

# THE GRIND

**PG.11** HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE

IT'S OK\*  
STUDIOS **PG.20**

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

VOL 2 ISSUE 1

**FREE**



**CEASEFIRE NOW!**

# A VERY MERRY MARKET

PRESENTED BY: **the flea**

1. Sewing pillow *for the crafter*

2. Eras Tour upcycled denim jacket *for the ultimate Swiftie*

3. Ceramic mugs *#workfromhome*

4. Canoeing beaver ornament *for the #1 teacher*

5. Knitted merino wool hat

6. Gourmet chocolate bars *for the host*

7. Porcupine quill earrings

8. Discoball charm

9. Perpetual seasonal produce calendar *for your bestie*

10. 18K gold hoops

11. Infused habnero sea salt *for the hot ones*

12. Bird + twig earrings *for your sister*

13. Set of 4 hand block printed table napkins

14. Raw wildflower Ontario honey

15. Kids vintage pants

16. Green fiesta tea cups and saucers

17. Earl grey macadamia nut caramelized white chocolate bar *for the dessert chef*

18. Trio of nut butters

19. Holiday cards *for the neighbors*

20. Book lovers pillow

21. Thank you ceramics



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FATIN ISHRAQ CHOWDHURY



"At the end of the massive November 4 rally calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, thousands of people staged a sit-in in the financial district downtown, demanding Mayor Olivia Chow join the calls for a ceasefire. On Nov. 10, Chow called for a ceasefire."

**ABOUT**  
*The Grind* was launched in fall 2022 by a group of passionate local journalists, as a new politics and culture mag for Toronto. It is a non-profit publication not owned by a media empire. We scrape by financially with no full-time staff and a lot of volunteer labour, though we prioritize paying our contributors. Around half of our revenues are from ads and the other half is from donations. We don't publish advertorials (paid advertisements that look like articles). *The Grind* comes out once every two months.

**THE GRIND MAGAZINE**  
 VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1  
 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER  
 2023

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ISSN 2817-1071

# INSIDE

**W**hen we began brainstorming for this issue of *The Grind*, we had the idea of publishing a gift guide. Excited by the concept, we began soliciting contributors, creating lists, and so on. We hoped to honour the practice of gift giving while also challenging the unfettered consumption of the holiday season. It was a difficult balance to strike back in September, and it is even more difficult now given the immense horror of our current moment. Simply put, there is no graceful way for us to marry the work that we did then with the moment we're in now. It just doesn't work. So, rather than trying to come up with a tidy narrative, we thought we'd be forthright about the fact that this issue is a bit of an awkward one. In the same issue where we are offering book and drink recommendations, we are also grieving the loss of life and calling for a ceasefire. It's

an uncomfortable pairing but one that we have tried to navigate with care and consideration. That means that from pages 11 to 18, you'll find a pull-out gift guide, a labour of love designed to help you prepare for time with loved ones. In the pages surrounding the gift guide, you will also find the analysis, voice, and perspective of *The Grind* that you have come to know — that, too, a labour of love. The next two pages are dedicated to what is happening in Gaza.

**COVER PHOTO**

Anna Lippman, a Toronto member of Independent Jewish voices and other groups, at the massive Nov. 4 rally downtown calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Read Anna's op-ed on page 4.

## READER LETTERS

I was passing through a coffee shop, mourning as I usually do the lack of an arts/music/movies/events printed listing in this city with so much going on, which I can never find out about, and saw: *The Grind*. I picked it up expecting the usual conspiracy theory crap and instead found an organized list of events worthy of the late lamented *NOW*. This is amazing. I even enjoy seeing the PC political commentary again; it's as good as the old days. I wish you the best for your community reach-out, hang in there dudes through thick and thin and rock on. A desolate city is counting on you.  
 PAUL REICHERT, BY EMAIL

Women's national soccer team appearing again in local alt paper *The Grind*. Helped promote recent home game where attendance record was smashed. Love it, thx!  
 ANNE BURBIDGE, @ABURBIDGE ON TWITTER

*The Grind* just out here reviving my hope for this city since the sale of *NOW* Magazine.  
 JOSIE RAMOAN, @JOSIERAMOAN ON TWITTER

**CORRECTIONS** In our summer issue, we published "Blackout Horoscopes" of the April/May issue horoscopes, but we did not list the artists who made the blackout version, Vlada Bilyak. Our apologies!

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**Gift giving made easy.**

# CEASEFIRE NOW!

Mass slaughter is happening in our names. We must call for it to end. That means keeping the pressure on governments and institutions.

BY THE GRIND EDITORS

On Oct. 15, a week after Hamas' attacks on Israel, in which over 200 Israelis were taken hostage and around 1,200 were killed, hundreds of scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies, and genocide studies signed a letter. They warning of the possibility of genocide being perpetrated by Israeli forces against Palestinians in Gaza.

Since then, we have watched in horror as Israel has continued dropping bombs, killing entire families — grandparents, parents, and children — in their homes, blowing up hospitals, ambulances, bakeries, and flattening northern Gaza. Israel also cut off nearly all of Gaza's supplies of food, water and power.

An estimated 1.4 million Palestinians have been displaced. On Nov. 12, Avi Dichter, a security cabinet member in the Israeli government, said on TV, "We're rolling out Nakba 2023" in northern Gaza. This was a reference and an admission to the 1948 Nakba, that the Israeli government long denied, in which Zionist settlers forcibly removed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes.

In short, just about everything the genocide scholars warned about has happened. More than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed as of Nov. 14, including over 4,000 children. This number could climb quickly. Gaza has become hell on Earth.

Canada has supported these atrocities. As of mid-November, Canada was still backing Israel's campaign in Gaza. Canada sells Israel weapons made here, and Canada refuses to call for a ceasefire in Parliament or at the United Nations (UN).

It took a while, but the federal NDP and Bloc Quebecois have called for a ceasefire, as have some Liberals. The bulk of Liberal MPs, though, are in favour of continued bloodshed, as are the Conservatives.

Only the U.S. is a more loyal ally to Israel. Despite enormous protests, including ones with thousands of American Jews saying "Not In Our Name!" and calling for a ceasefire, the U.S. hasn't budged. On Nov. 7, a White House spokesperson re-affirmed there were "no red lines" Israel could cross in its actions that would stop the U.S. from supporting its campaign.

The government of Canada's Global Affairs Ministry acknowledged but did not respond by press time to a question from *The Grind* on whether Canada has any red lines. (We will update this article online if we receive comment.)

This massacre and campaign of displacement is being carried out in our names. We have a particular responsibility to do something and an ability to affect the situation.

Israel's actions are unprecedented in terms of the exceptionally high number of children and journalists it has killed. The Israeli military has killed over 100

children per day and nearly 50 journalists, in addition to targeted bomb and sniper attacks on hospitals. Human rights organizations including the UN have called out what they see as Israel's war crimes. (Hamas' targeting of citizens on Oct. 7 has also been widely described as war crimes by Human Rights Watch, the UN and others.)

It is disorienting, then, that our nation's political leaders, who claim to uphold international law, unwaveringly support Israel while simultaneously denouncing those who support a ceasefire.

We can't forget how Toronto's Mayor Olivia Chow early on essentially labelled anyone supporting Palestinians as a terrorist, and encouraged the police to go after them.

Or how the Ontario NDP's leadership abandoned and then discarded MPP Sarah Jama, who spoke out early in favour of a ceasefire and for freedom for Palestinians.

Or how pundits at major media outlets and people in positions of power went after people like Jama, union leader Fred Hann, educator Javier Davila, student association leaders and others, trying to silence them.

Yet, through it all, people refused to be silenced. In fact, after a number of decent-sized gatherings, one of the largest rallies in Toronto in over a decade took place downtown on Nov. 4. Organizers' three demands were for Canada to call for: an immediate ceasefire, an end to Israel's 16-year siege of Gaza, and an end to Canada's complicity in Israel's war crimes.

Over 20,000 people attended, including over 1,000 Jews, according to Jewish groups.

A similar and possibly larger march happened on Nov. 12. Also that day, a much smaller but still-sizeable pro-Israel rally took place at Christie Pits Park.

There have also been more confrontational tactics used to call for a ceasefire.

Sit-ins were organized at 17 MP offices, including at the Toronto offices of Liberals Chrystia Freeland, Arif Virani and Bill Blair.

A mother shook Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly's hand at an event and repeatedly asked how many more Palestinian children need to die before Joly would call for a ceasefire. Joly did not give a direct answer.

Protestors disrupted the stuffy and tightly-scripted Scotiabank Giller Prize book awards, calling out Scotiabank for financing Israeli weapons' maker Elbit Systems, and called for a ceasefire.

A ceasefire, and the longer-term goal of freedom for the Palestinian people and peace in the region, will not come easily. The movement, which has been growing in fits and starts, must not allow any antisemitism or other forms of discrimination. And crucially, the pressure on the government must grow and grow.

That means each of us drawing inspiration from others, learning, confronting what is holding us back, and taking action with those around us.

FATIN ISHRAQ CHOWDHURY



Anna Lippman

## OPINION: PROTESTING ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE OF PALESTINIANS ISN'T ANTISEMITIC

Anna Lippman, a member of Independent Jewish Voices, calls out the dangerous conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism, a deliberate attempt to stop people from supporting Palestinians.

BY ANNA LIPPMAN

As we watch the devastation in Gaza, we are also witnessing politicians condemning Palestinian activism here as antisemitic. As both a Jew and a long-time activist in the Palestinian liberation movement, I feel immense frustration at the conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. But I'm not surprised.

In October, the right-wing Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) hosted a conference in Ottawa titled, "Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It," which focused almost entirely on supporting Israel, according to reports from attendees. I applied to go to this conference, eager to engage with fellow Jews about the antisemitism I face here and how that leads me to support Palestine. My application to attend was declined, and then, when a small group of my Jewish comrades and I protested the Palestinian genocide outside, we had the police called on us.

At the Oct. 9 Palestinian rally in Toronto that my mayor, Olivia Chow, condemned, I was present with a shirt, sign, and necklace that made my Jewish presence unmistakable. I was overwhelmed by the hugs and thanks I received from the crowd. Only in these rallies, do people go out of their way to thank me for being Jewish and showing up. As the

organizers always note, these rallies and the attendees do not promote hate of Jews, but rather call for an end to Zionism.

What many of our media outlets and politicians fail to recognize is the difference between criticizing Israel, or anti-Zionism, and hatred towards the Jewish people, which is antisemitism.

Zionism is a political ideology calling for a homeland for the Jewish people, first popularized by Theodor Herzl in the late 1800s. While today Zionism is a cornerstone of North American Jewish identity, it is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of the Jewish people.

Criticizing the settler-colonial state of Israel has little to do with hatred of Jews. Israel, as it currently exists, is based on the forced displacement of Palestinians, beginning on a massive scale in 1948 and through ongoing denial of basic rights for Palestinians. Critiquing this oppressive state not only doesn't harm me; but as someone who believes in collective liberation and human rights for all, anti-Zionism actually contributes to my safety.

When we stand for autonomy and dignity for all, that includes the Jewish community. When we confront rhetoric and actions that dehumanize any group, we humanize all people.

The culture and history of my people does not begin or end with a country formed in 1948. My grandparents are older than the state of Israel. Zionism is a political ideology, not a faith or religion. Israel is not a proxy for the entire Jewish people.

In Judaism we are taught about the concept of "tikkun olam," or repairing the world. The Torah teaches us not to stand idly by the blood of our neighbours, and instead to pursue justice. I take these teachings to heart in my Jewish faith, and I see them as antithetical to the actions of the Israeli government.

As the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, I know genocide when I see it. I also know antisemitism. I have experienced it. To water down antisemitism by attaching this label to all critiques of a settler-colonial state of Israel disregards the real experiences I and other Jewish people go through in almost every realm of our lives.

When protesters boycotted Cafe Landwer, an Israeli-owned business with strong ties to the Israeli Defence Forces and locations in occupied Palestinian territory, they were practicing the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction movement, popularly known as "BDS." This is a form of nonviolent resistance initiated in 2005 by civil society organizations in Palestine. BDS was inspired by the tactics' success during South African apartheid, and it encourages individuals, institutions and governments to stop funding Israeli apartheid.

In contrast to these political protests, which many powerful people are smearing as antisemitic, incidents such as the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, or the death threats made by a Cornell student this fall, embody antisemitic hate. Antisemitism is when people draw swastikas on synagogues, or try to burn them or shoot bullet holes in them as we saw in November in Montreal. It is the difficulty I face trying to schedule time off for high holidays. It is the shame I felt growing up when classmates would call me cheap or say I have a big nose.

Antisemitism is also assuming that the Jewish community is a monolith and that all Jews share the same feelings about Israel.

*Anna Lippman is a third-generation Ashkenzi Jewish settler on Turtle Island (North America). She is a PhD student in Sociology at York University. Anna organizes with Showing Up for Racial Justice and Independent Jewish Voices.*

# WATCHING THE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA FROM HERE

FATIN ISHRAQ CHOWDHURY

BY FARAH QADAN,  
AS SPOKEN AT A JUSTICE FOR ALL CANADA  
PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCT. 30, 2023

I'm Canadian-Palestinian. I was born in Gaza, but Canada has been my home for more than half of my life.

I come from a family of resilient dreamers, a family of displaced refugees on one side and native farmers on the other, turned architects, designers, educators, health-care providers and storytellers. A family, like all families, that loves life and cherishes their land.

In December of 2006 my family made the ultimate sacrifice to secure a vibrant future for my siblings and I, leaving behind the life we knew by choosing to migrate to Canada and make this country our home, under the premise that everyone is welcome here. Everyone.

A few days since landing here, the borders along Gaza were sealed shut indefinitely as a precursor to what has now been a 16-year long blockade. I am one of the lucky ones.

Since then, Gaza has been subjected to an unrelenting siege, riddled with deadly massacres and suffocating, dehumanizing restrictions by Israel, crippling [Gaza's] economy and restricting all movement by land, air and sea.

Countless violations against international law have been committed by Israel, imposing horror after horror with impunity. Human rights workers, journalists and medical personnel have been categorically targeted and killed. Gaza's water and agricultural lands have been purposely poisoned and contaminated. Israel has seen fit to put Gaza on a diet, controlling the caloric intake of the over 2 million residents of the Gaza Strip, half of which are children, to keep its populace malnourished. Let the scope of what this alone means sensitize you.

Since 2007, the hospital I was born in, where I drew my first breath in this world, has been reduced to rubble. The school I attended, where I learned my ABCs, has been flattened. The neighbourhood I grew up in is now no longer recognizable. I've had to mourn family and friends from afar. My childhood memories have become a eulogy.

Not a moment goes by where I do not have to contend with the grief and guilt of my privileged position while other Palestinians, including my family, don't know if they'll wake up tomorrow. I don't wish to be here. I don't relish this position. I don't wish to repeat and recount statistics and realities that we all know, proof of which is readily accessible and undeniable.

To say the narratives that have emerged in the last few weeks by our government and media groups have been a disappointment is an understatement.

Incendiary headlines and misleading narratives have given way to rising xenophobia and fear amongst Canadians. The relentless abuses, doxing and



**"Since 2007, the hospital I was born in, where I drew my first breath in this world, has been reduced to rubble. The school I attended, where I learned my ABCs, has been flattened. The neighbourhood I grew up in is now no longer recognizable."**

alienation fellow Canadians have been forced to experience has shattered our faith in our representing governing body, further perpetuated by our media that has deliberately undermined our rights to free speech and protesting by wrongfully construing our cause.

It is a profound betrayal seeing how the voices of thousands of Canadians from all walks of life that stand in solidarity with Palestinians have been so callously warped, manipulated and dismissed, even as accredited human rights organizations from across the world stage, including Israeli ones, have documented for decades the disparities, injustices and breaches of human rights laws that are embedded in the daily realities of Palestinians, as they are ethnically cleansed from their homeland.

