
4. Poissonnerie La Mer
5. Poissonnerie Falero

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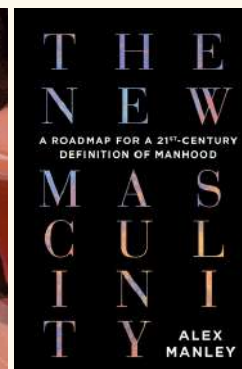
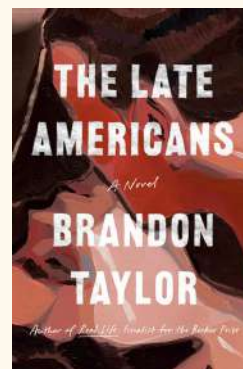
TUE, MAY 16 | 7 PM **BOOK LAUNCH**

I Felt the End Before It Came

THUR, MAY 18 | 7 PM **BOOK LAUNCH** | *I Got A Name*

SUN, JUNE 11 | 7 PM **HEURE DU CONTE**

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L'Express, #1 Best French Restaurant — something readers got right

Clay Sandhu

BY CLAY SANDHU

Well friends, here we are again. Back to that special time of year when you let the world know what you love best about our city and I, the snobby and opinionated restaurant critic, have the great pleasure of telling you what you got right and, more importantly, what you got wrong — at least insofar as it comes to food. Let's jump right in.

The first thing that needs addressing is the real lack of insight and excitement this year — the whole list has a strong “AI-generated” vibe. There's a constant stream of new openings to be excited about and, if we're being honest, a lot of the status quo “best in the city” joints have fallen off as of late. To see the same names, year after year, nabbing top spots despite no longer being great is a bit of a shame. All I'm saying is, if you're going to take the time to vote, at least vote for something that doesn't seem like it was auto-pulled from Trip Advisor.

Okay, moving on — here are some winners that I genuinely believe earned a top spot: Danny Smiles as Best Chef. The guy is a perennial Best Chef winner but the truth is that he just doesn't miss. What he's been able to accomplish at the Willow Inn and, most recently, with his new bar Double's, is entirely worthy of praise. Boom J's continues to be the top dog when it comes to Best Caribbean but the entire Top 5 is solid. I can totally get behind Dobe & Andy nabbing the top spot for Best Chinese but I would have liked to see some

love shown for J'ai Feng, Hong Mère and Keung Kee (none of which cracked the Top 5). Pumpui and Pichai holding down the #1 and #2 spots, respectively, for Best Thai can't be argued with, if you ask me — nice work on that one. I'll also show some love to Pizza Bouquet (Best Pizza), Bossa (Best Sandwich) and Chalet BBQ (Best Rotisserie Chicken), which all took the top spots in their categories. Again, none of these are particularly insightful revelations but I can't really argue with them either.

Now the fun part. Here's where you blew it: I know I just said that I can't argue with Danny Smiles in the top spot and I stand by it. With that said, Harrison Shewchuk (Salle Climatisée), David Gauthier (Bar St. Denis) and Louis Deligianis (Bistro la Franquette) are the chefs behind some of the best and most exciting restaurants in the city and deserve credit for what they've accomplished in their kitchens — it's borderline criminal that none of them cracked the Top 5.

Anémone is due a much higher ranking in Best New Restaurant, a category where NDG Luncheonette, Ketiw and Paradiso really deserved a shout-out. And Zaffran — which I've only just now heard about — seems a suspicious inclusion, but having never been, I can't rule it out completely.

The “Best New Food Trend” category is wild. I mean Korean? Arepas? Vegan? Pizzaghetti? What on earth are you people talking about? I find the trend category to be a bit annoying in and of itself but some more reasonable ones would probably be smash burgers, French takos and buvettes — all of which have just exploded in the city lately. My best new trend take: simplicity. Across the board, I'm noticing

restaurant menus getting smaller and more focused. Food is more regional, uses fewer ingredients and requires fewer steps to create. Food costs are up and so is the cost of labour — I think simplicity is here to stay for a while.

