

selected works
2021-2024

Portfolio

Xiaotian Wang

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About Me



Hi! I am Xiaotian Wang, a graphic designer and illustrator based in Toronto. My proficiency spans various domains including graphic design, illustration, editorial layout design, brand identity, social media content creation, and digital marketing.

My passion lies in transforming ideas into compelling visual narratives. With more than 3 years of industry experience, I've honed my skills as a well-versed designer and developed an keen eye for details. I thrive on bringing concepts alive, delivering impactful and engaging artistic expressions.

Work Experience

Graphic Designer

95 Developments

Apr 2024 - Present

Graphic Designer

Rayoned Lighting Systems Inc

Apr 2023 - Apr 2024

Social Media Intern

Salman Sajun Studio

Jan 2023 - Apr 2023

Editorial Designer & Illustrator

smART Magazine

Mar 2022 - Jul 2023

Graphic Designer

McGill AUS

Aug 2022 - Apr 2023

Design Editor

The McGill Tribune

Jul 2021 - Apr 2022

Education

McGill University (2018-2022)

Major: Economics;

Minor: Art History & Communication Studies

Software

Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop

Google Office Suite, MS Office

Canva, Wix

Language

English: Fluent

Mandarin: Fluent

French: Medium

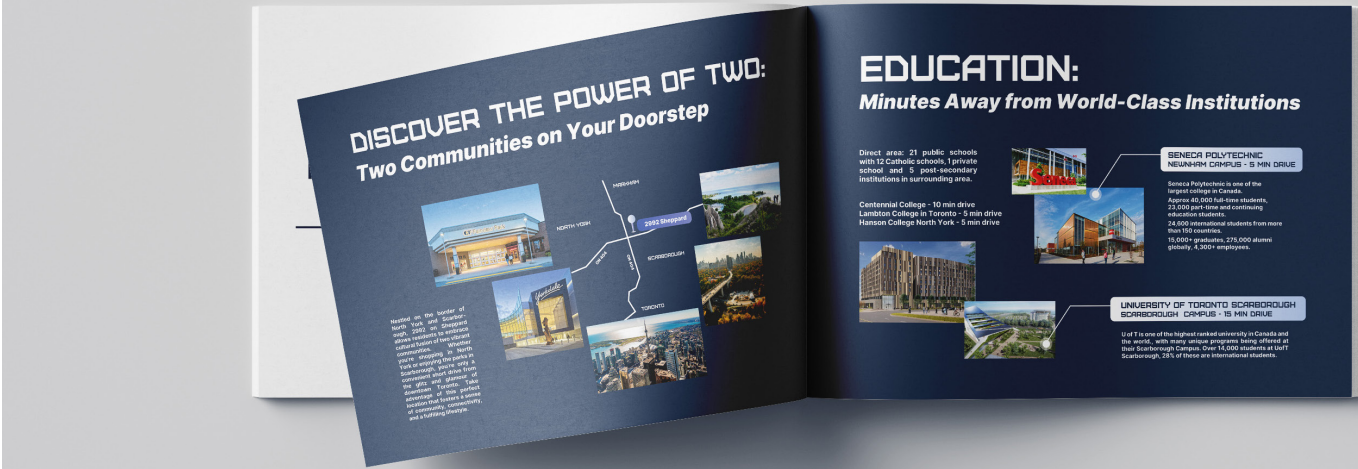
Contact

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Brand Identity 01

Print and digital marketing marterials created for Project 2992 Sheppard by 95 Developments. All works created within the established brand guidelines.



Project Booklet

Use consise and consistent design parameters to display key information of the project such as transit map, keyplate, amenity plan, community and education resources.





TYPICAL FLOOR PLATE

- 1 Bedroom
- 1 Bedroom+Den, 1 Bath
- 1 Bedroom+Den, 2 Bath
- 2 Bedroom
- 3 Bedroom
- Accessibility



Presentation Deck

Incorporate critical data and features of the project into a stylish presentation deck for information sessions.