The last few weeks have only shown a concentrated microcosm of the abuses Palestinians have endured for 75 years. We have seen unrelenting devastation and loss of human life, and it is shameful that rather than championing the collective voice of the thousands of Canadians coming from all creeds, ethnic groups and backgrounds calling for an immediate ceasefire and access to humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza, we instead bear witness to Canada's complacency, which in turn has made it complicit in the actions of Israel as it kills, maims, imprisons, silences, harasses and displaces countless civilians in the Gaza Strip and across occupied Palestine.

Mothers are not being afforded a moment to bury their children. Fathers are having to collect pieces of their babies' body parts in bags. Kids are having to write their names on their limbs in hopes that they'll be identified amidst the carnage being rained down upon them. Entire family lines have been rendered extinct.

If I could write all their names on my body, my skin would drown in ink.

Canada's bilateral relationship with Israel comes with the moral responsibility to hold its ally responsible for its desecration of international human rights and humanitarian law. This is not a matter of taking sides but of addressing the fundamental rights and dignity of a people deserving of peace, liberation, prosperity and most certainly worthy of life.

We have an obligation to tell the truth, to distinguish between the occupier and the occupied, and protect the sanctity of human life. Otherwise, we incur a debt against our moral conscience. We cannot afford the price that the Palestinians never consented to pay.

I am not alone in my sentiments. My outrage and demands belong to a diverse collective of fellow Canadians and our voice is vast and enduring, as we continue to speak for the people of Palestine. Calling for a ceasefire is the very bare minimum that Canada can do.

*Farah Qadan is a Gaza-born Palestinian-Canadian based in Ottawa. Her work centres around the intersection of community, education, and storytelling.*

## LANDWER, AROMA AND INDIGO BOYCOTTS

Actions of pro-Palestine protesters targeting a few businesses in Toronto were widely denounced as antisemitic. But, as described in Anna Lippman's article, boycotting Israeli businesses has long been a peaceful tactic of Palestinian rights groups, and is not necessarily antisemitic.

On Nov. 10, red paint was splashed on the doors of Indigo's flagship Bay and Bloor location and signs were put on the window saying founder and CEO, Heather Reisman, is "funding genocide."

There have been calls to boycott Indigo since 2007 because of Reisman and husband Gerry Schwartz's HESEG Foundation for Lone Soldiers, an organization which encourages foreigners to join the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center and others pointed out the Indigo action coincided with the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night Nazis vandalized many Jewish businesses in 1938. Indigo CEO Reisman is Jewish. This sparked fears over the incident's significance.

Beyond that, there doesn't seem to be evidence that activists targeted the store because of Reisman's religion.

Cafe Landwer is part of a large Israeli company with many locations there. One location was built on top of an ancient Islamic cemetery in Jerusalem in 2015, which outraged many Palestinians.

Aroma Espresso Bar is an Israeli company which built locations in the occupied West Bank. The development pushed out Palestinians and is illegal under international law.

At pro-Palestinian protests, there were calls and chants to boycott these cafés.

Other businesses targeted around Canada this fall for their involvement with Israel include Scotiabank, L3Harris (weapons), Lockheed Martin (weapons) and INKAS (weapons).

## HOSTAGES' FAMILIES FRUSTRATED WITH ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

Several family members in Israel are becoming increasingly frustrated with the government, unsure if their loved ones taken hostage by Hamas are alive, or whether there is a strategy for getting them back from Gaza. Some family members have called for a prisoner exchange, which Hamas had also called for. Israel holds over 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

Over 200 Israelis were taken from their families and homes by Hamas as hostages on Oct. 7. Their families and people around the world have called to bring them back home.

*The Guardian* and others have reported that Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu could have secured the release of more hostages early in the conflict in exchange for agreeing to a temporary ceasefire with Hamas, but chose not to.

"According to three sources familiar with the talks," *The Guardian* reports, "the original deal on the table involved freeing children, women and elderly and sick people in exchange for a five-day ceasefire, but the Israeli government turned this down and demonstrated its rejection with the launch of the ground offensive."

Netanyahu has been adamant that Hamas release all the hostages unconditionally.

As of mid-November, Hamas released four hostages.



READ ONLINE



KAROLLYNE VIDEIRA / UNSPLASH

## TRANS RIGHTS PROTESTS

This fall, rallies against “gender ideology in schools” were organized in at least 80 cities and towns in Ontario by the group “1MillionMarch4Children.”

The group is advocating to eliminate Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) curriculums in Canada, suppressing students’ access to potentially life-saving information about LGBTQ2S+ identity, community, and health. Information about cisgender and heterosexual (or “straight”) identities remains abundantly available.

The rallies were often met by counter-protests defending trans rights, with the counter-protests sometimes larger, sometimes smaller, and other times roughly equal in size.

## TEACHERS' STRIKE?

Ontario public elementary and Catholic school teachers say they will go on strike if the province doesn't deliver what students and teachers need.

Teachers in three unions, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), voted almost unanimously in favour of strike mandates, should negotiations stall.

“Our members have been working for over a year without a contract, and their patience has run out,” ETFO president Karen Brown said in a press release. According to Brown, members’ priorities include “more supports for students with special needs, acknowledging the staffing crisis in education, putting a fair compensation offer on the table, and addressing violence in schools.”

## STOPPING DEPORTATIONS AND WAGE THEFT

In June, community members in Malton (northeast Mississauga) successfully stopped the deportations of dozens of Indian international students who were victims of immigration fraud.

The group behind the effort, Naujawan Support Network (NSN), organizes people in the area to resist the exploitation of international students and immigrant workers.

In September, the group recovered \$185,000 in wages stolen from bakery workers after protesting for 33 days straight outside Live Freely Foods. In two years, the group has recovered over \$650,000 in stolen wages and gotten the workers paid.



READ ONLINE



Ontario Premier Doug Ford

## ONTARIO LEAVING PUBLIC HOSPITALS UNDERUSED, SHIFTING FUNDS TO PRIVATE CLINICS

**E**arlier this year, Doug Ford’s Conservatives passed legislation allowing private clinics to conduct more OHIP-covered surgeries. Critics said this will create a two-tiered system with higher fees, wealthy patients jumping the line, and private clinics poaching health-care workers from the crumbling public system.

In August, Ontario’s independent Financial Accountability Office reported that the Conservatives spent \$1.7 billion less than planned on health care in 2022-23. Hundreds of rural and small-town emergency departments have temporarily or permanently closed.

Reinvesting in dormant hospital spaces could go a long way to clearing

surgery backlogs in the province, according to a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released in October. The report reaffirms that it is not lack of infrastructure, but lack of operational funding that is worsening patient care. Shifting funds to private clinics will only make this worse, they predict.

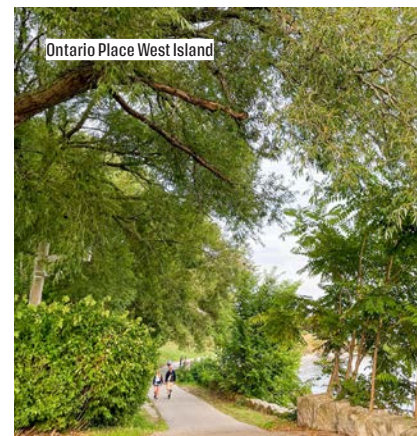
There have been a number of rallies, but whether health-care workers or the wider public will escalate their tactics to pressure the government remains to be seen.

There is a history of workers in Canada defying the law — or nearly defying it — to fight for a robust health-care system, as Hamilton-based nurse Rajbeer Grewal recently wrote about in

*Briarpatch Magazine*. This includes going on strike and refusing to work in Alberta in 1988 and 2020, Saskatchewan in 1998, and Nova Scotia in 2001.

In Quebec, in 1999, after being legislated back to work, union leader Chantal Boivin tells *Briarpatch* that, “for more than a year, there was real guerrilla [activity] locally: overtime ban, right of refusal, days of recuperation, illegal work stoppage, not to mention all the spontaneous actions that were organized in many centres.”

In October 2021, Quebec nurses refused to work their “legally mandated overtime” of dangerously long extra shifts, which eventually won them some improvements.



ONTARIO PLACE FOR ALL

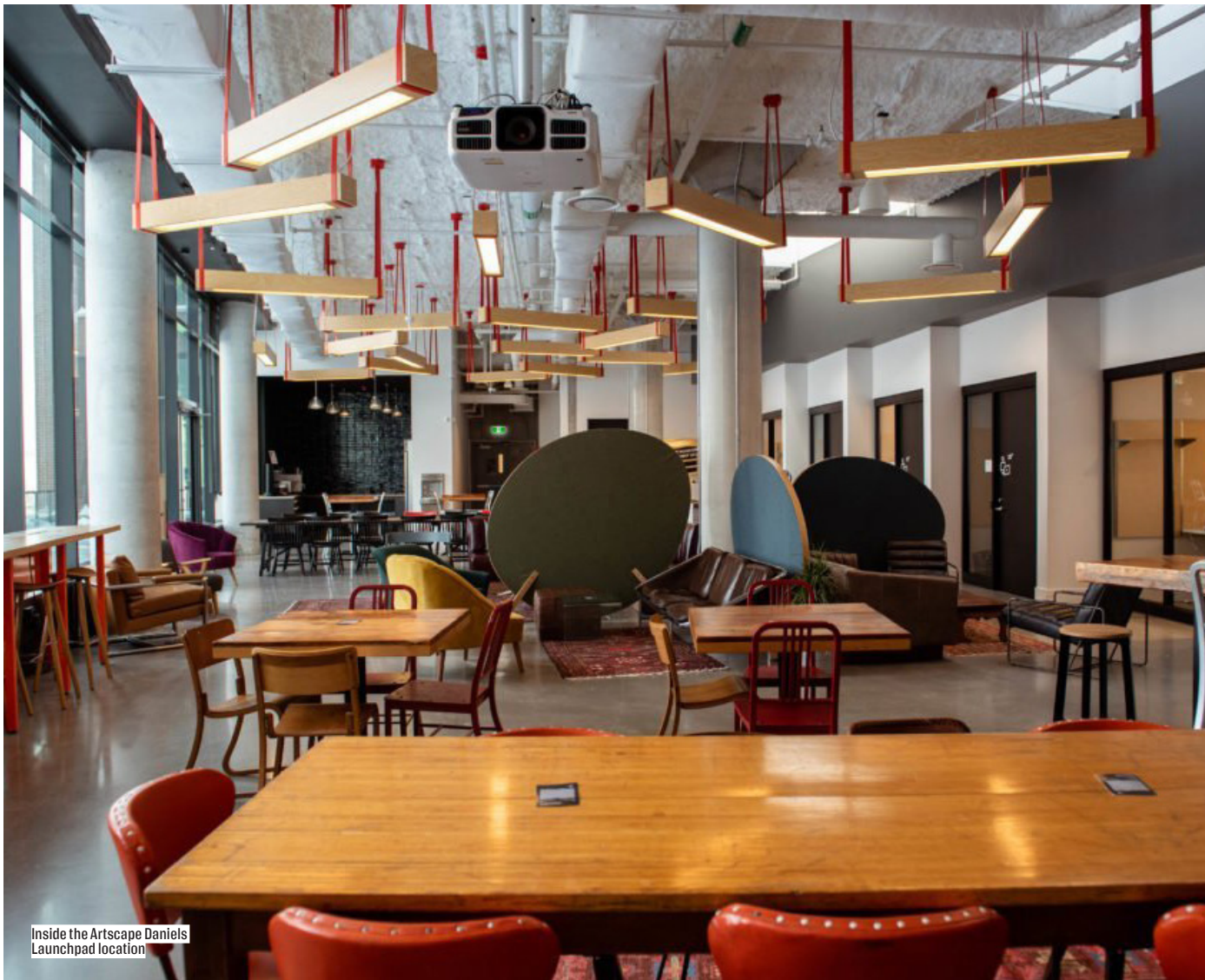
## ONTARIO PLACE IN LIMBO

Existing water and sewage infrastructure at Ontario Place is entirely unsuited to support the mega-spa proposed by Therme, the Austrian luxury developer. That’s according to a recent *Spacing Magazine* investigation.

Ontario has earmarked \$200 million for site remediation and other upgrades, but documents suggest far more money will be needed. Toronto residents could be forced to foot that bill, or Ford could reach into the provincial treasury again, or both.

The province seemed to be rushing to subcontract a company to begin cutting down over 1,500 trees at Ontario Place this fall to make way for construction. Grassroots group Ontario Place for All was signing up volunteers who are ready to take direct action to stop the urban forest from being felled. In late October, a wooden barrier was put up around much of the area.

In November, the provincial auditor general’s office announced it will investigate the Ontario Place redevelopment process. The NDP uncovered documents it says show the redevelopment bidding process was rigged in Therme’s favour.



Inside the Artscape Daniels Launchpad location



Artscape's Weston Common location in the city's northwest

## ARTSCAPE BECOMING TWO NEW NON-PROFITS, LOSING SOME PROPERTIES

**A**ccording to a letter sent by Artscape to its “tenants and owners” on Nov. 2, a portion of the arts organization will be taken over by two new non-profits, Artscape Non-profit Homes Inc. and Arthubs Toronto Inc. Other pieces will be sold off.

Artscape is an important cultural institution in Toronto, with nearly 400 artists living or working in spaces owned or managed by the organization.

In August, Artscape announced that it would be placed in receivership, meaning its assets would be sold off because it was effectively bankrupt and unable to pay its debts. After public outcry, the city and Artscape announced they would try to find a way to keep operations going.

While most of its programs and properties will continue operating under the two new non-profits, Artscape Daniels Launchpad (130 Queens Quay E, 4th Floor), Artscape Triangle Lofts (38 Abell St., off Queen W), Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw St.), and Artscape Lofts (210 Simcoe) will be sold off to other owners, leaving tenants uncertain about their future.

The City of Toronto told *The Grind* in a statement that “the City provided \$250,000 to the Toronto Artscape Foundation in September 2023 to ensure continuity of services and tenancies during the forbearance period prior to Artscape entering into the Receivership. The City is currently looking into additional funding, to complement a larger

sum of privately-raised philanthropic donations, that could be provided to ArtHubs Toronto to support continued work towards a sustainable solution to protect the needs of tenants, preserve services, and manage City assets.”

Artscape Workers United represents 25 workers who were laid off in August without severance and, in many cases, notice. The group successfully advocated to be paid vacation pay they were owed. But the city excluded them from the planning process about Artscape’s future. City staff and leaders from the philanthropic, business, and community sectors were invited to the discussions.



### GROCERY PRICE TRACKER LAUNCHED BY THE HOSER

This fall, *The Hoser* launched its Grocery Tracker initiative. The tracker scrapes publicly available pricing data from independent grocers and larger grocery chains. It provides easily accessible info on the fluctuating prices of food items across the GTA, with particular attention on common staples like bread and milk. *The Hoser*, an independent media company with ties to *The Grind*, publishes bi-weekly reports and newsletters on key findings curated by its editors and journalists. The project is live at [hosergrocerytracker.ca](http://hosergrocerytracker.ca).

### SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST BY-ELECTION NOV. 30

A new city councillor will be elected in Scarborough Southwest on Nov. 30.

The seat became empty after Gary Crawford, re-elected in 2022, left his position to run unsuccessfully for provincial office with Doug Ford’s Conservatives this summer.

In the 2022 municipal race, Parthi Kandavel, who has ties to the Liberal Party, came second behind Crawford, and Kevin Rupasinghe, who has ties to the NDP, came third. Both are running again this time, along with 21 other candidates. The Toronto and York Region Labour Council has endorsed Rupasinghe.

A candidates forum is being held Nov. 23 at the Oakridge Community Centre, 63 Pharmacy Ave., from 7 to 9 p.m.

### TPL WEBSITE DOWN, AFFECTING ACCESS TO SERVICES

The Toronto Public Library website and other tech services went down on Oct. 27 due to ransomware attacks and remained down for weeks, the library says.