I've got gripes in other categories too: Best Poutine — la Banquise hasn't been good in ages; Best Steak — I can think of a half-dozen places better than Gibby's; and Best Pho? Two words: Nguyen Phi. Ultimately, however, the categories aren't complete disasters.

In my work, I have the good fortune of getting to eat at and opine on the many restaurants in this city. Even better than that, I get to try a lot of new things, uncover hidden gems, become intimately familiar with decades-old institutions and occasionally take them down a peg. That work has given me the insight to know that what's best when it comes to food and restaurants in this city is deeply personal. I've also learned that things change all the time. What's “best” today might not be tomorrow. Chefs change restaurants, kitchens get complacent and trends fall away and are replaced by the next best thing. To see a list without insight, to see a list that doesn't challenge the status quo — that ain't us. That's not Montreal. We dine out, we know food, we aren't afraid to tell someone their shit stinks and we don't let the name on the door tell us what's good — we let the food on the plate do that.

So over the next 12 months, I challenge you to go out to eat somewhere new. Try a spot you haven't been in a while. Take that recommendation from a friend (or from the guy you're reading right now). Challenge the status quo a bit, and you'll be rewarded for it — there's some damn good food to be had in this town.

“Little Willy is sweet dirty fun”

— DAVID C. JONES, VANCOUVER PRESENTS

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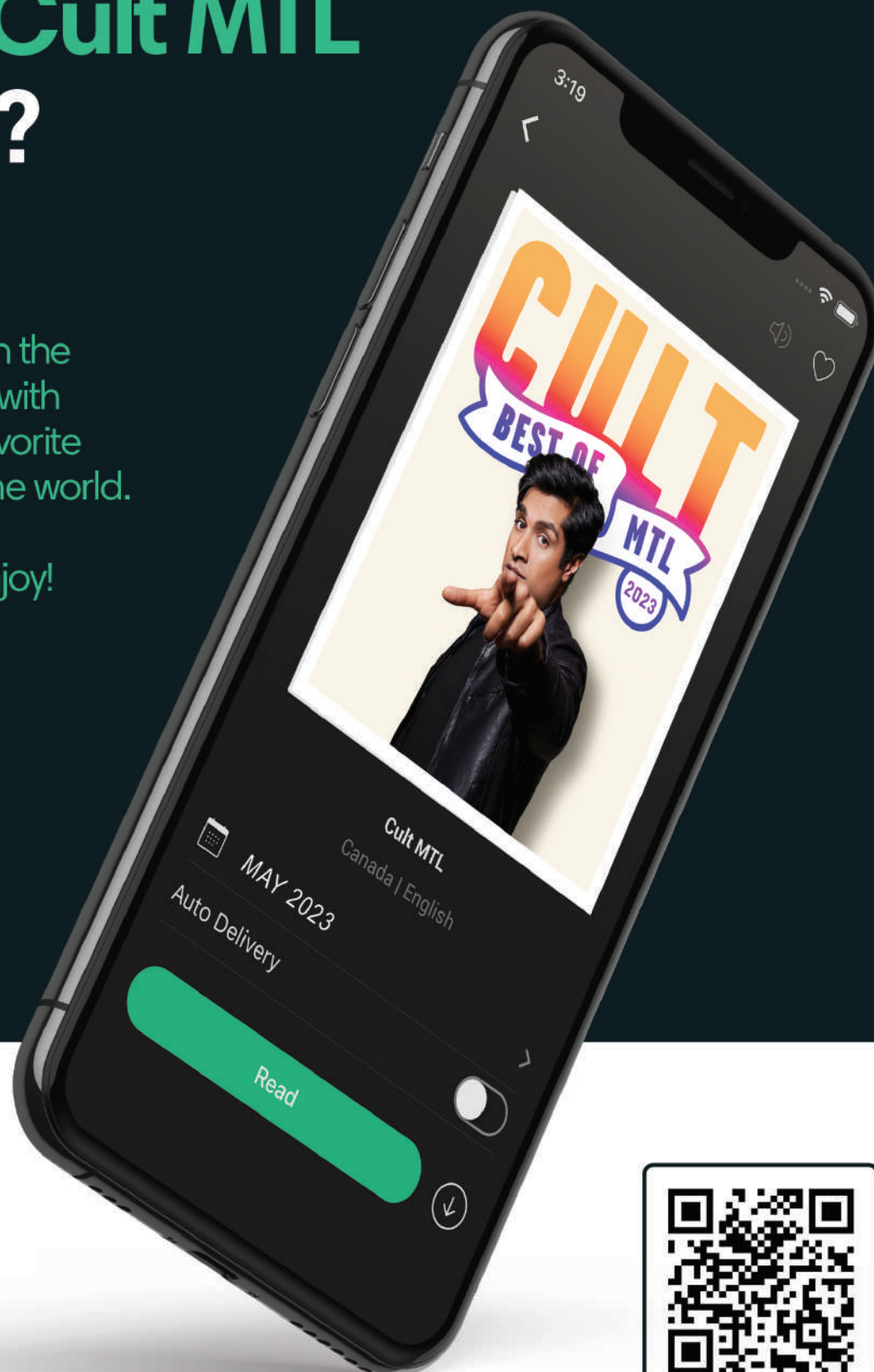
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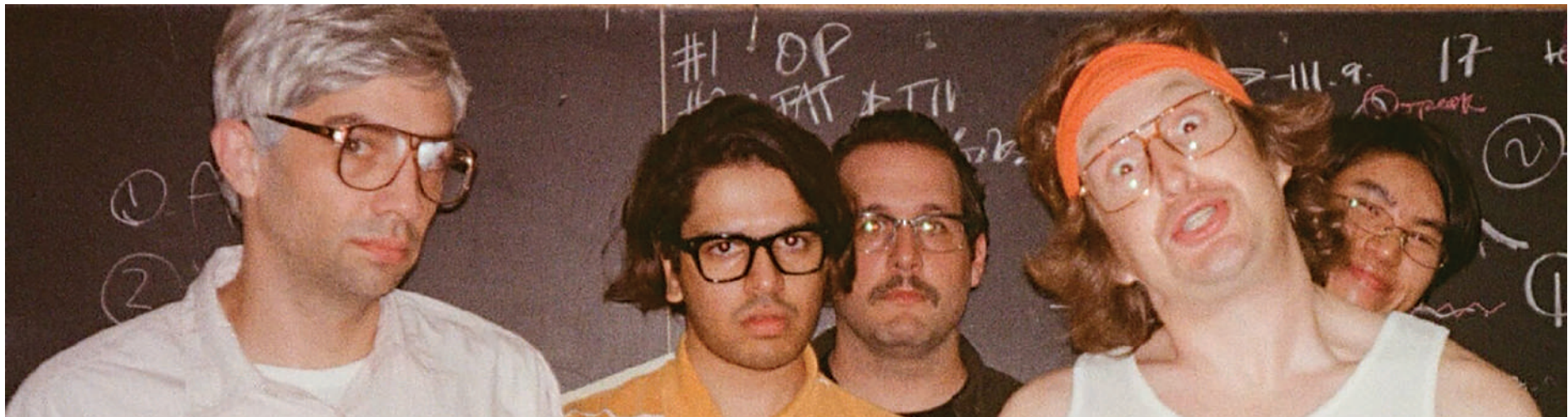
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Canadian anglo dysfunction



BY JUSTINE SMITH

Over a decade ago, people laughed when they heard David Fincher was making a movie about Facebook. But *The Social Network*, improbably, turned into one of his most successful films. More than a depiction of the inspirational rise of a tech company, it felt like a treatise on the culture at large. With *BlackBerry*, director Matt Johnson makes the Canadian equivalent.