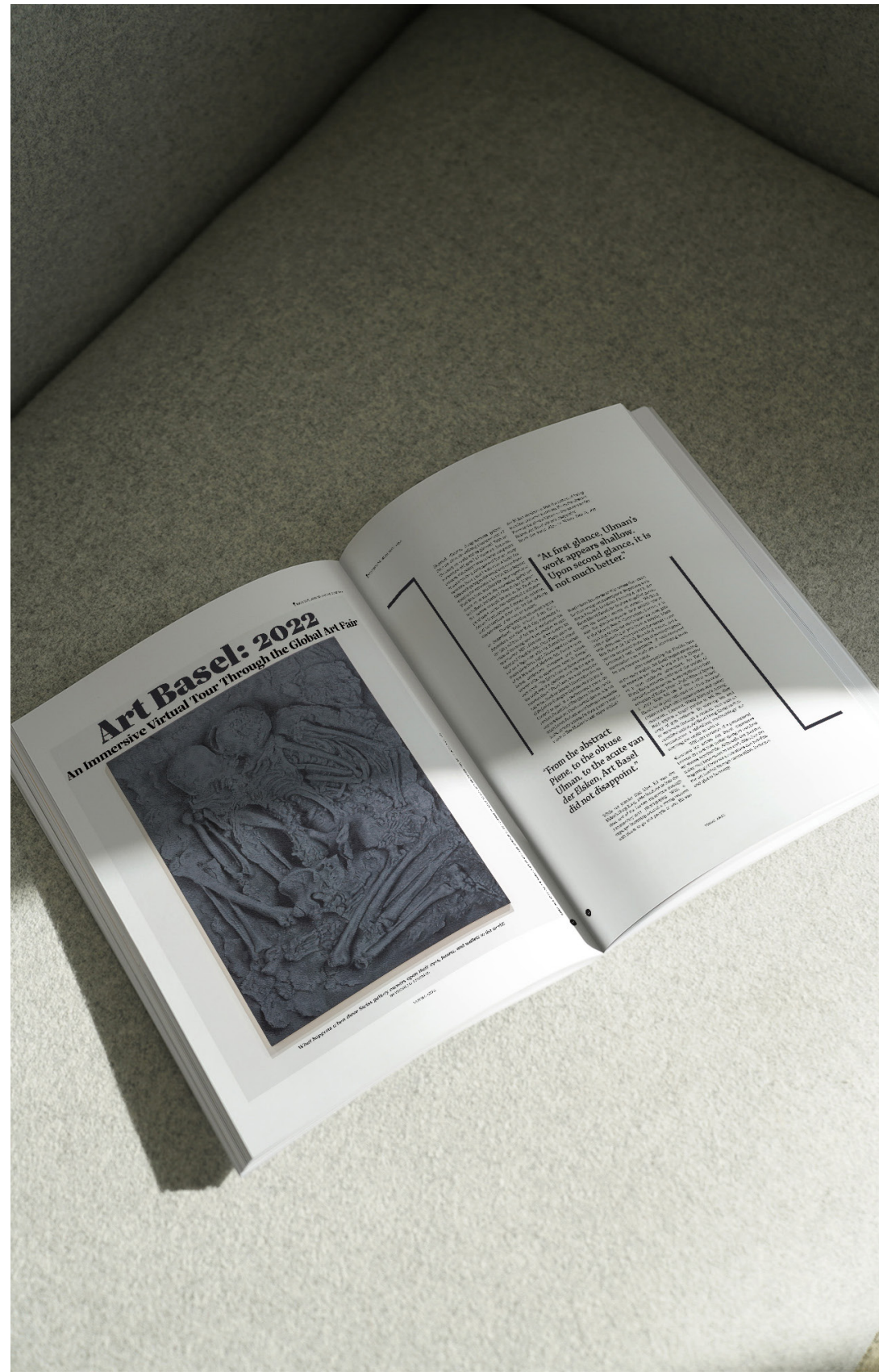
A-Frame Sign

Invitation Card



Editorial Layout

All layouts created for Visual Arts Section
of smART Magazine Issue 9 & Issue 10.



02





Lan Florence Yee

Toronto | Destabilising "Chinatown" Narratives with Text and Embroidery

BY LARA L. VANDERKAM

Toronto-based artist Lan Florence Yee's work centres on the friction between text and image, and the way this tension can be used to present a counternarrative. In her art, she presents a counternarrative to the dominant narrative of the Chinese diaspora in Canada. She explores the intersection of text and image, and the way this tension can be used to present a counternarrative. In her art, she presents a counternarrative to the dominant narrative of the Chinese diaspora in Canada. She explores the intersection of text and image, and the way this tension can be used to present a counternarrative.

Q | Your recent works that challenge racialized and gendered expectations often involve the intersection of text and embroidery. How did you arrive at this unique cross-section, and what other possibilities would you like to explore with it?

LFY — I come to art mostly through the media of signage, templates, and forms. They are everywhere and yet invisible to those who have normalized the way they guide people's behaviour. But especially the repetition, are taken for granted. Growing up in Montreal as a bilingual person, the hierarchy of language was a prominent feature in my environment.

At the same time, I was drawn to the early Chinese history in so-called Canada. From the nineteenth century onwards, the conditions of economic and political survival for Chinese migrants were not to their liking. As they sought to become a mainstream, they were often met with a mixture of recognition and denial. The narrative of the Chinese diaspora in Canada is a story of struggle, resilience, and the search for a place to call home.



Q | Along with Anus Salmadach, you co-edited the Chinatown Stories in 2020. What differences and similarities between being an artist and a curator inspired your journey into the latter?

LFY — The Chinatown Stories is a journey into the past, but it's also a journey into the future. It's a story of resilience, of the search for a place to call home, and of the way we can use art to challenge the status quo.

www.lfy.com

...and other cities at the same time. The idea of a festival as a way to celebrate a community is a common one. But in the case of the Chinatown Biennial, it's a festival that is also a way to challenge the status quo. It's a festival that is also a way to celebrate the resilience of the Chinese diaspora in Canada.

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Chinatown Biennial







03

Editorial Illustration

All illustrations created for articles of smART Magazine.



Mining Minimalism

WORDS BY NICOLAS HOLT | ILLUSTRATION BY XIAOTIAN WANG

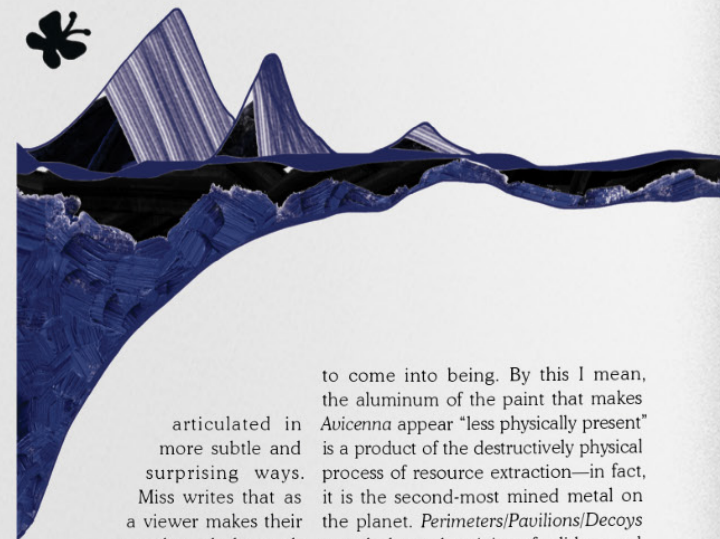
Ecocriticism meets a revisionist history of minimalism

During the 1960s, the glossy surfaces and industrial fabrication of minimalist painting and sculpture heralded a radical new approach to the usage of materials in art. What's been left unsaid in the history of minimalism – and is an increasingly pressing concern today – are the extractive processes that produced many of minimalism's iconic materials, such as aluminum and the crude oil byproduct, Plexiglas. There are two contemporaneous pieces that can help excavate the ways the process of extraction has materially informed minimalist art, and point towards an ecocritical revision of its history.

The first is Frank Stella's *Avicenna*, first exhibited in 1960 at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City. Technically a dodecagon (a twelve-sided shape), this painting had one notch in each of its four corners. The apexes of those notches point diagonally to a cavity in the center of the canvas itself, exposing the wall upon which it is hung, thus creating a continuity with its exhibition space. Compositionally, the painting is nothing but stripes, but those stripes follow unflinchingly the painting's straight lines and angles, such that the negative spaces created by the notches echo towards the central cavity. *Avicenna* was painted with aluminum-based paint, something Stella believed, because of its metallic shine, made the painting appear "less physically present in a way." Stella's paintings, with their hard edges, industrial materials, and novel relation to the gallery environment, anticipated much minimalist art to come.