This has affected access to important services for thousands of Torontonians who rely on the public library. This includes the ability to use computers at branches, accessing the website to search for books and events and services, using online accounts, and more.

A makeshift site with links to some online services was posted while the main site was down.



READ ONLINE

# KENSINGTON'S ENCAMPMENTS

The city and some neighbours won't let encampment residents simply live. A new application for a pollinator garden threatens to lead to the eviction of a well-established encampment.

BY MEGAN KINCH

**K**eith is a construction labourer. He is currently living in a tent in Bellevue Park, in the centre of Kensington Market. A long, protracted breakup caused him to fall into debt and depression, and eventually lose his apartment. He makes a good wage, but it's unstable, and because of bad credit, he can't rent a place even when he has money.

Keith eventually set up a tent in the park, where he says he feels a sense of community. He started talking more again and having friends. It sucks to be homeless, but Keith is always busy helping someone find a sleeping bag, or fixing a tarp, or finding places for friends to sit off the cold ground.

This summer, people who had been sleeping rough in Bellevue Park eventually put up tarps and tents. This new Bellevue Park encampment is mostly people with long-term connections to the area. Most have jobs, and some are members of unions. Victims of rent scams, bad breakups, and bad faith evictions, they are people who make money and can pay rent, but can't get places due to bad credit or not having first and last month's rent on hand.

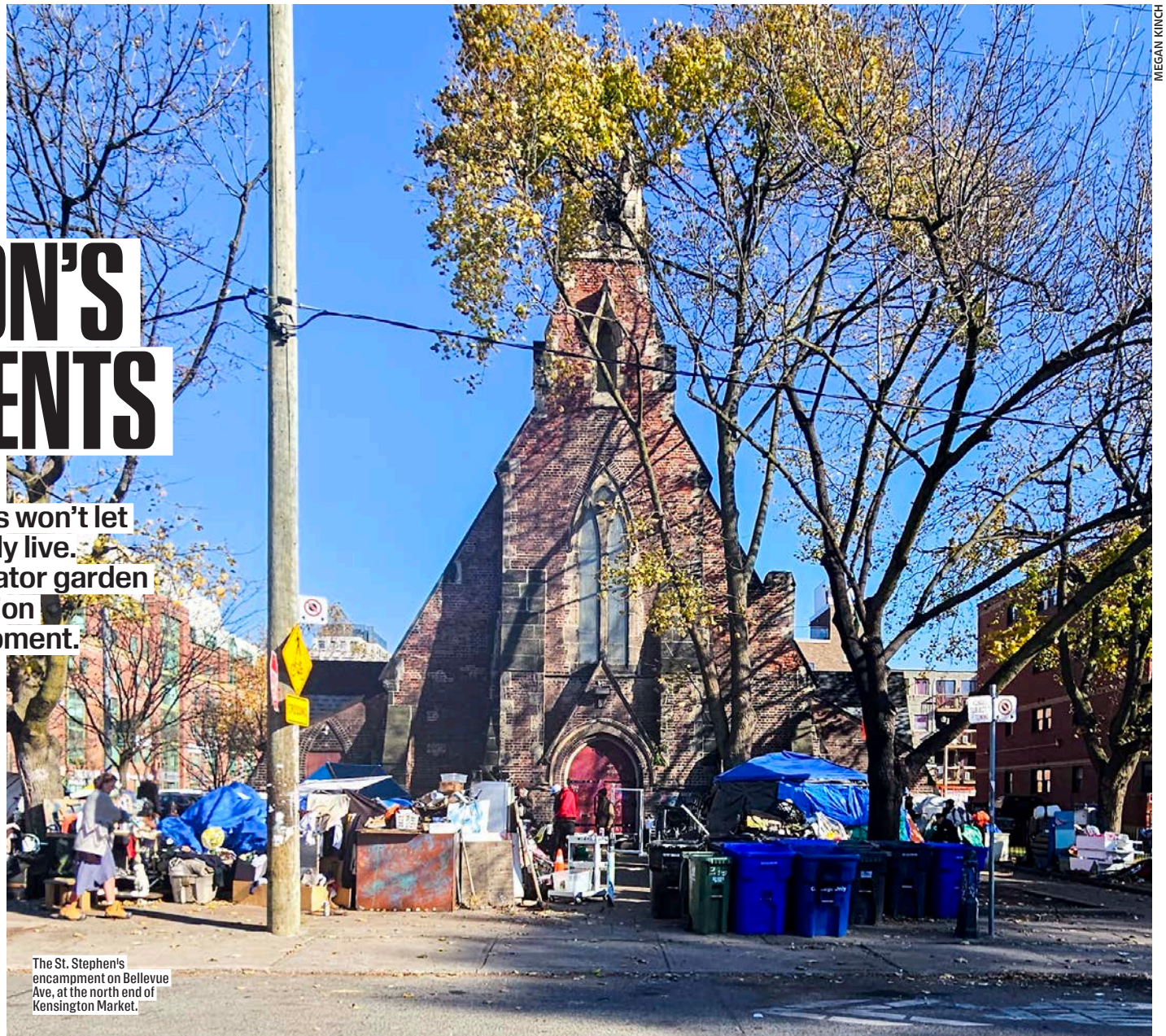
While there are almost daily visits from people with the city's Streets to Homes division and other agencies like the Encampment office (see text box), homes have not been materializing.

One day, Keith told me he despairs of ever getting into any kind of social housing. But the next day he tells me he talked to a worker who said they might be able to find him something. Most residents of that encampment are on that roller coaster; housing always seems around the corner, but it never comes through.

In the Kensington area, during the early phase of the pandemic, there was a large encampment at Alexandra Park, which was violently cleared in summer 2021 along with the encampments at Trinity Bellwoods and Lamport Stadium parks.

An encampment in Sonya's Parkette in the Market and an encampment in Bellevue Park were later cleared more slowly and quietly, tent-by-tent, by the city.

Eventually, a stable encampment emerged in the churchyard of St Stephen's in the field, at the corner of College Street and Bellevue Avenue. It has now been going for several



The St. Stephen's encampment on Bellevue Ave, at the north end of Kensington Market.



Keith



Pirate

years with support from the church and other groups.

Pirate, so-called for his eyepatch, decided to lean into the name, and lives in the St Stephen's churchyard encampment. He is a familiar face at pedestrian Sundays and other events, selling costume jewelry and other small items for money or barter, and is one of the most prominent information vendors. He has been living homeless in Toronto for

three years, with two of those in the churchyard encampment.

He needs to be there for his business, plus it's clear he finds meaning in creating community. He says the encampment "is like the Three Little Pigs. Tents are like a house of straw. I'm trying to build a house of sticks". It's his goal to winterize the encampment with pallets and raise up the tents off the ground so they stay dry and warmer.

## CITY SHIFTS ENCAMPMENTS MANAGEMENT TO NEW OFFICE

Encampment management during the early pandemic was handled by the city's Office of Emergency Management (now Toronto Emergency Management). But after a 2022 review, responsibility for encampments is now with the new Encampment Office, which is headed by John Francisco and which is located in the Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA). The Administration, it seems, is now ultimately responsible for managing encampment clearings, if they are conducted.

One day, city workers showed up and started to throw out people's things, he says, including the fire extinguishers that he had procured for the camp. "Why would you do that to fire extinguishers?" he asks. He wants to install fire detectors in the tent cluster as well. He says the city should be helping him instead of putting up barriers and disrupting the encampment. "They should be helping me to set it up. I need a drill. I need a staple gun. The list goes on. I need help with the pallets. It's going to happen anyway."

Pirate says that the relationship with the church, St Stephen-in-the-Fields, has been good, and that they keep communication open. He says he wants to make the encampment look like a little village, and pull back from the edge of the street, which is more visible.

Maggie Helwig, the minister at the Anglican Church, has become a kind of de-facto social worker and an advocate fighting for encampment. She says, "the city has been negatively disposed towards encampments in general. The only difference with our encampment in the churchyard is that they are directly connected to an institution which is advocating for them."

The church has been using the space as a churchyard since 1864. The land however, like the rest of the front yards on both sides of Bellevue, is formally designated as a city of Toronto transportation right of way, dating from the days when Bellevue was a grand boulevard.

"Specific threats to clear the encampment go back to November 2022" says Helwig. "So



**“We’ve been spending the last year with constant threats [of eviction], which are prevented, revised, [and] modified over and over. It’s exhausting for us. It’s exhausting for the encampment residents.”**

we’ve been spending the last year with constant threats, which are prevented, revised, [and] modified over and over. It’s exhausting for us. It’s exhausting for the encampment residents.”

Previously, the area’s city councillor, Diane Saxe, told the *Globe and Mail* she wanted to displace the encampment to build a homeless memoria. A proposal which was widely criticized.

The newest threat comes from a brand-new organization called Friends of Bellevue Parkette.

Publicly available city documents show that the group was registered in August and is proposing a pollinator garden, which would require evicting the encampment in order to be installed. The group was incorporated under the directorship of one person, Elizabeth Girven, who is the director of Westside Montessori School, located just down the street. Friends of Bellevue Parkette’s incorporation documents show no website, no criteria for membership, and no publicized way to join.

There is, actually, no “Bellevue Parkette.” It’s a made-up name for the churchyard, currently used as an encampment, designated for transportation.

As of press time, the church and encampment residents have a case before the courts to get an injunction to block the pollinator garden application from leading to an eviction of the encampment.

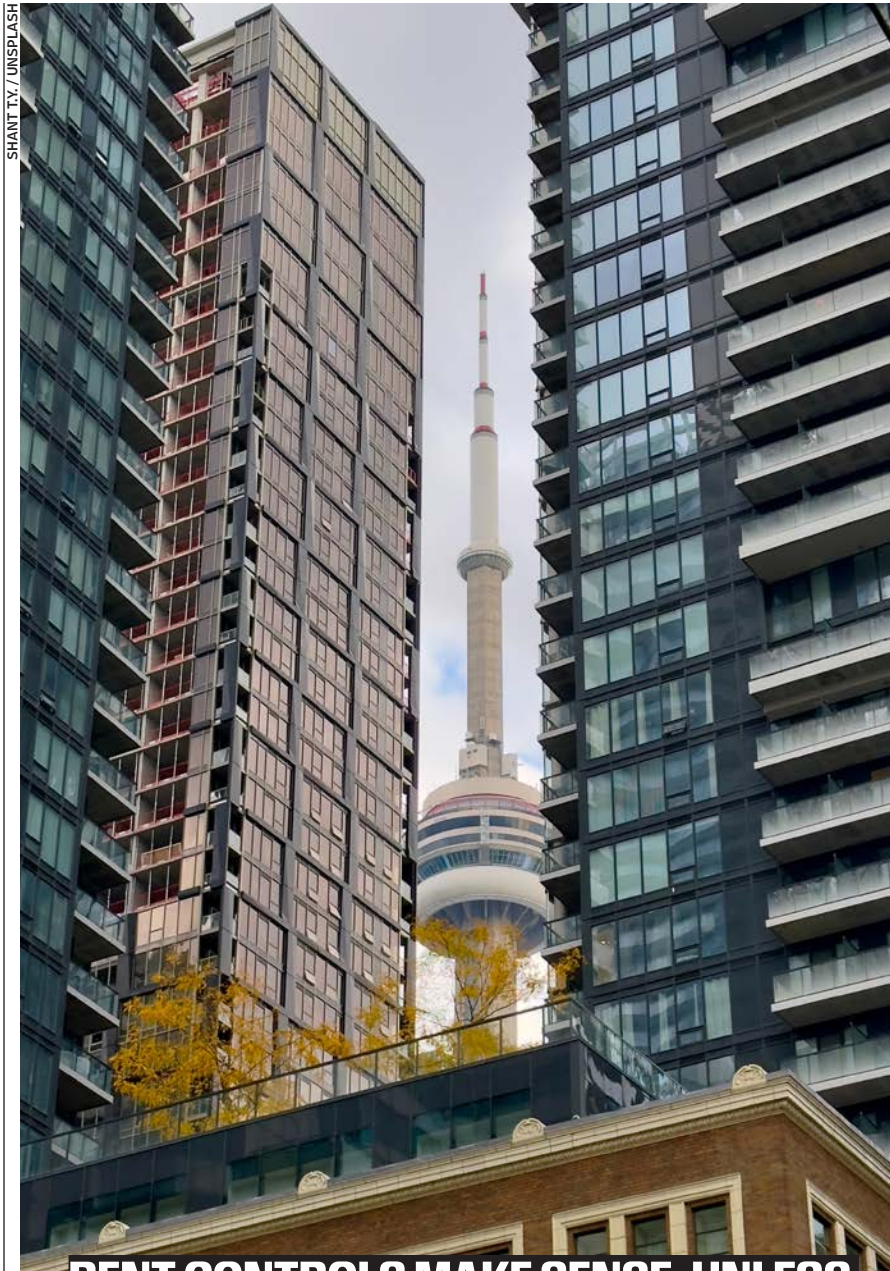
Evicting an encampment the size of the one at St. Stephen’s is not something the city has done since summer 2021. The city did, however, temporarily evict part of the St. Stephen’s encampment using outreach workers and a bulldozer in December 2022 as freezing rain came down. The city had notified the church and residents a week earlier that arborists would be coming to remove two trees, but the arborist was able to save one.

Dominique Russell is the founder of Friends of Kensington Market and the co-chair of the Kensington Market Community Land Trust. She raised two children who went to the nearby public school in Kensington, a stone’s throw from the St. Stephen’s encampment.

“There’s children walking by all the time,” she says. “West Neighbourhood House has a daycare right beside the Montessori school. It’s only this private school that has this problem. And why is that?”

Russell points out that the Montessori school is leasing a building owned by the city of Toronto. The building was formerly used as a shelter for abused women and children.

“Is a private school the best use of public, City of Toronto land in this neighborhood?” Russell asks.



## RENT CONTROLS MAKE SENSE, UNLESS YOU’RE A GREEDY LANDLORD

BY RICARDO TRANJAN

RENTS CONTINUE TO SKYROCKET in Toronto. The average asking rent for a two-bedroom unit has reached \$3,400. To reasonably afford a one-bedroom unit, full-time workers must earn \$26 per hour, nearly \$10 more than the minimum wage. What’s worse, rent controls are becoming weaker in Ontario.

The Ford government abolished rent controls in units built after 2018. Occupied units built before that are subject to an annual rent increase guideline, which will be 2.5 per cent in 2024.

To get around that, landlords are increasingly applying for above-guideline rent increases (AGIs), which can add up to nine per cent over three years, on top of the guideline increases. There are no controls on vacant units, which pushes average rents up and creates a financial incentive for evictions.

Against this backdrop, Toronto city council is considering a new housing plan. If approved, any new unit built with city support will be subjected to rent controls. The city’s plan also asks the province to re-enact controls in units built after 2018.

Landlords and developers are sure to argue against these measures. They always argue against controls, saying regulation slows new construction, which is bad for everyone.

But that’s not true.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) — the government agency with the best housing data — has carefully analyzed the impact of rent controls on construction, which the agency calls “rent starts.” The analysis looked at big Canadian cities with and without rent controls from 1971 to 2019 — almost 50 years of data.

The main finding of the analysis: “There was no significant evidence that rental starts were lower in rent control markets than in no rent control markets.”

Rent controls don’t slow construction or make rentals unprofitable. They simply put a limit on profit. The real reason landlords oppose rent controls is self-interest and greed. They want the freedom to squeeze tenants.

## TRAINING TO TAKE ON LANDLORDS AND STOP RENT INCREASES

We asked the York South-Weston Tenant Union to tell us about their new program

BY YORK SOUTH-WESTON TENANT UNION

**F**ed up with ever-rising rent? Inspired by the rent strike happening in York South-Weston? Want to make more stuff like that happen?

The York South-Weston Tenant Union in Toronto organizes free online workshops to learn and exchange ideas about how to build tenant power in your building and community. We provide step-by-step guides on starting a tenant association, taking action and fighting back against landlords’ greed.