Johnson takes us back to the mid-'90s when two techie Canadians, Mike Lazaridis (Jay Baruchel) and Doug (Matt Johnson), meet the more ruthless, business-savvy Jim Balsillie (Glenn Howerton) and begin work on the world's first smartphone.

Johnson is known for films like *The Dirties* and *Operation Avalanche*, as well as the cult TV series *Nirvana the Band Show*, and *BlackBerry* is his most polished project yet. Drawing from his previous work's raw aesthetics and spontaneous style, he streamlines it into something prescient and hilarious. Whether or not you're interested in BlackBerry phones, the film touches a Canadian nerve: the lines between politeness and manipulation, the limits of the Canadian dream and our American neighbours' overwhelming weight.

Montreal's own Jay Baruchel steps into a starring role to portray Lazaridis, the demure perfectionist turned Silicon Valley (or, more accurately, Windsor, Ontario «Valley») CEO who imagined a new way of communicating. With many twists and turns and an inevitable downfall, *BlackBerry* is a warning for what happens when you give up your values.

Justine Smith: You're a regular feature in *Cult MTL's* Best Actors list. How does that make you feel?

Jay Baruchel: I know! It's not like I don't check every year.

JS: This interview is being published in the Best of MTL issue, so let's hope you make the list again.

Jay Baruchel: I've had a good streak. It's everything. I used to call in to the Rant Line (in the *Montreal Mirror*), hoping they would print it. I was printed once. I left a message saying I was in love with this girl I saw the week prior, and I imagined her voice to be like alabaster porcelain. I was really psyched. The idea I would ever get mentioned in the Best of MTL was... like, I settled for NDG being named as the "Best Place to Be Jumped," which was one (of the questions) for years. Back then, it was a bit Vice-y. And I thought, well,

I'll take that. So I pay an embarrassingly close amount of attention to it.

JS: In *BlackBerry*, you play Mike Lazaridis. Over the years, Lazaridis transforms from a perfectionist nerd type into a bit of a business shark, becoming increasingly like Jim Balsillie.

Do you consciously shape that part of the performance based on what Glenn Howerton does with Jim?

Jay Baruchel: It's more about being truthful to the script. Any success with the character arc is like 99.9% because MJ and (Matthew) Miller wrote the hell out of the script, and MJ directed the fuck out of it. I just got to follow (Matt Johnson) and trust that he knows what he's doing. However, I'm terrible at subtle pivots. I am okay at big landing pieces. So the big transition from grey wig to white wig and then from white wig guy to guy fixing everything in the end, those little nuanced inches towards that, I don't have a brain for it. I assume that and trust. That's the danger, and that's the risk. You're asking about whether I start referencing what Glenn is doing. Yeah, to an extent, absolutely to an extent. That's how it's built. The larger zoom-out is that I'm trying to play a character from one ecosystem dropped into another and what it does to him. It rewards only strength, it only rewards sharks.

I like to think that (the film) is a mythological version of a very unfortunate Canadian truth, which happens when good faith Canadian innovation and entrepreneurship is faced with the yawning carnivorous mouth of laissez-faire American capitalism. Because we (Canadians) are not them. We're not Soviets either, and there is a sort of well-trodden soil of Canadian small business that's part of the Canadian dream that you can make something of yourself, and that itself should be the inevitable end. But then there's the infinite growth until you consume the entire fucking world — that's *their* thing, right? To me, I'm trying to play out many things as Mike. How earnest creation here will — if it gets to a certain point that it blips on anybody else's radar — inevitably turn into the other thing.

JS: Matt Johnson is known for a very unusual filmmaking practice emphasizing spontaneity, very little rehearsal and even breaking the line between documentary and fiction. How is it working in that environment for you?