The second is Mary Miss's *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* of 1977/1978, exhibited on the grounds of the Nassau County Museum of Art. Three wooden towers and two semi-circular mounds surrounded the work's most famous element: a

subterranean courtyard, revealed only by a square cavity carved into the earth and the tip of a ladder, which grants access to it. It's not surprising, then, that this was termed "Earth art," a broad category of artistic production situated within and responsive not to galleries or museums, but the lands outside them. While there is also continuity between artwork and exhibition space here, it is



articulated in more subtle and surprising ways. Miss writes that as a viewer makes their way through the work, they become "aware that the ground s/he has just walked across and presumed to be solid is undermined."

While these two artworks no doubt strike the viewer as profoundly different, they similarly feature a central cavity exposing a space beyond. And whereas Miss's work can be understood in part as that cavity, in the literal earth, Stella's painting required a cavity in the earth

to come into being. By this I mean, the aluminum of the paint that makes *Avicenna* appear "less physically present" is a product of the destructively physical process of resource extraction—in fact, it is the second-most mined metal on the planet. *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* reveals the undermining of solid ground, and *Avicenna* – perhaps at a distance – emerges from it.

Stella wasn't the only minimalist artist whose media originated in extraction. Many of Tony Smith, Charlotte Posenenske, and Judy Chicago's famous early sculptures were created from steel, which requires the extraction of iron, the most mined metal from our Earth's surface. Richard Serra was a fan of lead, and Donald Judd, constructed many of

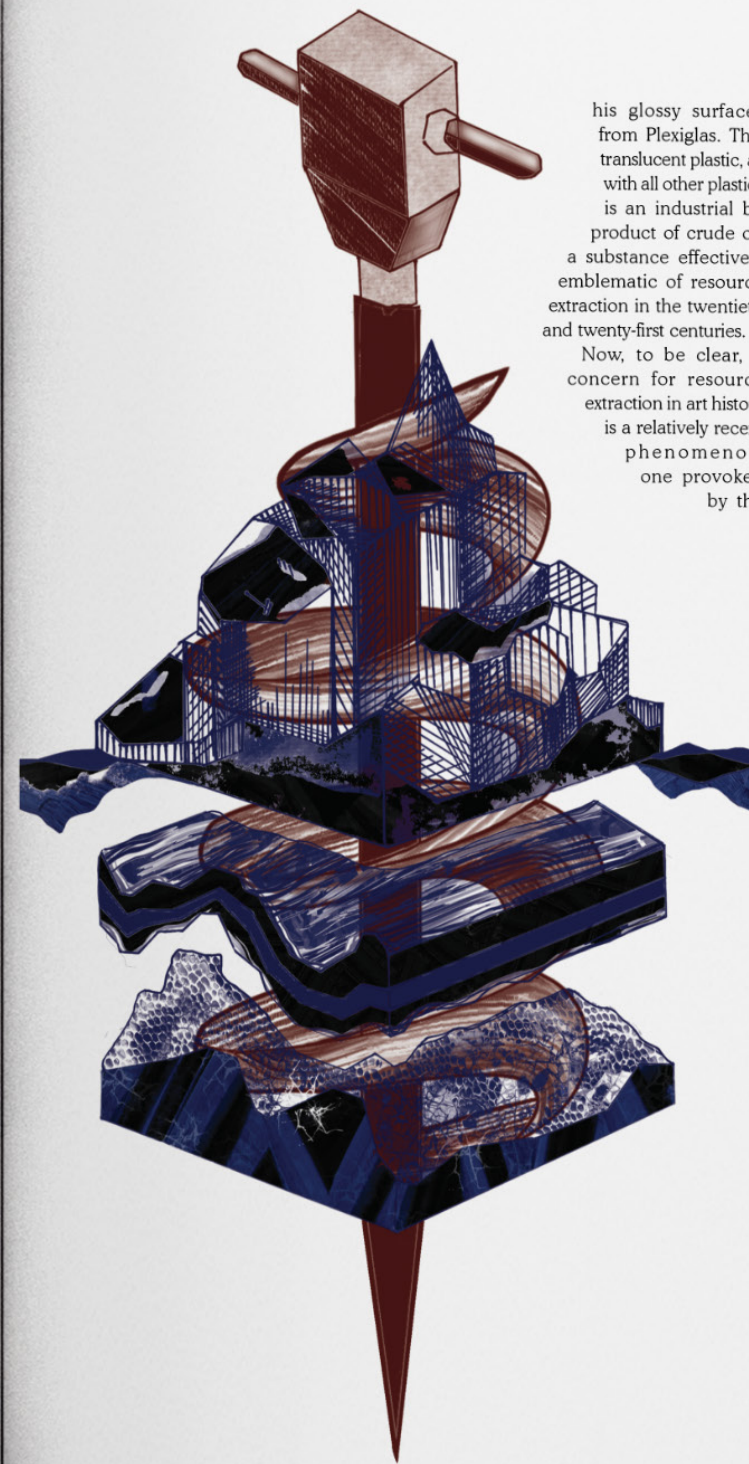
his glossy surfaces from Plexiglas. This translucent plastic, as with all other plastics, is an industrial byproduct of crude oil, a substance effectively emblematic of resource extraction in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Now, to be clear, a concern for resource extraction in art history is a relatively recent phenomenon, one provoked by the

consequences of our current energy economies and environmental conditions. Minimalist artists of the 1960s weren't exactly concerned with resource extraction as we think of it today, even if they were deeply concerned with the specificity of their materials. What happens when we similarly attend to the specificity of minimalism's materials in light of today's emerging extractivist critiques?

A common account of minimalist sculpture is that by reducing visual complexity, turning towards industrial materials, and eliminating the trace of the individual artist, the artworks forced attention onto their surroundings in novel ways and, by consequence, forced attention onto the experience of the object in its specific context. This focus on space and experience proved to be a major inspiration for much art of the 1960s, and Earth art is usually framed as harnessing that focus towards ecological ends because of how it situates itself in direct relation to the planet's terrain and materials.

But minimalist sculpture, if we keep in mind the extractive origin of its iconic media, never left the Earth behind—it simply excavated, undermined and transformed it. How this excavation might transform the history of minimalism, and its place in the *longue durée* of contemporary art, especially from the vantage of an ecologically-fraught present, remains to be seen. Perhaps this can serve as a critical reminder: amongst the hard edges, geometric forms, and exhibition space of minimalist artwork, echoes of a fragile world remain. These are echoes to which we must carefully listen, for they remind us of the Earth's constant and material presence, even where it might be least expected.