You’ll learn to connect specific issues in a building — like lack of repairs, unfair rent increases and above-guideline rent increase (AGI) applications — with broader dynamics in the housing market, including the role of corporate landlords. We give you strategies to fight back.

You will hear first-hand from experienced tenant organizers from across the province. They’ll talk about how to design your flyers, what messaging works at the door and how to pivot to respond to the landlord’s messaging around AGIs and renovations.

Hear about the different stages of escalating a fight against a landlord, from knocking on doors, to holding a meeting, to phone zaps, rallies and finally to a rent strike. You’ll also be invited to get hands-on experience in the rent strikes in York South-Weston.

Together, we’ll walk through how to stop rent increases, the importance of collective organizing, and the role of and limitations to relying on the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). Remember: Lawyers won’t save us!

The next round starts in December with meetings once a week for three weeks. For more information, visit [www.tenantunion.ca/tenantpower](http://www.tenantunion.ca/tenantpower), email [info@tenantunion.ca](mailto:info@tenantunion.ca) or call 647-479-9796.



READ ONLINE



READ ONLINE

What Julian Yi-Zhong Hou's Bicycle art piece would have looked like displayed on the side of the Pan Am Centre in Markham.



# QUEER PUBLIC ARTWORK CANCELLED IN MARKHAM

A large 120 x 37-foot photo collage, titled *Bicycle*, was printed and ready to go on the outside of the Pan Am Centre in Markham, ON, just north of Toronto.

But days before the Sept. 10 premiere, Vancouver-based artist Julian Yi-Zhong Hou was notified it would not be going up.

Hou had been invited a year before by the City of Markham's public art curator, Yan Wu, to contribute one piece to the city's series of public art installations, *Façade*. The exhibit was supported by the public art curator of the Art Gallery of York University. Hou told *The Grind* it had received all necessary approvals and was ready to be installed in September, until it was cancelled at the last minute, with no reason provided.

Hou, along with the subject photographed in the piece, James Albers (a.k.a. Lady Boi Bangkok), and a representative of York Region Pride, Grant Peckford, went

public about the cancellation a month later.

"While we cannot know the precise motivation for the last-minute cancellation, we are concerned by what can most easily be read as a politically-driven, fearful response to public representation of queer bodies, and specifically, a subject in drag," they write in a statement.

When pressed, the City said in a statement that the artwork was not "inclusive and sensitive to all."

The statement goes on to apologize to the artist and say that the City is committed to finding an alternative opportunity to show the piece.

As of Nov 6., Hou tells *The Grind* the City has not contacted him about unveiling the piece elsewhere.

"They also did not apologize to me directly about the cancellation, but instead only to the CBC [and other media]," Hou says.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

### HOU TELLS THE GRIND:

"I was interested in the demographics of Markham and how it has radically shifted over the past while. There are a lot of Asian people living there now, and I was interested in this demographic hybridity. James being himself half Asian and half Caucasian, I thought they would be an interesting embodiment of that hybridity.

"I also insert a lot of symbolism. There is the Chinese character from the 'I Ching' divination method on the clothing. There are references to mystical practices that are both from China, and Cartomancy, which is more of a European tradition of divination."

James performs in drag as Lady Boi Bangkok on the left side of the piece,

while on the right they appear "as themselves, as gender-fluid, how he or they identify," says Hou.

"I was interested in gender performance on the left side of the image, contrasting with gender fluidity [on the right]," they explain.

Hou hired fashion photographers, thinking they could "help the subject matter fit the landscape, because people are so used to seeing fashion images."

"I knew on some level, if it's the mysticism or the objects being queer, that [the piece] would be novel in a way. But I thought with fashion [photography], it could help it blend in more."

Hou hopes to exhibit *Bicycle* in Vancouver in the spring.



Artist Jenin Yaseen staging a sit-in at the Royal Ontario Museum on Oct. 28, with her painting.

## ROM Censors Palestinian-American Artists

JENIN YASEEN AND SAMEERAH AHMAD, two Palestinian-American artists, were recently censored by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) when staff made changes to *Death: Life's Greatest Mystery*.

The exhibition explores death rituals from around the world. But the museum had removed a panel with the word "Palestine" without the artists' permission, as well as other elements relating to Palestine and Muslim mourning traditions.

The artists took to Instagram and then staged an 18-hour sit-in starting Oct. 28. From their account, romystery, they posted that the ROM's actions made it "complicit in the dehumanization of Palestinians in both life and death."

Feeling the heat, the ROM backtracked and on Nov. 3 agreed to reinstate the work in full, saying it had made the changes "to keep the focus of the exhibition on the cultural practices, rituals, and science surrounding life and death, rather than current events."

However, on their Instagram account that same day, the artists said the ROM had not restored their work to its original — by redesigning it, incorrectly labeling items, misattributing quotes and misspelling names. They also say there was "a significant discrepancy in the way the English was translated into French, which completely changes the original words and meaning."

The ROM added labels saying that the views expressed in the artwork did not reflect those of the museum. This includes what the artists describe as a discriminatory content warning on a barrier installed while approaching the green burial display.

The point of the exhibit, said Yaseen, was precisely to help Palestinians be seen as more than just statistics. "They're human beings with dreams and hopes, and they're being completely eradicated," she said.

The travelling exhibit began earlier this year at Chicago's Field Museum, where it was not censored. It's on display at the ROM until April 7.

**THE  
GRIND**

Second Voyage in  
Riverside.

# HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



# VINTAGE, FLEA & MORE

You don't have to go big-box this holiday season. There's a quirky gift store, a treasure-packed vintage shop, or an enchanting holiday market filled with gift-able goods near you. Natalia Manzocco, former food and lifestyle editor at the old *NOW Magazine*, shares some notable spots.

BY NATALIA MANZOCCO



## STORES

### ROSE CEREMONY GEARY AVE.

Located in a tiny corner of an even tinier variety store off Geary, this gift shop is tiny but mighty. '90s glam-trash is the name of the game, from art to tchotchkes to vintage clothing, with a nice plus-size-friendly selection. ■ 340 Westmoreland Ave N, [roseceremonyshop.com](http://roseceremonyshop.com)

### SECOND VOYAGE RIVERSIDE

Well-priced gems abound at this boutique off Broadview, whether you're shopping for someone's closet, kitchen, bar cart, or anywhere in between. Choose your vibe: '70s cowboy, '60s flower power and '80s pastel-chic. ■ 734 Queen St E, [secondvoyage.ca](http://secondvoyage.ca)

### MRS. HUIZENGA THE JUNCTION

At twice the size of this long-running shop's previous location on Roncy, this sprawling boutique is packed with vintage treasures. Mugs, pennants, clothing, dishware and art can be tucked around every corner — often for an extremely fair price. ■ 2906 Dundas St W, [mrs\\_huizenga on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/mrs_huizenga)

### ARTS MARKET THE JUNCTION, RIVERSIDE, AND THE DANFORTH

Artists, crafters and vintage dealers rent display spaces in each location of this family of stores. Each offers a different slice of the city's art scene, from Toronto-themed swag to jewellery, body products and prints. Vintage hounds will particularly dig the basement of the Junction location. ■ 2978 Dundas St W, 1856 Danforth Ave, 790 Queen St E, [artsmarket.ca](http://artsmarket.ca)

### GADABOUT LESLIEVILLE

Vintage handbags? Military ephemera? Disposable paper dresses from the '60s? Whatever your gift-ee is into, this two-floor cabinet of curiosities will have something their collection is missing. For best results, give yourself plenty of time to dig. ■ 1300 Queen St W, [gadaboutvintage.com](http://gadaboutvintage.com)

### SECRET PLANET THE DANFORTH

This indie print shop is a magnet for anyone who enjoys cute stuff, retro stuff, gay stuff, space, cats, or any combo of the above. Jackie Lee's Toronto neighbourhood tees and intergalactic-themed space posters are surefire hits, but pieces from countless other indie brands and artists bulk out the selection for maximum gift potential. ■ 918 Danforth Ave, [secretplanet.ca](http://secretplanet.ca)

### EASY TIGER DUNDAS WEST

The prices trend higher at this Dundas gift shop, but if your loved one has a fave indie brand of choice (e.g. Baggu, Areaware), it's likely here. You'll also find ceramics, candles and body care from local makers. Head to sister store Ease across the street for slow fashion pieces, including a selection of under-\$50 accessories. ■ 1447 Dundas St W, [easytigergoods.com](http://easytigergoods.com)

### I HAVE A CRUSH ON YOU LIBERTY VILLAGE

Bringing a much-needed dose of colour and chaos to Liberty Village is this spanned-out gift shop tucked away off Jefferson. This is a go-to spot for greeting cards, which is fitting, since founder Amy Kwong also runs card brand Smitten Kitten. It's also a go-to spot for gold leaf rolling papers and giant prints of tarot cards featuring sexy drawings of Simpsons characters. ■ 51 Jefferson Ave, [ihaveacrushonyou.ca](http://ihaveacrushonyou.ca)

## ALSO NOTABLE

**OLD'S COOL GENERAL STORE** ■ East York, 250 Westlake Ave, [oldscoolgeneralstore.com](http://oldscoolgeneralstore.com)

**96 TEARS VINTAGE** ■ Bloor West, 1267 Bloor St W, [96tearsvintage.com](http://96tearsvintage.com)

**TOKKI** ■ Junction, 1570 Dupont St, [tokki.ca](http://tokki.ca)

**ONCE UPON A CHILD** ■ Etobicoke, (1020 Islington Ave), Scarborough (1001 Sandhurst Cir) and Leaside (45 Overlea Blvd), [onceuponachild.com](http://onceuponachild.com)

**PARIS CALLING** ■ Etobicoke, 3043 Lake Shore Blvd W, [pariscalling.ca](http://pariscalling.ca)

**VINTAGE VENDORS** ■ Ajax, 19 Notion Rd, [vintagevendors.ca](http://vintagevendors.ca)

Photos from inside Second Voyage in Riverside

READ ONLINE



## EVENTS

### WELCOME MARKET'S "TIS THE SZN" QUEEN WEST

The city plays host to countless holiday markets, but this relative newcomer is notable for its colourful pop-up experience and a product slate that runs from the relentlessly adorable to the reliably on-trend.

- Weekends Nov 18-Dec 23, 938 Queen St West, @ [the.welcome.market](http://the.welcome.market)

### ONE OF A KIND SHOW EXHIBITION PLACE

The Lollapalooza of local craft shows likely needs no introduction, but this massive biannual event features vendors you won't see anywhere else during the holidays. The selection of clothing, handmade housewares and artisanal snacks is big enough to crush most of your gift list. Bring water and walking shoes.

- Nov 23-Dec 3, Enercare Centre, 100 Princes' Blvd #1, [oneofakindshow.com](http://oneofakindshow.com)

### SUNDAY VARIETY ST. LAWRENCE MARKET

The years-old Sunday flea market tradition at St. Lawrence was revived this year by Kieran Sullivan, longtime doyenne of Toronto vintage and the founder of popular pop-up Hippy Market. The market now features a lively mix of clothing, art, decor, handmade items and snacks, with the all-vintage New Old Antique Market taking over on occasional weekends.

- Sundays, 125 The Esplanade, [sundayvariety.com](http://sundayvariety.com)

## ALSO NOTABLE

**HOGTOWN FLEA** ■ Riverside, Nov 19, Dec 3 & Dec 17, 24 McGee St, [hogtownflea on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hogtownflea)

**CANADA BLACK OWNED MARKETPLACE CHRISTMAS MARKET** ■ Scarborough, Dec 10, 1081 Progress Ave, [canadablackownedmarketplace.ca](http://canadablackownedmarketplace.ca)

**MISSISSAUGA FESTIVAL OF TREES ARTISAN MARKET** ■ Mississauga, Dec 8, 1352 Lakeshore Rd E, [creativehub1352.ca](http://creativehub1352.ca)

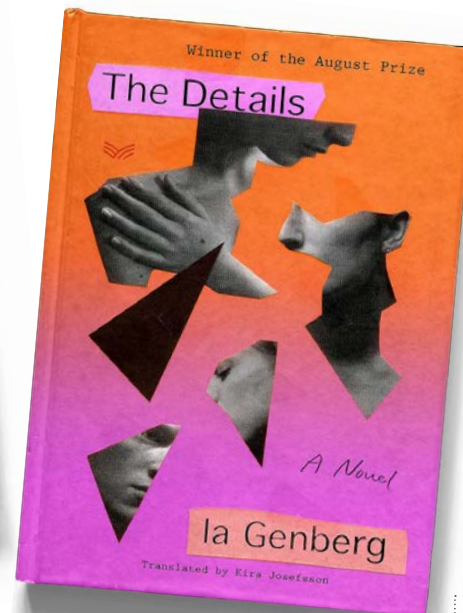
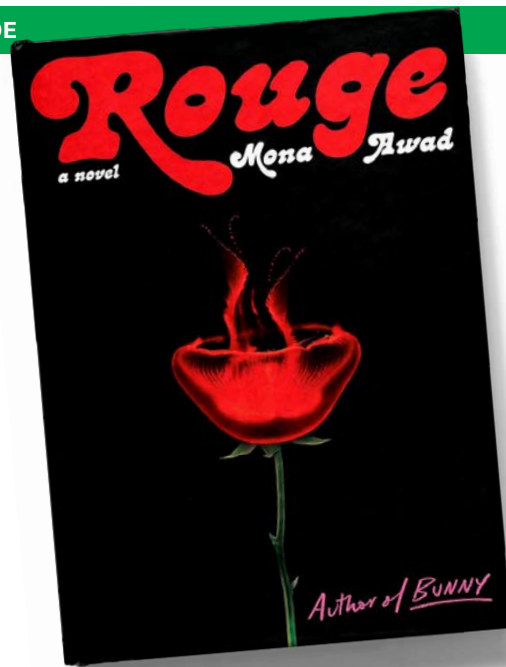
**HOLIDAY FAIR IN THE SQUARE** ■ North York, Dec 1-23, Mel Lastman Square, [fairinthesquare.ca](http://fairinthesquare.ca)



A brilliant example of ethical engagement and methodological integrity.