Jay Baruchel: This is as close to slick as he gets. It's fucked up a lot of the time, and he knows how I feel about it. It wasn't an easy movie to make because we tell a lot of story, with a lot of production value in a short amount of time. If this was an L.A. studio counterpart, our budget would have easily been five times what it was, and we would have twice as much time. We were making, by Canadian standards, a big-budget movie and had 35 days.

There were times I was ready to kill him and Jared Raab (director of photography) because if it were up to Matt and him, we'd still be doing takes for a scene from a year ago, and Jared Raab would still be setting up. They can tweak forever, and both shit on each other for the same thing. They will both say a version of "perfectionism is a disease," but they just inform each other. Here's the thing: I can get super annoyed, and it can drive me up the fucking wall, but there's a ceiling

of how mad I can get because every time I'd see what they were doing, I was like, "It's really good." I know what we're doing is good, and I could feel something else on the ground, but I'd see the rushes or the playback, and I was like, "It's really special." I hated how special it was in the moment because I just wanted to be right. I wanted to be right about being crabby. But, I was like, you know what? I won't even care about this a year from now. All I'll remember is how good the movie is. It fucking sucks, but it's also exhilarating.

Forgive me, but it's pure cinema, and you don't always get that. You don't always get to be directed by a guy that can nerd out about movies like you can. You don't always get to work with people who only want to do two things: talk about other movies and make movies. This is special, and what's the word? Punk rock. As scotch-taped together as their process can be, it's guided by this fucking big radiant fucking light and a voice of honesty and truth, and they can't steer you wrong. These guys know what the fuck they're doing, and their hearts are all in it, ready to risk it all. On the day, it drives me up the fucking wall, but at the same time, I'm like, "Yeah, we're making something good."

JS: One thing I find cool about Matt is how he talks the talk. He's a huge advocate for improving Canadian cinema. He isn't a tech guy, but he relates to the story of BlackBerry as the story of the Canadian film industry. As someone who works in Canada and the USA, do you also see the BlackBerry story as connected to Canadian cinema?

Jay Baruchel: Absolutely. I could name George Beurling, who should be a household name, but most people have no idea who he is. If you've been to Verdun, you've seen Rue Beurling and Beurling Academy. This is Canada's most successful fighter pilot from the Second World War. This man shot down 33 German and Italian aircraft, 20 of which were in a two-week period. This man died at 27, murdered, he died mysteriously. This man applied to join the Royal Canadian Air Force. They turned him down. The Brits took him in, and he became a star. Then the RCAF was like, well, bring him back to boost recruitment because now he looks good. I was reading about him and was like, "Oh, it happens to all of us." This dysfunction of anglo Canada. This is our demon to exorcise.

So (Matt Johnson) saying that early RIM is a stand-in for independent English-Canadian cinema is spot on, and that's why I love this story because it dovetails with me, and I'm someone who's done pretty good. If you ask most people, I'm one of the Canadians who's done well down there and let me tell you, I've never been treated worse professionally than in Canada. I would be working with Clint Eastwood in Hollywood on a movie that will probably do pretty good and I couldn't get casting directors to let me audition for a \$500,000 indie film. But then, when L.A. started to dig me, then I was Canada's Jay Baruchel. I'm asked about this shit a lot, like I was brought to Banff a few years ago to talk, and I started saying, "It's really nice that you guys were talking to me, but I know if I weren't still doing things in America, you wouldn't ask me to be here." When that's not a thing anymore, we're good.

→ *BlackBerry* opens in Montreal theatres on May 12.