Visual Arts

ILLUSTRATION BY KATHARINE WONG

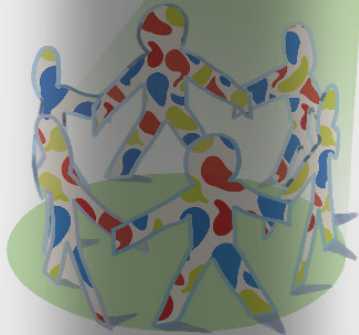


WONG, 2015

Time to Join the Hive?

Building Communities Through Art and Therapy

An artists' community-based art therapy workshop plays a vital role in stress management through art-based social interaction
BY JULIA KASNER ILLUSTRATION BY KATHARINE WONG



WONG, 2015

Photo

Given the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's no surprise that many people are looking for ways to connect and support each other. One way to do this is through art therapy, a practice that uses art to help people explore their emotions and experiences. Art therapy can be done in a variety of ways, including individual sessions, group sessions, and community-based programs. In this article, we'll explore the benefits of art therapy and how it can be used to build communities and support each other.

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"Art therapy creates a transformative relationship between the artistic process and the visual arts to maintain, support, and improve the spiritual, psychosocial, and physical health of all ages and backgrounds."

"Communities are not built from groups of people with identical tastes and styles, but from people who see value in others and feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves."

WONG, 2015

From Instagram's Stage to Theatrum mundi

How the Stage is Becoming the World

BY KATHARINE WONG ILLUSTRATION BY KATHARINE WONG



WONG, 2015

"You don't have to be an artist to live a fake life on Instagram."

Instagram is a social media platform that has become a part of our daily lives. It's a place where we can share our photos and videos with our friends and followers. But what if we don't want to be an artist? What if we just want to live a fake life on Instagram?

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Photo

Fan Art as Visual Art

BY KATHARINE WONG ILLUSTRATION BY KATHARINE WONG



One of the most interesting things about fan art is that it's a form of art that is created by fans. It's a way for fans to express their love for a particular character or story. But what if we don't want to be a fan? What if we just want to be an artist?

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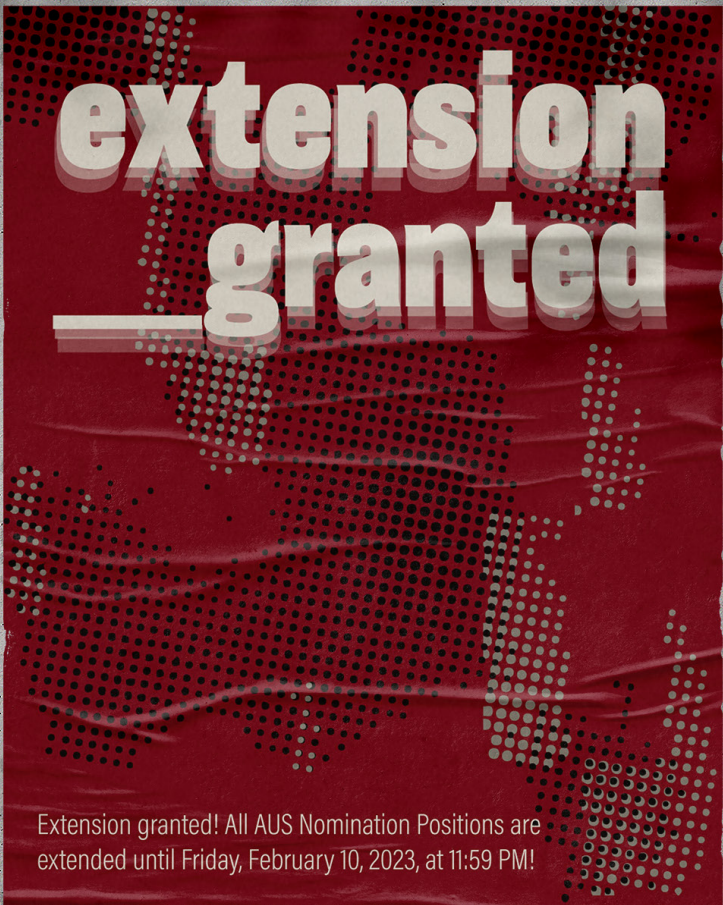
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WONG, 2015

Poster Design

All posters created for promotional purposes for McGill AUS's events.

04



Recording Secretary



Fill the form below to apply:

<https://form.jotform.com/230376943628262>

Forms are due Sunday, February 12, 2023 before 11:59 PM)



HIRING



HAVEN Survey

CW: Sexual Harassment

Hello! Thank you for being so interested in taking this survey! This survey will be used by the Students' Society of McGill University to help guide future decisions regarding initiatives to help reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment and violence on- and off campus. Notably, this survey looks at the interest in the app HAVEN, which is a campus safety app offered at other Canadian Universities. Information collected is anonymous and confidential.