FERNWOOD PUBLISHING  
CRITICAL BOOKS FOR CRITICAL THINKERS



READ ONLINE



Staff at Type Books' three locations share their recommendations for the latest page-turners

**ROUGE**

By Mona Awad (*Hamish Hamilton / Penguin*), 2023, \$34

A darkly delicious fairytale set against the California coast, Mona Awad's *Rouge* is a feverish romp of beauty detectives, femme-facials, and the dark side of that coveted youthful "glow." At turns playful and introspective, Awad layers petals of memory and forgetting to create an all-consuming nightmare of beauty, motherhood, and sharp, thorny envy. Not to be dismissed as capitalizing on social media's current skincare craze, Awad uses the phenomenon to beg the questions why, for whom, and to what end? — **CC/FOREST HILL**

**THE DETAILS**

By la Genberg (*HarperCollins Canada*, 2023), \$28.50

Lying in bed with a high fever, a woman reads the inscription written inside a novel that she has long owned. The words in this message surface parts of her past and feelings about the people she won't ever be able to forget. Through four intimate reflections, Genberg draws readers into a sentimental and contemplative journey. While reading *The Details*, at times, I found myself stopping mid-sentence to reflect — sometimes with tears in my eyes — as I recalled my own long gone connections. If you're looking for a meditation on loss and nostalgia, Genberg's English language debut is a must read. — **NR/FOREST HILL.**

**BIRNAM WOOD**

By Eleanor Catton (*McClelland & Stewart / Penguin Random House*, 2023), \$36.95

In Eleanor Catton's follow-up to *The Luminaries*, guerilla gardeners squatting on an abandoned farm on New Zealand's South Island stumble onto an American tech billionaire's end-of-times bunker. An uneasy alliance forms and the vacuum of suspicion rapidly fills as surveillance scuffles with trust. While conservation is the core of every character's motivation, who decides what is conserved becomes a race to the last page. The title, *Birnam Wood*, may lead crafty readers to think that this book is a retelling of *Macbeth*. It's not a retelling of *Macbeth* but it's also not not one. — **PD/QUEEN STREET**

**MY WORK**

By Olga Ravn, translated by Jennifer Russell and Sophia Hersi Smith (*Book\*hug Press*, 2023), \$25

Olga Ravn structurally reinvents each genre she writes in. *My Work*, a novel exploring a new mother's journey into unknown territory, is merciless, debilitatingly beautiful, and as harsh as it needs to be to convey the reality of post-partum depression. I love when a highly anticipated book for me exceeds its expectations. — **OP/JUNCTION**

**TREMOR**

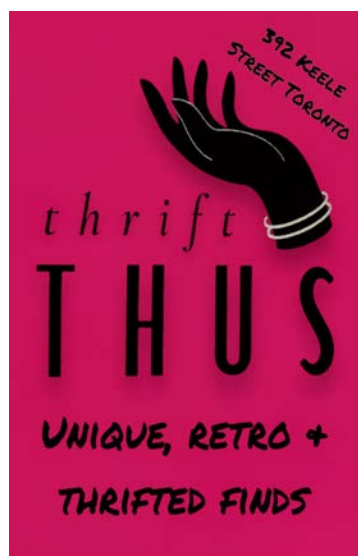
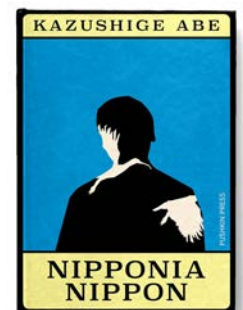
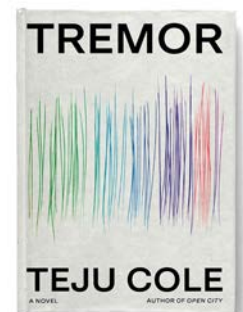
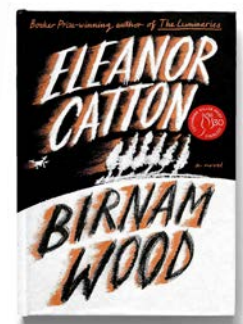
By Teju Cole (*Penguin Random House*, 2023), \$37.99

What would your doppelganger, the one who had never left your ancestral home, be like? And if you got to meet them, with the same skin colour as you but with a different accent and different wounds, what would that be like? In this W.G. Sebald-like novel, Tunde, a Nigerian-born photography professor teaching at Harvard, grapples with these questions and more. — **MA/JUNCTION**

**NIPPONIA NIPPON**

By Kazushige Abe, translated by Kerim Yasar (*Pushkin Press*, 2023), \$19.95

Haruo is a wayward 17-year-old who has endured many humiliations. He has no friends, speaks petulantly to his parents, and lives alone in a small Tokyo apartment. After discovering an interest in preserving an endangered species of birds, Haruo slowly begins to come into his own, bit by bit. Alas, Haruo's situation takes a dark turn when he decides his destiny will be realized only when he is able to rip into pieces the "script written by human beings" Kazushige Abe's sharp and careful writing reminds us that not all struggles are a triumph of the human spirit. Sometimes, the human spirit takes a loss, albeit a captivatingly interesting one. — **KB/QUEEN STREET**



"Sassy and wicked smart, *Decolonize Drag* is essential reading." —Jasbir Puar



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# BOOK RECS



# CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Bookworm Jessica Rose digs into the best new kids books in Canada.

BY JESSICA ROSE

## 100 CHAPATIS

By Derek Mascarenhas, illustrated by Shantala Robinson (*Owl Books, 2023*), \$21.95

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 4-7**

Waiting isn't easy, especially when you're small. In *100 Chapatis*, Derek Mascarenhas' debut picture book, Simon is anxiously awaiting news that his new sibling has arrived. To help pass the time, Pappa and grandson Simon make 100 chapatis (a type of flatbread), carefully measuring ingredients, kneading the dough, and sharing stories along the way. Accompanied by Shantala Robinson's bright, textured illustrations, *100 Chapatis* is a joyful book about intergenerational relationships, embracing change, and the power of food.

## WHEN THE OCEAN CAME TO TOWN

By Sal Sawler, illustrated by Emma Fitzgerald (*Nimbus Publishing, 2023*), \$13.95

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 4-7**

Gretchen loves living near the ocean. In fact, she'd spend all her time playing near the foamy seawater if she could! Inspired by author Sal Sawler's own experience living through Hurricane Juan, *When the Ocean Came to Town* is a thoughtful picture book — illustrated by Emma Fitzgerald — about what happens after Gretchen hears her anxious parents talking about climate change and a great storm that's about to come. For three days, the windows rattle and houses sway, sending townspeople into a frenzy. But what comes next is a powerful lesson in community care and resilience as they all work together to rebuild.

## THE WORDS WE SHARE

Written and illustrated by Jack Wong (*Annick Press, 2023*), \$22.95

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 4-7**

*The Words We Share* is the moving story of Angie and her beloved dad, who speaks mostly Cantonese. Written and illustrated by Jack Wong, it follows the duo's day-to-day life as Angie translates, helping him navigate their new life in Canada. Soon, Angie realizes she can help others, too. That is until a bad review threatens to squash her entrepreneurial spirit. An extraordinary picture book about communication and care, *The Words We Share* is a heartwarming testament to love, understanding, and the bond between a father and his daughter.

## LOST INSIDE MY HEAD

Written and illustrated by Vigg (*Orca Book Publishers, 2023*), \$21.95

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 6-8**

Less than an hour ago, Vincent could recite a fable in a single breath. He couldn't be more prepared to present it to his class! However, when his turn comes, Vincent freezes. There isn't one syllable in his head. Inspired by author and illustrator Vigg's own experience growing up with ADHD, *Lost Inside My Head* is a stunning book that brings readers inside the mind of a neurodiverse character. With tenderness and humour, it shares Vincent's struggles and frustrations, but, more importantly, it celebrates his uniqueness.

## NAAHSA IS AN ARTIST

Written and illustrated by Norma Jean Russell & Hali Heavy Shield (*Second Story Press, 2023*), \$21.95

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 6-8**

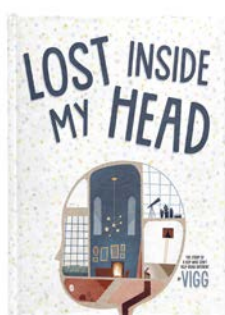
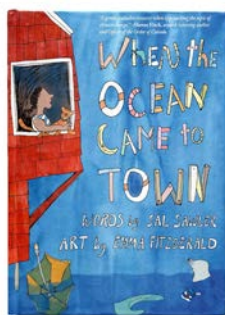
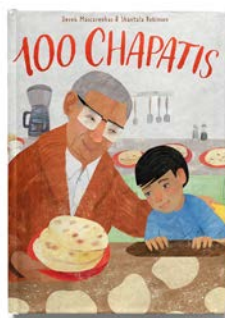
Winner of the Second Story Press Indigenous Writing Contest, *Naaahsa is an Artist* is the first book by multidisciplinary artist Hali Heavy Shield. Inspired by the many adventures the author has had with her mom, *Naaahsa is an Artist* follows a young girl and her grandmother — an artist and residential school survivor — to Ottawa for an art show at the National Gallery. With statements like "You can always make something out of nothing. Just use your imagination!" and "Art is a language everyone understands," *Naaahsa is an Artist* is a powerful reminder to all young readers that the art they make matters.

## ALONE: THE JOURNEYS OF THREE YOUNG REFUGEES

Written by Paul Tom, illustrated by Mélanie Baillairgé, translated by Arielle Aaronson (*Groundwood Books, 2023*), \$24.99

**RECOMMENDED AGES: 8-12**

The stories of Afshin, Alain and Patricia in *Alone: The Journeys of Three Young Refugees* give a glimpse of what the over 400 minors go through who arrive alone in Canada each year requesting refugee status. Told in both the first and second person, and accompanied by Mélanie Baillairgé's sparse but deeply affecting illustrations, this poignant book urges young readers to imagine what it must be like to start a new life, all alone. Dedicated to "the children who come here. To the parents who stay there," *Alone* perfectly captures grief and loneliness, but also hope, sacrifice and love.



# BRIARPATCH

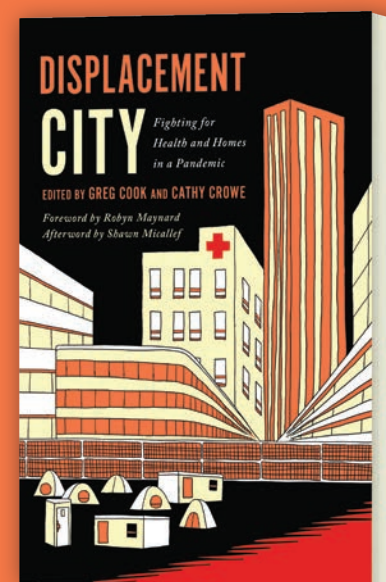
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"Displacement City is exactly what we need to better understand why the status quo on homelessness has been so cruel."

—DR. ANDREW BABACK BOOZARY  
Gattuso Centre for Social Medicine at UHN

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Omo, owner of Omo Bamboo Shop on Broadview, can help you ditch plastics.

OMO BAMBOO SHOP

# GETTING OFF PLASTIC

For the plastic haters in your life, there are simple gifts for reducing plastic use at the individual and collective levels

BY DAVID GRAY-DONALD

## THE CONTEXT

Many of us feel a tension. We want to reduce our plastic consumption and we know it's essential for a better world, yet we find it a struggle. Just about everything around us seems to be either made of plastic or packaged in it.

While each of us feel this in our daily lives, it's also much bigger than any one of us.

The powerful oil and gas industries are happy to push more plastic on us too. "We're seeing a predicted drop-off in demand [for oil and gas] for transportation and energy, but we're not seeing the same kind of drop-off in demand for plastics," says Karen Wirsig, plastics campaigner at Environmental Defence in Toronto. "In fact, the plastics and the petrochemicals industry become a kind of a 'Plan B' for oil and gas extraction."

And so, the industry is trying to influence governments to avoid plastic-reducing policies that environmental groups are advocating for.

The federal government has a ban coming into effect on Jan. 1, 2024, on some single-use plastics including plastic straws at restaurants and plastic bags at checkouts. The plastics industry is suing the government to stop the regulations.

This page has a few ideas for how to start helping each other reduce our plastic use.

## ADVOCACY

"Obviously, this whole plastic pollution crisis isn't going to be solved by the actions of some good individuals," says Wirsig. It isn't behaviour change alone that will get us out of this, she says.

Advocacy and policy change is desperately needed so that less wasteful behaviours become the new norm.

For example, when dining in Paris, France, at fast food spots like McDonald's, the only option is reusable plateware, which the restaurants are responsible for washing.

Or in Edmonton, several single-use plastic items were banned this summer. There were some complaints from Edmontonians in the first couple months, but those declined as people got used to the changes.

We could see these kinds of changes around Toronto if there is broad public support and willingness from politicians.

The City of Toronto is going to be considering a plastics reduction plan, likely before the end of 2023. The plan is being developed by city staff with input from a number of groups, including the Reusable Toronto coalition organized by the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

The federal government is also considering plastic-reduction policies beyond the narrow single-use plastics ban, like mandating grocery stores to significantly reduce plastic use.

But at every turn, the fossil fuel industry will be fighting these changes.

### GIFT IDEA

- Make a donation in your loved one's name to an organization working to reduce plastic pollution. **The Toronto Environmental Alliance** is working on Toronto's policies through the **Reusable Toronto coalition**, and **Environmental Defence** is working on federal policies.
- Sign yourself and your loved ones up for updates from those organizations' plastics campaigns.

## REFILLERIES

Refilleries tend to refer to places where you can get cleaning and hygiene products in refillable containers, without disposable packaging.

Getting someone set up at a refillery for just one product, like dish soap or conditioner, is a great, gentle start. And it can be a gateway to learning more about plastic use and alternatives.

Your best bet is to visit a refillery to chat with them about options that will work for your loved one. And you might just see many more eco-friendly products. Search online for the one nearest you. Unfortunately, there aren't many in Toronto.

### GIFT IDEA

- A glass-and-metal pump for their home, which can be easily refilled. They range from \$10 to \$30, depending on the store.
- One full container of a cleaning product, in a reusable jar. I went for the fragrance-free dish soap from **Omo Bamboo Shop** (it's good!) in a free glass jar that was available there. New glass jars are available as well (\$5 to \$20)



OMO BAMBOO SHOP

## TAKEOUT FOOD

There are a number of services operating in Toronto now that offer reusable containers for takeout and delivery food. After use, you return the dishes and they get washed.

This is the kind of system that will need to expand if we want to really make a dent in plastic waste.

### GIFT IDEAS

Check out these local programs, sign your gift-ee up for one, and put some money toward their first order:

- **Suppli:** Compatible with Uber Eats app, has added fee per order of \$1.49 - \$3.99. [mysuppli.ca](https://mysuppli.ca)
- **Muuse:** You can borrow reusable food and beverage containers for free for up to 30 days and return them to any participating location to be washed. You can order home pick-up for a fee. [muuse.io/toronto](https://muuse.io/toronto)
- **Inwit:** Specializes in corporate and institutional catering, partnering with restaurants so they don't have to use disposable containers and plates. A good one to recommend and use for your next event. [inwit.ca](https://inwit.ca)



OMO BAMBOO SHOP

BULK • ZERO WASTE

Part of the soap selection at Omo Bamboo Shop



READ ONLINE



GROCERY STORES

At bulk food stores and some grocery stores, they'll let you put food in reusable containers. Coffee, flour, cereal, and so on. This can range from cheap spots like Bulk Barn up to fancy ones like Urban Bulk & Refill in Leslieville.

To use a reusable container, ask the cashier to weigh the empty container first, then come back with the container filled up and they'll weigh it again at check-out to determine the weight of the food item and the price.

GIFT IDEAS

- Buy one or more nice **sturdy reusable containers** (glass or plastic, like Tupperware) that can hold food products and will be good for bringing to the store and back. Starts under \$5. Using this regularly will noticeably reduce plastic waste. You can also weigh the empty container and put a label or a tag on it showing the weight, so the cashier doesn't have to write it on each time.
- Buy a **gift certificate** for their nearest (or your favourite) bulk food store.
- Buy **beeswax wraps** to replace plastic wrap for keeping leftovers and produce fresh. Find from under \$10 at eco-stores, whole food spots, and online retailers like Ardent Earth.



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# BEER, WINE, SELTZER & NON-ALC REGS

Whether for gifting or to bring to holiday parties, The Grind team and friends have recommendations for a variety of budgets.

## NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

Booze-free drinks are super popular, and with good reason. Be it for physical or mental health or another reason (which you don't need to ask about), many people are choosing to drink less alcohol, or none at all.

When entertaining, it's important to have something non-alcoholic to have on hand for guests other than pop and orange juice. These can also make for great gifts.

### 0% BEERS

These have come a long way, and are just as flavourful as boozy beers. Based on our extensive taste-testing, we recommend:

At the pricey end:

Harmon's IPA, \$16.50 for 6 x 355 ml

Harmon's Lunchbox (Lagered Ale), \$16.50 for 6 x 355 ml

In the mid-range:

Heineken 0.0, \$23.95 for 12 x 330 ml

Sober Carpenter's IPA, \$23.45 for 12 x 473 ml

Best value:

Compliments IPA, \$9.49 for 12 x 355 ml

### MOCKTAILS

You can make your own cocktail using a quality booze-free liquor substitute like Seedlip (\$45 for 700 ml).

Or try a ready-made mocktail like Clever G&Tonic (\$3.49 for 355 ml), which nails the flavour of the original.