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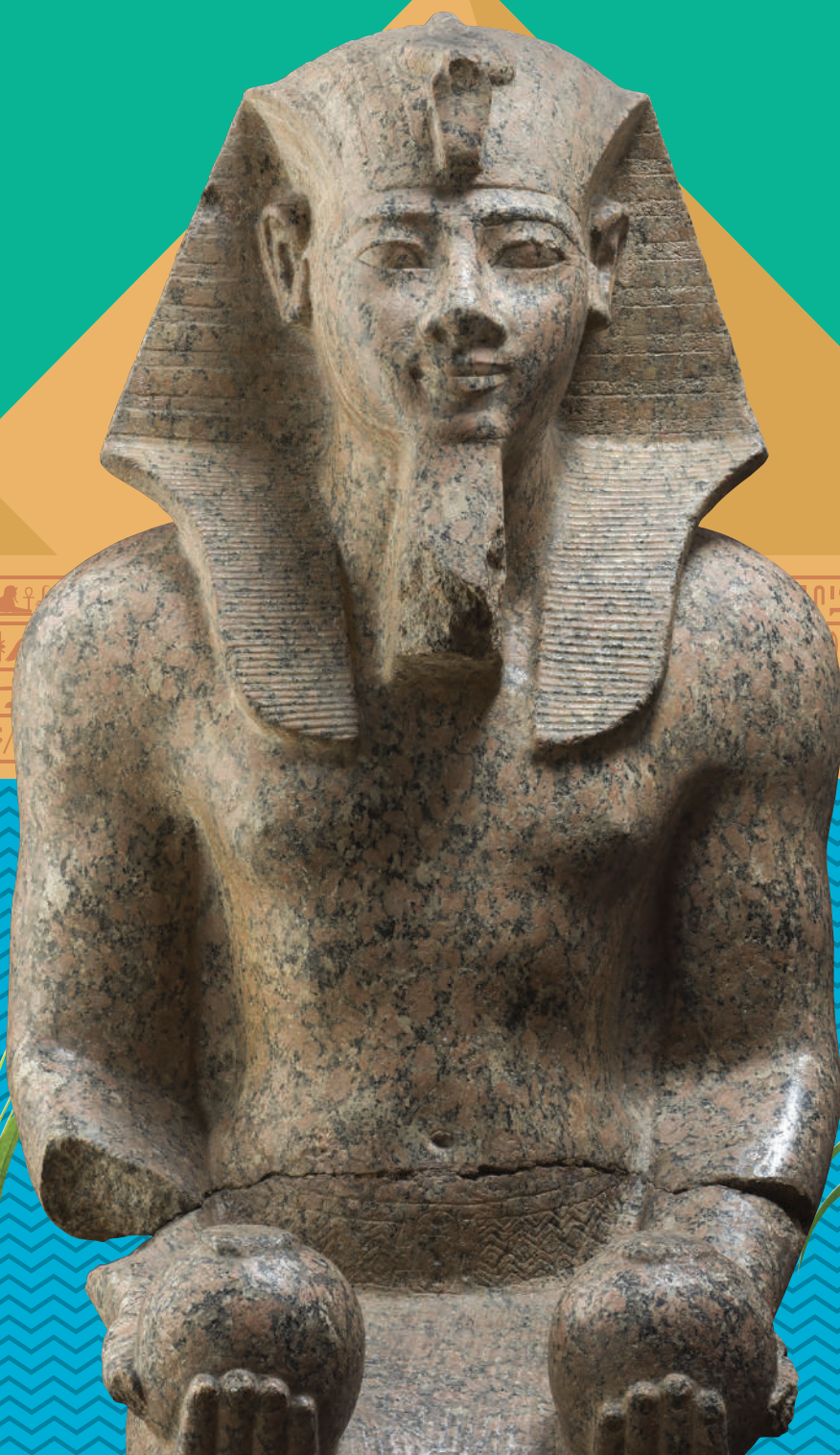
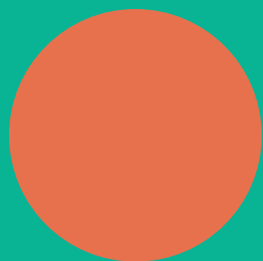


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