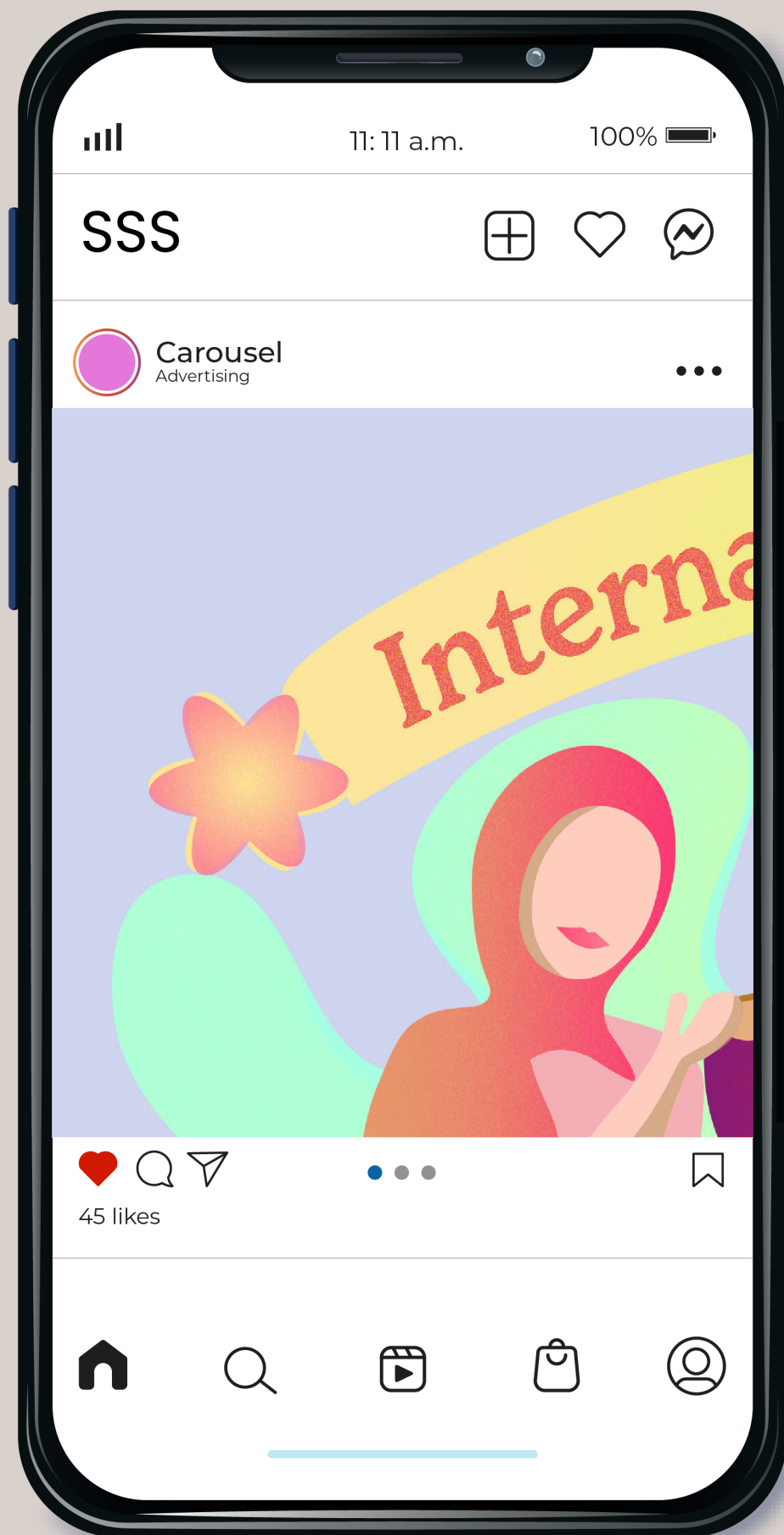
Fill out the anonymous form here:

<https://blocksurvey.io/survey/1ExH9zfzt4W1J3X2Axuy2GLqc13GLRFFT/3630ff65-a7e5-4aef-b14a-d18ca92bad05/r/o>

05 Social Media Design

International Women's Day Campagne designed for Salman Sajun Studio, aiming to celebrate powerful women from different ethnic and career backgrounds around the world.





Carousel Advertising

International Women's Day



45 likes



Newspaper Design

All illustrations and layout created for McGill Tribune's print and digital issues.

06



Marty the Mythological Martlet

One evening this past semester, my roommates and I were discussing the McGill mascot, Marty the Martlet. Although we knew what Marty looked like, none of us had any idea what a martlet actually was. After some research, we discovered that our beloved mascot is based on an ancient mythological bird with no feet. From the second the martlet enters the world, it is in perpetual flight until the last flap of its wings.

One evening this past semester, my roommates and I were discussing the McGill mascot, Marty the Martlet. Although we knew what Marty looked like, none of us had any idea what a martlet actually was. After some research, we discovered that our beloved mascot is based on an ancient mythological bird with no feet. From the second the martlet enters the world, it is in perpetual flight until the last flap of its wings.

Suddenly, we had a revelation: Marty the Martlet wasn't so far fetched after all. A bird that can never take a break from flying, which must continuously flap its wings to survive? I couldn't think of a better creature to represent McGill students.

It didn't take me very long to sense the university's intense, competitive hustle culture—I was exposed to it before I even arrived in Montreal. Soon after I accepted my offer at McGill, I joined the Facebook group for entering students to make some connections before I embarked on my degree. Although the Facebook group's purpose was to lessen the daunting stress of university, now just months ahead of me, it did the opposite.

I was bombarded with introductions from hundreds of students. The idea was simple—to share a few fun facts about oneself. Yet even that simple prompt quickly became an incitement for

competition. If the first student that posted spoke two languages, then by the time the 10th student posted, they spoke 12 languages and were the son of an important diplomat.

"There definitely is a hustle culture at McGill," wrote Alisa Nosova, U3 Arts, in an email to *The McGill Tribune*. "Everyone

try and compete. She took on multiple executive positions, became involved with the Arts Undergraduate Society, and acquired a part-time job. It wasn't long before Nosova's mental health took a hit.

"I felt so hopeless," she said. "I felt I needed to make a Plan B for myself."

After she realized that

year, I decided to branch out. I began the 2020-2021 school year with a plan to get involved in as much as possible, but the bleak reality of the ongoing pandemic prevented me from truly achieving this goal. It wasn't until my third year that I succeeded in my plan to try and get involved as much as possible.

and I lost entire days as I lay in my bed. I was in a never-ending fight with my depression. Worse, I was shackled by a gut-wrenching feeling of anxiety because I couldn't do what I set out to do. I was losing. By the time December came around, I didn't even recognize myself. I was now 15 pounds lighter. My usual outgoing and energetic nature was gone—I had officially hit a low I didn't know existed. I was burnt out.

A Mental Health Crisis and Student Burnout

The mental crisis I experienced was by no means unique. That semester, whenever I wanted to see that other students were feeling the same way, all I would have had to do was check the */mcgill* subreddit.

The feeling that you aren't good enough to be at McGill comes as no surprise when you consider the image the university attempts to uphold. The institution prides itself on its rankings as a top research university globally and consistently reminds the public of its notable alumni.

Of course, the mental health crisis extends far beyond the McGill student body. For example, a survey conducted by Ohio State University found that between August 2020 and April 2021, students who screened positive for depression or anxiety increased by four per cent. As a result, the rate of student burnout increased from 40 to 71 per cent. Additionally, findings from the American College Health Association's Canadian Reference Group's 2019 executive summary found that 51.6 per cent of students have felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, 68.9 per cent felt overwhelming anxiety, and 16.4 per cent have seriously considered suicide within the past 12 months. These numbers have only increased since the pandemic began.

Unfortunately, even that semester didn't play out how I had planned. Things quickly went off the rails. When I wasn't working on-campus, I found myself locked away in my bedroom. As the semester dragged on, I watched as dishes piled up in my room. The period between my meals and showers lengthened,

she had spread herself too thin, she decided to take a step back and focus on herself in her final year. As she put it, "I lost myself in the process of pampering my resume and chasing all the experience."