### SODA WATERS

Bubly (multiple flavours), \$6.29 for 12 x 355 ml

La Croix (multiple flavours), \$6.99 for 8 x 355 ml

## BEER

There is no shortage of beers to try. A few we dig:

### LAGERS AND PILSNER

On the cheaper end:

Pilsner, Old Style, \$13.95 for 6 x 473 ml (5% alc)

Pabst Blue Ribbon, \$25.95 for 12 x 473 ml (4.9%)

More elevated:

Stella Artois, \$16.95 for 6 x 330 ml (5%)

Steamwhistle, \$16.95 for 6 x 341 ml (5%)

Mill St Organic, \$19.50 for 6 x 473 ml (4.2%)

### CRAFT BEERS

Boneshaker IPA, \$3.65 for 473 ml (7.1%)

Collective Arts Good Monster IPA, \$4.45 for 473 ml (8%)

Mill St Hazy Organic IPA, \$3.60 for 473 ml (6%)

Tokyo Hazy White, \$4.20 for 330 ml (5%)

Bellwoods Jutsu Pale Ale, \$4.50 for 473 ml (5.6%)

Muskoka Detour, \$3.65 for 473 ml (4.3%)

## WINE

Least expensive but still very drinkable sparkling:

Saintly | the good sparkling, \$18.95 for 750 ml (12.5%)

Least expensive but still drinkable red:

Beringer Main & Vine Cabernet Sauvignon (California), \$11.95 for 750 ml (\$10.95 till Nov. 26 at LCBO)

Many Ontario wines that are not available at the LCBO can make for a unique gift. But they can be pricey. Shop online or head to your local bottle shop.

### REDS:

Looking Glass (Rosewood Winery, Niagara), \$33 for 750 ml (11.8%)

Triomphe Cabernet Franc (Southbrook Winery, Niagara), \$26.75 for 750 ml (12.2%)

Laundry Vineyard Pinot Noir (Southbrook Winery, Niagara), \$37.75 for 750 ml (13.7%)

### WHITE:

White Rabbit (Rosewood Winery, Niagara), \$20 for 750 ml (11.8%)

## SELTZERS & COOLERS

The selection has exploded recently.

If you're looking for value, White Claw (various flavours, \$3.35 for 473 ml, 5%) is still hard to beat.

In the mid-range, give Ace Hill a try, either the Lemon or Raspberry (both are \$3.05 for 355 ml, 4.5%). And check out Collective Arts' Citrus Gin Collins with Grapefruit, Lemon & Thyme (\$3.00 for 355 ml, 5.6%).

For something really festive and different, pick up local brewer Willibald's Ginger Mule (\$3.98 for 355 ml, 5.4%). Willibald's other seltzers, like the Purple or the Fruit Punch, are also really good.

NOTE: Prices may vary from store to store.

# BEAUTY AND THE HYPEBEAST

## No Hurrahs for KAWS at AGO

BY CHARLENE K. LAU

It's impossible to talk about the artist known as KAWS (born Brian Donnelly) without speaking of the time we're in. It's 2023 and hypebeast culture and streetwear are fully mainstream, Toronto now has a temple to sneakerdom in the form of a KITH retail store, and the pockets of this lifestyle community are as deep as they've ever been.

While natty threads and sneaker culture were born out of 1970s hip-hop culture and graffiti (or "street art") in New York, hypebeasts — a derogatory term for the sneaker-obsessed shared by a Hong Kong-based publication of the same name — represent a distant cousin. Hypebeasts are seemingly apolitical and largely focused on hyperconsumption through the collecting and wearing of streetwear brands.

KAWS's relationship to this community is developed, firstly, through his own background as a graffiti artist, and later through commercial partnerships including General Mills, Supreme, Uniqlo, and Nike, and famous collectors of this work like Drake, Pharrell Williams, and BTS. With these connections, he pledges an unstoppable allegiance to popular culture and to celebrity over creativity.

In my day job, I'm a curator of public art, a semi-peripheral part of the artworld that sometimes sits outside of art with a capital A. But by night, I'm an art critic, which awkwardly situates me in between extreme positions of accessibility and gatekeeping. It's with this great difficulty that I look at the art of KAWS, a white man born in New Jersey who now lives in Brooklyn.

Note that by this description alone, he might be like many artists before him. Note also that it has been a very long time since I have volunteered to write about a white male artist. And so, on a sunny October afternoon, I walked down Dundas Street, following a modest trail of hypebeast bros also on their way to see the exhibition *KAWS: Family* at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). I felt a mix of trepidation and excitement, buoyed by the thought of meeting a fellow writer friend — a publisher of an art magazine — who was going to help me dissect this experience.

Once inside the gallery, my friend and I step back to take in the view. We've never seen so many young people in the AGO. The gallery is bubbling with activity. A white security guard shushes a group of racialized youths, and many of the visitors are happily taking selfies and enjoying the artworks on display, something I rarely see happen in these vaunted spaces.

Ah yes, but what about the art?

KAWS is known for one thing: a figure called "Companion" that shapeshifts and borrows from Mickey Mouse, Michelin Man, or Grover. In its various forms, it is in greys or in colour, and sometimes furry. His trademark is marking eyes as Xs, an irreverent take on being dead (though, apparently, he sees Companion as being very alive). His form is found everywhere from



TOP:  
KAWS Time Off, 2023  
BOTTOM:  
KAWS, Space, 2021

**“Are we celebrating his inclusion in the hallowed halls of art history, or his mainstream cool factor and market success?”**

inflatables to collectible figurines, clothing to cereal boxes.

In the exhibition, we see some of these things, including drawings of figures, huge, bright prints, painted bronze sculptures, a loveseat covered in Sesame Street stuffies.

We follow a path from the exhibition through the Henry Moore sculpture court to an oddly annexed section unceremoniously shoved into a corner by an emergency exit. The area is anchored by a jumbo, silver "Space" Companion resembling the old MTV Moonman statue. It features some paintings, a diamond encrusted necklace



commissioned by rapper Kid Cudi, and you guessed it, more Companions. The painting *News* (2017) appears here, consisting of nine round canvases that abstract and mash up various parts of Companion, whose circular shapes the interpretive panel connects to the Renaissance. It's feeble to make this superficial comparison, as if to champion KAWS's involvement in the "rebirth" of the — or any — cultural moment.

Are we celebrating his inclusion in the hallowed halls of art history, or his mainstream cool factor and market success?

If the latter, the exhibition spaces feel like showrooms, luxury boutiques where the viewer can window shop, consumable shrines to pop artists who came before him. But this is not even close to Andy Warhol, the Godfather of pop art and whose acerbic take on pop culture offered viewers an all-consuming world, a snake eating its own tail. Or Jeff Koons, whom the contemporary art world loves to hate with his *Celebration* series of utterly and (unfortunately) delightful, giant sculptures of balloon animals and wrapped gifts. Or the king of all luxury fashion collaborations, Takashi Murakami, who cheekily put a Louis Vuitton boutique inside his 2007 retrospective exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Is KAWS similar at least? Naw. These other artists' works are critical, self-conscious and knowing winks at the establishment. None of that is to be found here in their aspiring heir. "We're trying to find and sculpt a program that is experimental in some ways," AGO

deputy director and chief curator, Julian Cox, stated about the exhibition in a *Globe and Mail* article. In a strange reversal, pop becomes experimental in the art museum. What does this mean? Perhaps Cox's quote "I think museums more and more have to operate that way" is the most telling, identifying a link to capitalism as the only way in which artistic institutions can survive.

I return to the rampant consumerism of hypebeast culture. I love sneakers as much as the next person, likely more. I love streetwear. I have an outsized appreciation for car culture. But I also love a well-made artwork that says something important about our worlds, our cultures, the times in which we live. KAWS's work is empty of meaning, only comparable to Warhol, Koons and Murakami at a quick glance, but without the substance. Somehow, he has made a career off copying and pasting Companion into various scenarios and adding X'd out eyes for everything else. This exhibition is no different.

While unoriginal, it can't be denied this is a crowd-pleasing show that has expanded the audience for the AGO's programming. Art galleries and museums are intimidating places to be, and these institutions need to do more to reach new audiences. But accessibility doesn't have to come at a price of showing interesting work. After seeing this work, I'm left feeling empty and a bit dead inside, and, like Companion, with my eyes X'd out.



READ ONLINE

# A SPACE TO BE HONEST AND TRUE



**It's Ok\* Studios is helping Black artists invest in themselves and the community**

It's Ok\* Studios is located at 468 Queen St. W.

BY PHILLIP DWIGHT MORGAN

For Black artists in Toronto, finding spaces to host a show, exhibition, or performance can sometimes feel impossible. In addition to the challenges that many artists in the city face — unaffordability, declining number of venues, precarity — Black artists often have to contend with a particular kind of gatekeeping within the industry.

In his May 2020 survey of 18 art galleries across Toronto, Palestinian-Canadian artist Ibrahim Abusitta found that among the 454 artists represented at these galleries, only 2.4 per cent (or 11) were Black, 0.4 per cent (2) were Indigenous, 9.69 per cent (44) were other people of colour, and 39 per cent (177) identified as female.

“Toronto is often described as diverse and multicultural, but I didn’t see that representation in the rosters of these galleries,” Abusitta writes. “Several commenters expressed that this was not news to them, but rather an unspoken reality,” he adds.

Chris Wilson, a Toronto-based DJ, producer and cultural programmer, knows this reality intimately. Throughout his career, he has navigated spaces where there are no Black people in leadership positions. As a result, Black artists seeking access to these spaces often find themselves in a perilous position: convince a programmer or curator with little-to-no context or knowledge of your work of its merit, viability and, crucially, profitability.

It is with these experiences in mind that Wilson began collaborating with fellow cultural programmer Said Yassin, who had been thinking along the same lines.

In 2021, the City of Toronto acquired a vacant building at 468 Queen Street West for the purpose of creating a public park at the corner of Queen and Denison. Given the lead time required for demolition, the city expressed interest in using the space in the interim as an artspace focused on Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists.

After council approved a motion supporting the proposal in April 2022, It’s Ok\*, an existing non-profit organization, took control

of the space. In this moment, It’s Ok\* Studios— an extension of the highly successful performance series It’s Ok\* — was born.

The lease agreement with the city notes that, at the conclusion of the lease in 2024, the city will develop a new park including 468 Queen St. W (where It’s Ok\* now resides), 464-466 Queen St. W, and a portion of 15 Denison Ave.

With a search for a permanent home on the horizon, It’s Ok\* Studios finds itself in a very different position than the Wildseed Centre for Art and Activism, another Black-run arts space in this city. In 2021, Black Lives Matter Toronto purchased 24 Cecil St. from the city with private funding and a \$250,000 contribution from the city.

Despite the challenges that exist for It’s Ok\*, Yassin and Wilson remain steadfast in their vision of creating a space to build community and to showcase Black arts workers, artists and performers.

“Where are we able to express ourselves and be honest and true to that?” Wilson asks. “We started to look at arts workers and the



Album release with Jahmal Padmore



Jahmal Padmore takes the floor after an opening set by JOZEM



**“Despite the challenges that exist for It’s Ok\*, Yassin and Wilson remain steadfast in their vision of creating a space to build community and to showcase Black arts workers, artists and performers.”**

experience that I, myself, had been able to gain,” recalls Wilson. “It was never one where we could learn from other Black folks.”

“We started to realize that part of that ability to share knowledge is rooted in space.”

Thus, It’s OK\* is not merely a Black-run studio but rather a community space in which knowledge, ideas, experiences, and insights can be readily shared amongst each other with the aim of deepening connections and opportunities with Toronto’s Black arts scene.

In summer 2022, It’s OK\* Studios opened to the public. In the basement of 468 Queen, there is now a fully outfitted recording studio. The ground floor operates as an exhibition and performance space, hosting public talks, concerts, art exhibitions and more. Lastly, the second floor contains an ever-growing library organized around art and design, with a particular emphasis on Black creators.

“We think about poetry and architecture, for example, and then taking that lens and really zeroing in on Black authors and Black books who speak within these spaces,” says Wilson.

Given the dwindling number of venues in the city combined with the diversity of events that It’s OK\* can host, Wilson and Yassin have received many requests for private bookings. These private bookings not only help cover It’s OK\*’s operational costs but also help the studio subsidize costs for other community projects and events. In doing this, many of the shows, talks, and performances that would not have made it through the city’s many gatekeepers can now find a home.

Since opening, It’s OK\* has hosted numerous events including VenusFest Music festival, BLACK IS\* THE NITE photography exhibition, and several live performances and artist talks.

Staff at It’s OK\* have been consistently told how “refreshing” it is to have a space like It’s OK\* in the city.

Over the next year, their goal is to keep growing as a creative hub and incubator, production site, event venue, art gallery, and neighbourhood landmark. While 468 Queen St. W is slated for demolition at the end of the two year lease, the connections being built in the space are not so easily displaced.

COURTESY OF IT’S OK\* STUDIOS


GREEN YANG



Venus Fest 2023




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Jeremy Dutcher

# EVENTS

A curated list of happenings around the city from mid-November through December. For consideration in future listings, email [arts@the grindmag.ca](mailto:arts@the grindmag.ca).

## LITERARY

**ART BAR POETRY SERIES** Mondays, 7 PM, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St, Free

**DIGGING FOR TRUTH IN MEMOIR WRITING WEBINAR WITH ANNAHID DASHTGARD** November 18, 12-1 PM, online, Free (registration req'd)

**WORK, BORDERS AND BEYOND: A CONVERSATION WITH HARSHA WALIA** November 18, 6-8 PM, Northrop Frye Hall - Room 003, 73 Queen's Park Cres E, Free

**SJ SINDU BOOK LAUNCH** November 18, 6:30-9:30 PM, CSI Annex, 192 Spadina Ave, \$10

**TPL CHRISTMAS BOOK SALE** November 18, 9 AM-4 PM, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St, Free

**TORONTO LAUNCH OF BEAST BODY EPIC (READINGS BY AMANDA EARL, JIM JOHNSTONE, KIRBY, MARCUS MCCANN, RASIQRA REVULVA, AND DANI SPINOSA)** November 19, 3 PM, Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave, Free

**IN CONVERSATION WITH ALICIA ELLIOTT** November 20, 7 PM, Burlington Literary Festival, 2331 New St, Burlington, Free

**BOOK TRIVIA** November 21, 8:30 PM, Famous Last Words, 392 Pacific Ave, Free

**SHE WHO LIES ABOVE BY BEATRIZ HAUSNER BOOK LAUNCH (W/ SPECIAL GUEST AL MORITZ)** November 21, 6:30 PM, Flying Books, 784 College St, Free

**PALIMPSEST PRESS FALL LAUNCH (BEN ROBINSON, FAWN PARKER, KLARA DU PLESSIS, KHASHAYAR 'KESS' MOHAMMADI)** November 22, 7 PM, Another Story Bookshop, 315 Roncesvalles Ave, Free

**MEMORY OF NUDITY: A READING SERIES FOR THE PRESENTATION OF NEW, EXPERIMENTAL WRITING** November 23, 7 PM, 100% Silk Shop, 1558 Dupont St, Free

**THE TRUTH ABOUT MIGRANT WORK WITH GABRIEL ALLAH-DUA** November 23, 7 PM, Burlington Literary Festival, 2331 New St, Burlington, Free

**HAROON SIDDIQUI AND JOHN RALSTON SAUL IN CONVERSATION WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RT. HON. ADRIENNE CLARKSON** November 23, 8 PM, Ismaili Centre, 49 Wynford Drive, Free

**OPENING OF INHABIT BOOKS (A NEW INUIT-OWNED INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE)** November 25, 3 PM-5 PM, Inhabit Books, 612 Mount Pleasant Rd, Free

**JUNCTION READS: MOEZ SURANI** November 26, 6 PM, Type Books Junction, 2887 Dundas St W, Free

**AUTHOR & ATHLETE PERDITA FELICIEN** November 26, 2 PM, Burlington Literary Festival, 2331 New St, Burlington, Free

**DROP-IN BOOK CLUB (HELLO, BEAUTIFUL BY ANN NAPOLITANO)** November 28, 8 PM, Famous Last Words, 392 Pacific Ave, Free

**PACK ANIMAL PRESENTS: NIGHT PHILOSOPHY** November 30, 7:30 PM, Standard Time, \$20

**ARC 102: DISABILITY DESIRABILITY TORONTO LAUNCH (READINGS BY SEAN CARSON KINSELLA, ANDREW GURZA, STEPH PAUL, BROOKE MANNING)** December 1, 6:30 PM, Society Clubhouse, 967 College St, Free

**ROSEWAY READING SERIES: FEMINISM AND DIASPORA (KIMIA ESLAH, CHRISTINE ESTIMA, SAFIA FAZLUL)** December 1, 7-9 PM, Another Story Bookshop, 315 Roncesvalles Ave, Free

**SPACING'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY** December 2, 7 PM, Urban Space Gallery + Spacing Store, 401 Richmond Street W, Free

**SILENT BOOK CLUB** December 5, 5-11:59 PM, Famous Last Words, 392 Pacific Ave, Free

**PROBABLY POETRY** December 5, 7 PM, Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave

**LAST RISE** December 8, 6:30-9:30 PM, IT'S OK\* Studios, 468 Queen W, \$20

**BOOK EXCHANGE** December 12, 5-11:59 PM, Famous Last Words, 392 Pacific Ave, Free

**BOOK TRIVIA** December 19, 8:30 PM, Famous Last Words, 392 Pacific Ave, Free

## MUSIC

**YOUR GRANDAD RECORD RELEASE** November 17, 8-12 PM, Monarch Tavern, 12 Clinton St, \$20, 19+

**DR. SHIVAN PERWER-AVEEN BAND** November 17, Doors 7:30 PM, Show 9 PM, Star Nation Event Centre, 9737 Yonge Street, \$75-\$172, All Ages

**AFROGROOVE** Fridays November 17 and each Friday, 10 PM, Scarlett, 571 Queen St W, Free Before 11 PM, 19+

**CHAI & JAM (INDIAN VOICE & RHYTHMS)** November 18, 8-10:30 PM, Small World Centre, 180 Shaw St, \$10-\$20 PWYC, All Ages

**BLOK: EASTERN EUROPEAN MUSIC** November 18, 2-10:30 PM, The Bentway, 250 Fort York Blvd, PWYC, All Ages

**SCOTTISH MUSIC & DANCE** November 18, 6:30-10 PM, Unitarian Congregation PathWay, 84 South Service Road, PWYC Under 18 Yrs, \$33 Adult, All Ages

**NOHA'S SOUND PRESENTED BY NOHA COLLECTIVE** November 18, 9 PM-Late, The Lobby, Ace Hotel, 51 Cambden St

**LUCKY 7 OPEN MIC** November 18, 7-11 PM, Studio IDFK, 190 McCaul St, \$7-\$15, All Ages

**SOUND OF KOREA** November 19, Doors 7:30 PM, Show 8:30 PM, Lula Music & Art Centre (Lula Lounge), 1585 Dundas St W, \$14, 19+

**WILD WOMAN HOSTS ISADORE** November 19, 7:15 PM, Boukan, 774 Danforth Ave, \$10-\$20, All Ages

**KENSINGTON MARKET LAND TRUST FUNDRAISER SHOW, WITH TED KENNEDY, FOG AND LASERS (RODRIGO F. STOLL), JACK MOVES, SPOOKYFISH** November 19, 9 PM, Handlebar, 159 Augusta Ave, \$10

**POOLBLOOD, ALEXALONE & POOR YOU** November 20, 8-11:30 PM, Monarch Tavern, 12 Clinton St, \$20, 19+

**TARA KANANGARA W/ ZIN-NIA** November 20, 9:30 PM Tranzac, Southern Cross Lounge, 292 Brunswick Ave

**OKAN** November 21, 7 PM, The Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, \$17.70

**COWBOY JUNKIES** November 22, 7 PM, Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave, starting at \$100

**BILLIANNE** November 22, 7 PM, THE AXIS CLUB, 722 College St, \$27

**TURKISH MUSIC CHOIR** November 23 and Thursdays through December 21, 6-8 PM, Toronto Yunus Emre Institute, 78 Berkeley St, \$35, All Ages

**ROCKY LORELEI** November 24, 8:30 PM, Tranzac, Living Room, 292 Brunswick Ave

**KURUZA** November 24, 9 PM, History, 1663 Queen St E, from \$55, 19+

**25 YEARS OF LAL** November 25, 8 PM, The Music Gallery, 918 Bathurst, \$10 low income/arts worker/MG member, \$15 Adv, \$20 at door

**STOMP RECORDS 28TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW** November 26, 8 PM, Lee's Palace, 529 Bloor St W, \$20

**SYDNEY SPRAGUE W/ BLISS FIELDS AND WHEELWRIGHT** November 26, 7 PM, Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, \$29, 19+

**TERRY JONES** November 26, 7:30 PM, Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave, PWYC

**PÄTER & MOHSIN ZAMAN** November 29, 7:30 PM, Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, starting at \$20, 19+

**JAV3X** November 30, 8 PM, Revival Event Venue, 783 College St, \$25

**FREQUENCIES (ELECTRONIC MUSIC SHOWCASE)** November 30, Handlebar, 159 Augusta Ave, PWYC before 10 PM, \$10 after

**TERRA LIGHTFOOT** December 1, 8:30 PM, Horseshoe Tavern, 370 Queen St W, \$20, 19+

**ISKWĒ** December 2, 8 PM, TD Music Hall, 178 Victoria St, \$38, 19+

**DAVE CLARK PRESENTS! (VARIOUS ARTISTS)** December 3, 7:30 PM, Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave, PWYC

**THE TWO BODY PROBLEM ALBUM RELEASE SHOW** December 3, 7 PM, Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, \$15, 19+

**CURTIS WATERS** December 6, 7 PM, The Garrison, 1197 Dundas St W, \$20 adv.

**KARKWA** December 6, 8 PM, The Garrison, 1197 Dundas St W, \$20 adv.

**HOLY OAK FAMILY SINGERS** December 6, 7 PM, Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave, PWYC,

**SNOTTOY NOSE REZ KIDS** December 8, 7 PM, THE AXIS CLUB 722 College St, \$38, 19+

**JEREMY DUTCHER** December 9, 8 PM, Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St, from \$24.20

**ANJIMILE** December 10, 7 PM, Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, \$17.50, 19+

**THE WEATHER STATION** December 11, 12, & 13, 8 PM, The Great Hall, 1087 Queen St W, \$39.50, 19+

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**DEBBY FRIDAY** December 13, Velvet Underground, 508 Queen St W, \$28

**KENYA GRACE** December 14, 6 PM, Drake Underground, 1150 Queen St W, \$25

**BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE** December 16, 7 PM, The Concert Hall, \$42.50, 19+

**MAJID JORDAN** December 16, 9 PM, History, 1663 Queen St E, from \$70, 19+

**NORA VAN ELKEN** December 16, 10 PM, CODA, 794 Bathurst, \$25, 19+

**S.H.I.T.MAS 10 YR ANNIVERSARY** December 16, 7 PM, Velvet Underground, 508 Queen St W, \$32

**JENNIFER CASTLE WINTER SOLSTICE TOUR** December 21, 7 PM, The Great Hall, 1087 Queen St W, \$41

**PEACH** December 29, 10 PM, Standard Time, 165 Geary Ave, \$20 early, up to \$40

## VISUAL ARTS

**THE CHILDREN HAVE TO HEAR ANOTHER STORY** until November 25, 2023, Art Museum University of Toronto, 15 King's College Cir, Free

**THE PERFORMANCE OF SHADOWS** until November 25, Art Museum University of Toronto, 15 King's College Cir, Free

**DOUGLAS COUPLAND: THE NEW ICE AGE** until December 16, Daniel Faria Gallery, 188 St. Helens Ave, Free

**THE WEDGE COLLECTION: DANCING IN THE LIGHT** until February 4, 2024, MOCA, 158 Sterling Rd #100, 18 and under free, adults \$14, seniors (65+) \$10, Students (19+) \$10

**ARIA DEAN: ABATTOIR, U.S.A.!** until Jan 7, 2024, Power Plant, 231 Queens Quay W, Free

**SARINDAR DHALIWAL: WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO BE A NAMED OF PAINT COLOURS** until January 7, 2024, AGO, 317 Dundas St W, 25 and under free, adults \$30, one-year pass \$35,

**DRESSED TO IMPRESS: FOOTWEAR AND CONSUMERISM IN THE 1980S** until March 16, 2024, Bata Shoe Museum, 327 Bloor St W, \$5-\$35

**MAGDALENE ODUNDO: A DIALOGUE WITH OBJECTS** until April 21, 2024, Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park Cres, \$15 for adults, \$11 for seniors, free for 18 and under/students

**THE SECRET CODES: AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN QUILTS** until April 28, 2024, Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre Ave, adults \$15, youth (under 18) and students \$6, \$10 seniors (65+)

**ERIKA DEFREITAS: IT'S BECAUSE OF THE SHIMMER, THE VERGE, AND THE YET.** until December 9, Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto Scarborough, 1265 Military Trl, Free

**ANAHITA NOROUZI: SYSTEMA NATURAE** until December 9, Gallery 44, 401 Richmond St W, Free

**ELIZABETH BURMANN LIT-TIN: PUPILA** until December 16, twoeventwo gallery, 272 Avenue Rd, Free

**SIGNAL TO NOISE: JOHN MONTEITH, LOU SHEPPARD** until December 3, Hunt Gallery, 1278 St. Clair Ave W, Unit 8, Free

**LIZ MAGOR: THE SEPARATION** until February 4, 2024, MOCA, 158 Sterling Rd #100, 18 and under free, adults \$14, seniors (65+) and students \$10

**IN CONVERSATION: OMO IS-ERHIENRHEN, DELALI COFFIE AND MORAA STUMP** November 11, 12 AM, Textile Museum of Canada, Free (registration req'd),

**THEO JEAN CUTHAND: PRO-CESSING RACISM TABLE** until December 16, YYZ Artists' Outlet, 401 Richmond St W #140, Free

**ON AMERICANITY & OTHER EXPERIENCES OF BELONGING** until December 9, Onsite Gallery, 199 Richmond St W, Free

**MICHAEL DUMONTIER & NEIL FARBER: VULNERABILITY IN TRANSITION** until December 23, Patel Brown, 21 Wade Ave # 2, Free

**INDIGENOUS FASHION FUTURITIES - ROLE OF COMMUNITY HERE & TOMORROW** November 19, 12 PM, Textile Museum of Canada, \$40 general, \$35 Indigenous

## FILM

**FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE** November 17, 5:45 PM, Fox Theatre, 2236 Queen St E, \$14

**EMTAÏ** November 18, 4 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St W, \$14 - \$24

**FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE** November 18, 2:45 PM, Fox Theatre, 2236 Queen St E, \$14

**ANOTHER BODY** November 19, 5:30 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15 for non-members, free for members

**PARADISE PRESENTS TOUCH OF EVIL** November 20, 6 PM, Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor St W, \$16.54, seniors and students \$13.54

**PARADISE PRESENTS LONE STAR** November 20, 8:30 PM, Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor St W, \$16.54, seniors and students \$13.54

**CITY OF GOD** November 21, 6:30 PM, Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members, students & seniors; free for Individual/Family membership

**DETOUR** November 22, 6:30 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St W, \$14-\$24

**OUR TERRIBLE COUNTRY (BALADNA ALRAHEEB) (BIDAYYAT [BEGINNINGS] IN SYRIAN REVOLUTIONARY NON-FICTION)** November 22, 6:45 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15 for non-members, free for members

**MARATHON MAN** November 22, 7 PM, Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members, students & seniors; free for Individual/Family membership

**ORLANDO, MY POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY** November 23, 7 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St W, \$14-\$24

**FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE** November 23, 7:30 PM, Fox Theatre, 2236 Queen St E, \$14

**STILL RECORDING (PART OF BIDAYYAT [BEGINNINGS] IN SYRIAN REVOLUTIONARY NON-FICTION)** November 23, 6:45 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15 for non-members, free for members

**TOTAL TRUST** November 24, 3:45 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15, Members from \$10

**LISA SMOLKIN: SCREENING OF GRAFTER AND PERFORMANCE, CO-PRESENTED BY C MAGAZINE AND VTAPE** November 24, 7 PM, Vtape, Bachir/Yerex Presentation Space, 401 Richmond St W, Suite 452, Free

**IN FIELDS OF WORDS: CONVERSATIONS WITH SAMAR YAZBEK (L-SAHEL AL-MUMTANI') (PART OF BIDAYYAT [BEGINNINGS] IN SYRIAN REVOLUTIONARY NON-FICTION)** November 24, 6:45 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15 for non-members, free for members

**TOTAL TRUST** November 25, 11 AM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15

**THE BEEHIVE** November 25, 1 PM, Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members, students & seniors; free for Individual/Family membership

**JFK** November 25, 1:45 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$17

**MEMORIES OF MURDER** November 25, 8 PM, Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor St W, general \$16.54, seniors and students \$13.54

**MONK WITH A CAMERA** November 26, 2 PM, Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$15



LAL



Artwork by dairysam (@dairy.sam)

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**BAY ST. HEALER & MARS PROJECT  
DOUBLE-FEATURE** November 26, 6:30  
PM, Innis Town Hall Theatre, 2 Sus-  
sex Ave, \$20

**THE BEEHIVE** November 27, 9:30 PM,  
Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave,  
general \$15; \$12 Loyalty Members,  
students & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**ROSE** November 28, 9:30 PM, Revue  
Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15  
general; \$12 Loyalty Members, stu-  
dents & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**DRUNK FEMINIST FILMS: THE HOLI-  
DAY** November 28, 9 PM, Hot Docs Cin-  
ema, 506 Bloor St W, \$20-\$25

**ROSE** November 29, 9:30 PM, Revue  
Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15  
general; \$12 Loyalty Members, stu-  
dents & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**DRUNK FEMINIST FILMS: LOVE AC-  
TUALY** November 29, 9 PM, Hot Docs  
Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$20-\$25

**RENAISSANCE: A FILM BY BEYON-  
CÉ** November 30, 7 PM, Market Square,  
80 Front St E, \$19

**ROSE** November 30, 9:30 PM, Revue  
Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15  
general; \$12 Loyalty Members, stu-  
dents & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**MY ANIMAL** December 1, 6:45 PM, Re-  
vue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave,  
\$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members,  
students & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**RENAISSANCE: A FILM BY BEYONCÉ**  
December 1, 12 PM, Market Square, 80  
Front St E, \$19

**MY ANIMAL** December 2, 4 PM, Revue  
Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15  
general; \$12 Loyalty Members, stu-  
dents & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**BEYOND UTOPIA** December 3, 11 AM,  
Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St W, \$17

**MY ANIMAL** December 4, 9:30 PM, Re-  
vue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave,  
\$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members,  
students & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**MY ANIMAL** December 6, 4 PM, Revue  
Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave, \$15  
general; \$12 Loyalty Members, stu-  
dents & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**TOKYO GODFATHERS (20TH ANNI-  
VERSARY SCREENING)** December 7, 7  
PM, Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles  
Ave, \$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members,  
students & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family membership

**DIVINITY** December 8 & 9, 4 PM, Re-  
vue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave,  
\$15 general; \$12 Loyalty Members,  
students & seniors; free for Individual/  
Family memberships

**SHORTS IN CONVERSATION - CU-  
RATED BY IMAGES FESTIVAL WORKS  
BY NOUR BISHOUTY** December 13, 7  
PM, Interspace - Ace Hotel Toronto, 51  
Camden St, Free (RSVP Req'd)

## PERFORMANCE

**BAD ROADS** until November 26, 2023,  
various showtimes, Crow's Theatre,  
345 Carlaw Ave, starts at \$50

**WITHROW PARK** until December 3,  
various showtimes, Tarragon Theatre,  
general \$65, back row \$30, arts worker  
\$25, rush \$25, student \$15