Unfortunately, I fell prey to the same trap in my second year. After feeling insecure about my accomplishments in first



From hustling to health

Beyond productivity culture

Noah Vaton, Multimedia Editor

is hustling to get the best opportunities, get into the most interesting classes, build relationships with professors that teach classes of 200+ students, and take on executive positions in clubs. It's competitive out there."

Nosova is no stranger to the rat race. After arriving at McGill, she did everything in her power to

Given this common experience and its impact on the mental health crisis at not only McGill but also across other Canadian universities, one might think that the university would make students' well-being one of their main priorities. But after I had a conversation with Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) vice-president (VP) Student Life Karla Heisele Cubilla regarding SSMU's role in the mental health and well-being of students, I learned this isn't necessarily the case. Heisele Cubilla believes that the mental health problem at McGill is largely structural. While McGill has a clinic, branded as the Wellness Hub, students have consistently faced barriers in accessing mental healthcare. Most students will face long and discouraging wait times before they can get help.

When Claire Downie, SSMU VP University Affairs, and Cubilla presented their concerns about the Wellness Hub with the Committee on Student Services, the meeting didn't go well. According to Heisele Cubilla, the Committee said, "We are not a hospital, we do not have the resources for that."

In the absence of adequate mental health resources, some students have had to come up with their own solutions to cope with the stress. Many students, for instance, have turned to study drugs, taking prescription stimulants like Ritalin, Adderall, and Vyvanse that are usually prescribed to people with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

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University Life

In the midst of the pandemic, some students are turning away from university altogether. College enrollment rates have dropped dramatically since COVID-19 hit in March 2020. Enrollment at U.S. colleges dropped by approximately 560,000 students between the fall of 2019 and the fall of 2020. Although this drop-off

may be a consequence of the pandemic's unique stresses, it also tells us something about the model of the university itself. For many, the university workload is simply unsustainable.

"While I believe that the culture to hustle at McGill may be more prevalent than at other universities, I think that one of the major contributing factors to students having poor mental health is the competitive nature of university in general," wrote Avery Martin, a

graduate or medical school from day one, meaning the pressure is on at the start.

Martin admits that while he was at McGill, he felt like the only true measure of success was high grades. Consumed by school, he barely slept, failed to eat well, and neglected physical activity. The combination of these things left him feeling so burnt out that he withdrew from McGill in his second year.

"To say that I was miserable was an

As he puts it, if he had never reached his breaking point, he never would have sought positive change.

Moving toward a healthier approach to academia

When I started research for this article, I never anticipated finding a solution to the problem. It's certainly true that hustle culture and the ongoing mental health crisis is prevalent at many

also emailed out a graphic-filled, three-page PDF offered by the Office of the Dean of Students, which recommends students practice mindfulness. Although this is a start, it's far from perfect. While it is important for a university to remind students to make time for self-care, they shouldn't consider their job done yet. After all, self-care only goes so far when an institution lacks sound support systems. The administration needs to start listening to the needs of their student



former McGill student now enrolled at the University of British Columbia, in an email to *The McGill Tribune*.

For one, Avery cited the stress of meeting admission standards to get into McGill in the first place—a source of anxiety that doesn't necessarily end upon receipt of an acceptance letter for your undergraduate degree. Many students already have their sights set on

understatement," Martin said. "My mental health had deteriorated to a point where it wasn't realistic to continue at this current point in time."

Now, at UBC, Martin's mental health has improved after taking the time to reflect on his time at McGill. Regardless of his negative experience, Martin believes his time spent at McGill acted as an important reality check.

universities, and within society as a whole. But it remains true that the McGill administration could better support their student's well-being. McGill has tried, albeit not hard enough. Recently, they posted an announcement on MyCourses reminding students that if they are feeling overwhelmed, there are resources accessible to them. They've

body and addressing the mental health crisis at a structural level—rather than attempting to put a bandaid over a bullet wound by preaching mindfulness to their students.

Design by:
Xiaotian Wang,
Design Editor

Oh, the humanities

Life, Liberal Arts, and the Pursuit of Humanities

Matthew Molinaro, *Opinion Editor*

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that every single employer in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a humanities graduate. The humanities graduate was spiteful. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. How do I turn from my degree and live? For students of the humanities, all this happened more or less.

Any student of the humanities understands the power of stories, how they unite us, how they diffuse past borders, how they free us. For example, the story that I jokingly tell myself and others about my English literature major is that it acts as a way of combating thoughts that I am an interventionist. Unfortunately, not everyone believes that understanding stories is still necessary—or relevant.

The humanities have a long, if not fraught, history. Part of it might be its softness or subjectivity. Unlike science's hard empiricism, humanities take on critical, historical, and oft-conflicting lenses in their quest for truth. In ancient Greece, there was the concept of *paideia*, a broad-ranging system of education meant to guide men to becoming good, active citizens. Later on in western Europe in the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church took a decisive role in creating strong programs of liberal education. By the late 12th century the university was born in Bologna and Paris, where typically instructors emphasized teaching theology, or quite literally, the interpretation of texts. More recently, some universities have touted Great Books programs and Western

humanistic content.

What is essential about the humanities is that these fields take a normative approach to answer questions about the good and how we should live, whereas the sciences first focus on gathering empirical information. These approaches do not need to be mutually exclusive. The rise of the medical humanities and environmental humanities—fields which assess human impacts in medicine and climate change—shows that humanistic approaches to the sciences can have concrete effects on practice and knowledge creation. In social sciences, there has been the affective turn, where scholars focus on emotions in politics and society, and the rise of qualitative methods like narrative counter-storytelling used to magnify the experiences of marginalized communities. These approaches to humanistic inquiry challenge the 'hard,' positivist science turn that has taken over some social sciences.

The interaction between the two different communities of sciences and humanities fascinates Victor Wang, a U2 Arts student studying Computer Science and English literature.

"I get to find really lovely connections and intersections between these two disciplines, the disciplines of like computer science, or the skill of programming, along

own class privilege. Having had the privilege to study the humanities, I want to be able to do something substantial with them. Studying the humanities only to be a passive agent in the face of injustice is a fundamental contradiction that needs to be addressed, unpacked, and dismantled at all times.

Resisting the cultural pressures to study something more "useful" is something that Thai Judiesch, a U3 Arts student studying English: Cultural Studies and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (GSFS), takes seriously. To Judiesch, the humanities open up discourses on our lives and lived experiences.

"Humanities articulate something differently which tries to get at the unanswerable questions of the world," Judiesch said. "And I think that there was something in that level of mystery that felt more intriguing to me. [...] I said pretty firm. I don't get really wavered."

After starting at the individual level—through, usually, closeness with a text—humanities students and scholars have to go out into the world. In the wider community, humanities offer opportunities for collaboration and can encompass making, creating, and doing interdisciplinary work. Michelle Hartman, a professor of Arabic literature at the Institute for Islamic Studies and an acclaimed literary translator, emphasized the rewarding of interdisciplinary scholarship. Hartman, who has collaborated with education scholar Rosalind Hampton and Black disability studies pioneer Theri Pickens, brought together methods from Black Studies and critical Arab American studies in her most recent book, *Breaking Broken English: Black-Arab Literary Solidarities and the Politics of Language*.

"We have these things in common, [along with] these things not in common."

Civilization courses with the aim of making students read 'our' civilization's venerated works—though these reading lists skew European and Anglophone. Both of the initiatives have taken criticism for focussing on and propagating Eurocentrism. Perhaps the greatest modern manifestation of the humanities in liberal arts colleges. Though they are more of an American phenomenon, north of the border, small, boutique universities like University of King's College, Bishop's University, Mount Allison University, and Acadia University stress a liberal arts curriculum. Carleton University's Great Books program, Western University's School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities (SASAH), and McGill's own Liberal Arts major show that even larger, research universities can incorporate

with the skills of reading and writing within English literature, c," Wang said. "One thing that always comes to mind is accessibility and its community. I'm hesitant to even box [their differences] in. I think there are a lot outside of the spectrum [...] It may be different to finish, like the coding project versus finishing an essay. But I suppose one really nice thing to know, as well, is how similar these students' work and struggles are as well."

My journey to studying English literature is decidedly not unique—I love to read and write. I love how politics and art intersect. I want to change the world. But I'll confess that these clear-cut signs alone still did not stop me from starting my degree in management. As a convert to humanities, I'm especially grateful to finally study my passions. It was not an easy choice. I still grapple with what literature does, what humanities offers, what theory means, beyond the academy. We live in a profoundly unequal world. The ability to face the pressure to get a job after choosing a pathway of study not typically known for its employability reflects my

Hartman said. "If you're [engaging in interdisciplinary work], genuinely I think it will force you to ask difficult questions that will force you to be spinning around things that are outside your comfort zone. That's what real

interdisciplinary work means: Working outside of your comfort zone and really challenging yourself to think in different ways."

As the story sits, any idea of the humanities, traditional, interdisciplinary, or even multicultural, is under attack from all angles—whether from capitalism, globalization, changing syllabi, or the university system itself. The academic job market has become a nightmare (or perhaps it has always been), funding is limited and limiting (but you have to expect that of funding, you'll spend more time writing grants than writing your work), employers don't care about what grade you received on an undergraduate thesis they neither sought nor read (nobody reads anymore, let alone critical work). If the humanities needs defense, would it need a strategy compatible with capitalism?

At the same time, there are new approaches to texts in the digital humanities (DH) that make use of computational tools for research. Wang, who bridges his studies together with DH, finds that the superpowers of both fields allow DH to enrich the humanities as humanities enrich the sciences. For example, he emphasized a recent study by Richard So that found that white authors publish over 90 per cent of books yearly.

"DH can help tell stories, it can give voices to those who might not have that voice in the traditional humanities or the other way around and give voices to those who might not have the same [powerful] voices," Wang said. "Having a new field at any point is that well, now there's an open space. Now there are open seats. [...] What can we do with that? Like, how can we hone that? Those who knew how to program and have these great ideas, but didn't necessarily have an outlet for both? Now they can take that, they can inspire their friends, and more importantly, they can tell stories and look at stories, about race and about literature."

In an age where the traditional humanities already feel threatened, however, the reception to these approaches isn't always positive.

"With the surge of digital humanities, there was a lot of backlash," Judiesch said. "Old school humanities scholars do not like the idea of bringing in quantitative analysis into the humanities. It's complicated in a lot of ways, because there is this sense that you have to be flexible and be able to move with the times."

Of course, scholars should not be coerced into making their work quantitative simply because DH offers an additional perspective or set of tools.

"At the core of everything around all, like digital humanities, and then the two other disciplines are people and are great ideas and meaningful ideas and the motivation to make change and to do great," Wang said. "As long as these great ideas keep coming, and I think they will, one day under this actor, this group, this generation, this group of scholars, this group of creators and academics, [...] I'm sure new ideas will come in."

For younger people interested in humanities, the popularity of alt academia shows that there are more ways the humanities can enrich themselves beyond the old

guard. For instance, YouTube longform essay content, like videos by ex-philosopher Natalie Wynn, is incredibly popular.

"People are stubborn, and, and to be fair, I get it is kind of scary, like, 'What will it mean?'" Judiesch noted. "Like the humanities just turned into this science discipline that let go of these ideas of multiple truths. And I guess that's some dystopian reality that I feel like a lot of people are imagining, which I don't think is [necessarily] true."

An attitude that does have to be modernized, though, is the idea that humanities scholarship should solely focus on those interested in graduate work. Hartman noted that nowadays, many of her students go on to cross-disciplinary careers across the world. To her, that shows that the humanities opens up social conversations even for those who do not solely focus on pursuing the humanities.

But to have conversations openly is political—which is perhaps another reason why the humanities are under attack. Free speech is a contentious issue, especially at a time when conservative states in the US are banning ways of thought and interpretation, like critical race theory. The so-called liberal university and Canada itself is not immune from eradicating thought to support misconstrued, dangerous ideologies, Hartman pointed out.

"I'm concerned about a debate, where the premier says there's no systemic racism in Quebec, it's factually untrue. And it closes a conversation that right now is an important conversation that young people are having," Hartman said. "So if you can pronounce and get all of your ministers and society to pronounce over and over and over again, something as a truth that is not allowed to be discussed, that directly speaks against the experience of the majority of people."

In truth, the university is not neutral ground because learning itself will always be political. And updating a reading list to include a few more authors of colour is not the be-all, end-all of updating the curriculum. To do the humanities differently is not to read Toni Morrison or Edward Said just to realize that Black and Palestinian people are different. Reading racialized authors as dark drops in a sea of whiteness does not centre their art as beautiful, as dynamic, as powerful. Reading books themselves is not enough when reading Black and Palestinian authors does not reorient your worldview or your engagement in the world. While some scholars promote new models of diversifying the humanities, like the University of Chicago English Department's decision to accept only PhD students working in Black studies, these models often lack the bold structural changes that scrutinize failures in academia.

McGill is, certainly, no exception. Judiesch

on to the humanities. For example, in literature, you'll see people doing a postcolonial class like it's attached as this kind of amendment to the humanities."

No wonder when McGill likes to associate itself with the veneer of cultural capital and academic prestige. The iconic Arts building featured on almost all McGill communications reminds us of the universities' tie to the humanities. Even the first endowed research chair at McGill, the Molson Chair, is reserved for a professor studying English, showing a vested interest in the relationship between humanities and the university. This relationship, though, is unequal. The humanities is a plural discipline, but its multiplicity is erased when certain, 'newer' disciplines do not receive the same treatment as the classical, white, Western subjects of the humanities. Meanwhile, other universities across Canada like Queen's have picked up the pace on Black studies, with cultural geographer and Black feminist thinker Katherine McKinnick rightfully gaining recognition from a major source of funding, the Canada Research Council. McGill remains far behind on working on the potentially transformative changes of the Anti-Black Racism Plan.

Hartman questioned the reasoning that decides which authors, theories, and lives are political. She recalled a particularly egregious New York Times review of her translation of Jana Elhassan's psychological novel *The Ninety-Ninth Floor*, where the reviewer explicitly argued that readers should read el-Hassan's carefully crafted work because of its political content rather than the storytelling. "It's the political rather than the personal that's most engaging for the foreign reader," wrote reviewer Alison McCulloch, "since there are some truths only a storyteller can tell."

"We're arguing that certain kinds of literature in the context that we're in, let's say, in North American academia, Anglo academia, Canadian academia, etc., is itself a political statement," Hartman said. "Because the assumption is that the works that we're working on are themselves not neutral. These other things are neutral. These other things are literature. And what you're doing is: 'Oh, it's literary, but it's somehow political.'"

Even McGill's disciplinary categorization is political. Why are classes in East Asian Studies, for instance, not considered part of Languages, Literatures, and Culture or Classics? Overcoming the arbitrariness of disciplines requires

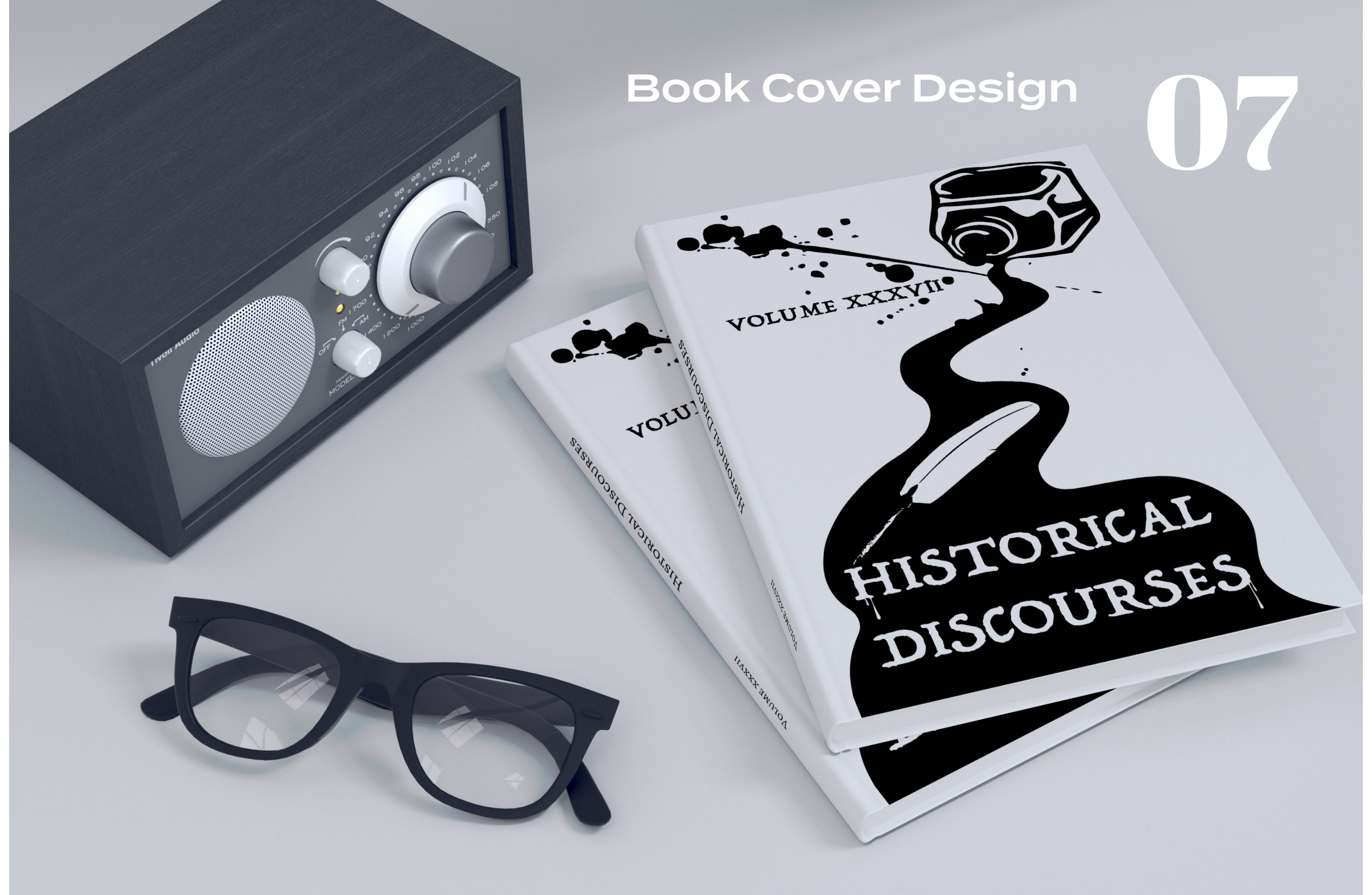
interdisciplinary work. Hartman noted that at the Institute for Islamic Studies alone, historians, literary critics, political scientists, scholars of religious studies all come together for challenging and collaborative conversations under a broad tent. Where scholars work multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary into structures, multidisciplinary fields can be undone.

"In the humanities, everyone's talking about 'undisciplining.' And I think that disciplines overall are very fundamentally a colonial construct, the idea that you can in any way separate out forms of knowledge," Judiesch said. "There's been more uptake in Indigenous scholars and Black studies scholars that are articulating that integration of different disciplines is essential to working, and decolonizing academia."

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Merch Design

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