**THE LEHMAN TRILOGY** until Decem-  
ber 2, various showtimes, Bluma Appel  
Theatre (Canadian Stage), 27 Front St  
E, \$25 - \$103

**MONSTER** November 16 - Decem-  
ber 10, Factory Theatre - Studio Theatre,  
125 Bathurst St, Pick Your Price: \$20,  
\$40, \$60, \$80

**HERE LIES HENRY** November 16 - De-  
cember 10, Factory Theatre - Mains-  
pace Theatre, 125 Bathurst St, Pick  
Your Price: \$20, \$40, \$60, \$80

**"LIVE PERFORMANCE IN VR"** Novem-  
ber 17, 6:30 PM, Theatre Passe Mu-  
raille, student \$10, arts worker \$15,  
general \$20

**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL DANCE  
FESTIVAL (DAY 1)** November 19, Chi-  
nese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard  
Ave E, Free

**TORONTO PREMIERE: STATIONS** No-  
vember 23 - 25, Fleck Dance Theatre,  
207 Queens Quay W, \$49 - \$79, \$39 se-  
niors, \$29 arts workers and under-30

**AUTHENTIC FLAMENCO PRESENTS  
AMADOR ROJAS** November 24 & 26,  
Dec 7 & 8 John Bassett Theatre, North  
Building, Metro Toronto Convention  
Centre, 255 Front St W, \$69 - \$144

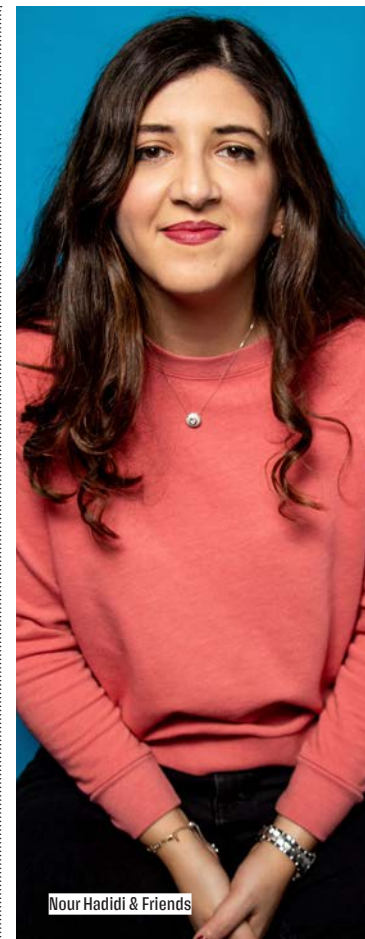
**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL DANCE  
FESTIVAL (DAY 2)** November 26, Chi-  
nese Cultural Centre, 5183 Sheppard  
Ave E, Free

**VUKA (AS PART OF EMERGING  
BLACK CREATION UNIT)** December  
1-3, Passe Muraille, Pay-What-You-  
Can-Afford \$12, \$35, \$65

**NATASHA, PIERRE & THE GREAT  
COMET OF 1812** December 5 - January  
7, 2024, various showtimes, Crow's  
Theatre, 345 Carlaw Ave, starts at \$50

**BAD HATS' ALICE IN WONDERLAND**  
December 12-31, various showtimes,  
Soulpepper, Michael Young Theatre,  
\$25 - \$45

**THE BASEMENT REVUE** December 7  
& 14 & 21 & 28, Doors at 7 PM, Show  
at 8 PM, Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor  
St W, \$42



Nour Hadidi & Friends

## COMEDY

**10 YEARS OF THE DISASTER** Novem-  
ber 17, 8 PM, The Garrison, 1197 Dun-  
das St W, \$30, 18+

**CATCH23** November 17, 9 PM, Comedy  
Bar West, 945 Bloor St W, \$15

**DANNY JOLLES** November 18, 12 PM,  
Comedy Bar East, 2800 Danforth Ave,  
\$30

**SECOND CITY PRESENTS CHA-  
OS MENU: DISORDER UP! VARIOUS  
TIMES** Tuesdays to Sundays week-  
ly, Toronto Mainstage, 1 York St,  
\$29 - \$49

**ABSOLUTE COMEDY: HEADLINER SI-  
MON RAKOFF** November 24, 9 PM,  
2335 Yonge St, \$20

**MIKE RITA** November 25, 8 PM & 10  
PM, Paradise Theatre, 1006 Bloor St  
W, from \$23

**NOUR HADIDI & FRIENDS** December  
2, 10 PM, Comedy Bar West, 945 Bloor  
Street W, \$25

**D&D LIVE!** December 3, 7 PM, Comedy  
Bar West, 945 Bloor Street W, \$15

**RADIO HAHA!** December 5, 8 PM,  
Tranzac, 292 Brunswick Ave, \$15

**BEER BEER COMEDY SHOW** Decem-  
ber 9, 8 PM, 154 Danforth Avenue 2nd  
Floor, \$23

**GAY AF CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR**  
December 14, 8 PM, Comedy Bar West,  
945 Bloor St W, \$23, 18+

**101 HOLIDAY MOVIE MOMENTS** De-  
cember 15, 7 PM, 2800 Danforth Ave-  
nue, \$30



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# WHAT WE'RE WATCHING



## BAD SISTERS

APPLE TV

When Grace's husband J.P. ramps up his emotional abuse towards her, Grace's sisters — Eva, Bibi, Ursula, and Becca — conspire to kill him. What ensues is a series of hilariously intertwined misadventures and dramas. Part dark comedy and part whodunnit, this beautifully-shot miniseries set in Ireland is great binge-worthy TV.



## LUPIN — PART 3

NETFLIX

If you love eating cotton candy even though you know your teeth will hurt afterward, *Lupin Part 3* is for you. Assane Diop (Omar Sy) is back as everyone's favourite gentleman thief, drawing on his unending supply of disguises, tricks, and wit. While this feel-good drama-meets-heist show can feel formulaic at times, there's something charming about its unapologetic infatuation with a good, high-stakes caper.



## BLACKBERRY

CBC GEM

Blackberry was the phone in the late 1990s and early 2000s, especially for business types. This docu-drama, now out free on *CBC Gem* as a three-part series, is the story of the Waterloo, ON, personalities behind Blackberry's rise and fall. Directed by Torontonian Matt Johnson (who also acts in it), *Blackberry* features Montrealer Jay Baruchel as nerdy founder Mike Lazaridis and Glenn Howerton (Dennis on *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*) as shouty CEO Jim Ballillie. Professional hockey also plays a role. Unfortunately, the many randomly-timed commercials on *CBC Gem* really take away from the viewing experience.



## SKYMED — SEASON 2

CBC GEM

Marketed as a high-stakes medical adventure series about "life, death, and drama at 20,000 feet," *SkyMed* follows a group of young First Responders in the remote North. These responders rely on helicopter travel to reach remote communities thousands of miles away. As they fly between rescues, they not only stir up dust and debris but also heartbreak, conflict, and controversy.



## THE BURIAL

AMAZON PRIME

If you like courtroom dramas, this film is a must-watch. And even if you don't like courtroom dramas, Jamie Foxx and Tommy Lee Jones deliver, as always, spectacular performances. These range from Foxx's sometimes irreverent humour as a lawyer and reverend of a Baptist church, to Jones' heartfelt epiphanous moments. Loosely based on real events, *The Burial* is the story of Jeremiah Joseph O'Keefe (Jones), a white funeral home owner who hires a dogged Black injury lawyer (Foxx) to help save his business when a greedy Canadian businessman tries to put the squeeze on him, touching on themes of racial injustice and corporate corruption.

# Bring Wildlife Home

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## QUICK BITES FOR THE NON-SPORTS FAN



### NBA

2023 #1 draft pick **Victor Wembanyama** is exceeding the high expectations that awaited him in the league. After only a handful of games, commentators and players alike agree the 19-year-old, seven-foot-four forward is a generational talent.

### UFC

Heavyweight champion Jon Jones tore his left pectoral muscle in training and will be unable to fight for the foreseeable future. Given Jones' age, some believe the injury may spell the end of his career.

### NFL

While the Kansas City Chiefs are once again favourites to win the Superbowl, the Detroit Lions (who are typically terrible) have put together an excellent team this year that, along with a few other teams, poses a serious threat to Kansas City.

### MLB

The Texas Rangers won the 2023 World Series after beating the Arizona Diamondbacks 4-1 in a best-of-seven series. The win marks the Rangers' first ever World Series title.

### HOCKEY

The death of Adam Johnson, who previously played 13 games in the NHL, rocked the hockey world in October. Johnson died after being cut in the neck by a skate during a pro game in England. Many are now calling for mandatory neck guards at all levels of hockey. Some men's leagues below the NHL have already made the move.



The WNBA is composed of 12 teams, six in each conference

ALL-PRO REELS

## NO WNBA TEAM FOR T.O.

Basketball fans hoping for a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team in Toronto will have to put their dreams on hold. According to reports, Maple Leaf and Sports Entertainment (MLSE) pulled its bid for a Toronto-based WNBA expansion team amid varying levels of interest in a team among senior leadership. Given the costs and facility requirements associated with starting a WNBA team, MLSE's cold feet may have shut the door on the WNBA in Toronto for the foreseeable future.

## Dark Days for Darko?

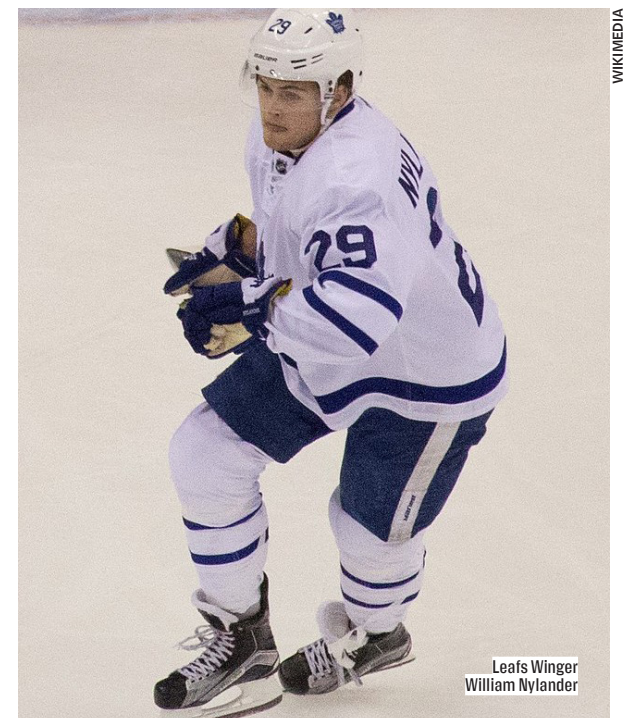
On one hand, the Raptors have shown incredible signs of promise: Scottie Barnes is playing his best basketball to date, team chemistry appears to be high, and O.G. Anunoby's defense is as stout as ever. On the other hand, the Raptors continue to turnover the ball and miss three pointers, making them one of the worst offensive teams in the league.

While most teams in the Eastern Conference made notable improvements to their rosters during the offseason, the Raptors opted to bring back most of its core team from last year. New head coach, Darko Rajaković, has some big challenges ahead of him if the Raptors are going to make a splash this year.



Raptors Forward  
OG Anunoby

KEITH ALLISON



Leafs Winger  
William Nylander

WIKIMEDIA

## WILL LEAFS WITHSTAND DEFENSIVE WOES?

The Toronto Maple Leafs started the season okay. Not great, not terrible. High-priced forwards like Auston Matthews, captain John Tavares and (lesser-paid) William Nylander are producing. Frustratingly for fans, that's been more true on the road than at home. But there has been a lack of fight in the team. The defence is scarily thin and the penalty-kill is looking particularly bad. Even still, if their goal-scoring stays consistent, they have a decent chance of making the playoffs again.

## PWHL TORONTO TAKES SHAPE

After signing Sarah Nurse (Forward), Blayre Turnbull (F) and Renata Fast (Defence) during free agency, the Toronto Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) team has added Maggie Connors (F), Rebecca Leslie (F), and Emma Maltais (F). While there are still more pieces to be added to this puzzle, PWHL Toronto general manager, Gina Kingsbury, appears to be putting together a serious contender. The six team, 24-game inaugural PWHL season begins in January 2024.



Canadian Men's National  
Soccer Team (CANMNT)

HOSSEIN ZOHREAVAND

## THE PATH TO CONCACAF

On Nov. 21, the Canadian men's national soccer team will face the Jamaican men's national team at BMO Field. The match will be the second in a two-game head-to-head series (the first being in Jamaica on Nov. 17) and offers the winner a place in the CONCACAF Nations League finals next March. After a disappointing first-round exit in the 2022 FIFA World Cup and a 4-1 loss to Team Japan in October, the 44th-ranked Canadian team is looking to get its groove back against the 56th-ranked Jamaican team.

# HOROSCOPES

BY LEE SUKSI

## ARIES

(MARCH 20 - APRIL 20)

Who do you feel loyalty to? Prove it, even if they already trust you. Offer your service, your attention, your love. This isn't a moment for retreat, for diminishment, noncommitment or even self-reliance. Even if you insist on relying on yourself, don't force that value onto others. Show up, and bring something to share.

## TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Falling madly in love can be one of the loneliest experiences. Whether it's with an idea or a person, your world narrows to the circle of obsession, casting everyone else out. You're at risk of obsession this month. Allow your new devotion to be expansive, helping you explore the world through one person or idea instead of cutting you off.

## GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

There's so much that you wish you didn't know, just to keep your mind still. The way to get really, really still, is to give yourself a moment to let everything you know exist. The total weight of all you know - every family secret, every moral evil, every conflicting rumour - can exist at once, making its noise. Make time to hear it all.

## CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

When you try something new, it doesn't have to be major. You don't even have to tell anyone about it. Begin a secret novelty this month, and see how it serves you.

## LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 22)

It's hard to be totally honest in a world that we can't understand in one lifetime. Our notions of honesty are partly developed by where we recognize lies. When we pay attention, we can see the ones we tell ourselves by accident. Even little lies will be more pesky this month.

## VIRGO

(AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22)

When we put precision first, we lose consistency. When we zero in on the finest details, there are swathes of life that go unattended to. Perfectionism is the fear that we will get it wrong, but there are many mistakes in any life worth living.

## LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

Sometimes you find yourself speechless, able to watch but not converse, dream but not interpret. Get out your camera, your wallet, your chisel. Find your brushes, your binoculars, your boots. Put on some music and shake your whole body. Find your body, however you can.

## SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 22)

Happy birthday! Time to seduce. When are you at your most persuasive? Most people say one-on-one. This month, bring your most intimate convictions to the public sphere. Apply your charm, your interest, your loveliness to the widest audience possible. Invite the world to what they are responsible for. Use your powers wisely.

## SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

Happy birthday! Who are you? You're human, and you tend to morph and bend to other people's ideas of you, making everyone come to your party. This flexibility gives you good ideas about who you are. However, during your busy birthday season, I want you to spend some time in solitary self-reflection. Remember, whoever you find in the mirror doesn't have to exist forever.

## CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

You have a central toughness that's only getting tougher. Offer this toughness in service of protection. To protect well, you have to ask people about their boundaries and desires. That will force some cracks in your armour. You'll have to trust that this is mutually beneficial.

## AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 20)

Think of your first memory, the one you always tell people about when they ask. Now, begin to imagine your life backwards. What precious information is hidden in the time between your birth and the beginning of your memory? Is there something you've forgotten that you can access?

## PISCES

(FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 20)

Generosity can be a power grab, a way we assert that we're in control of a relationship. Gifts can be patronizing, an offering that can always be taken away. Can you give and fully surrender what you lose? What can you sacrifice, without knowing who you're sacrificing to? What can you sacrifice without being thanked?

*Lee Suksi, The Grind's horoscopes writer, has been reading peoples' horoscopes for 10 years. You can book a personalized reading with them at leesuksi.com/getread. They're also the award-winning author of The Nerves.*

Lee Suksi

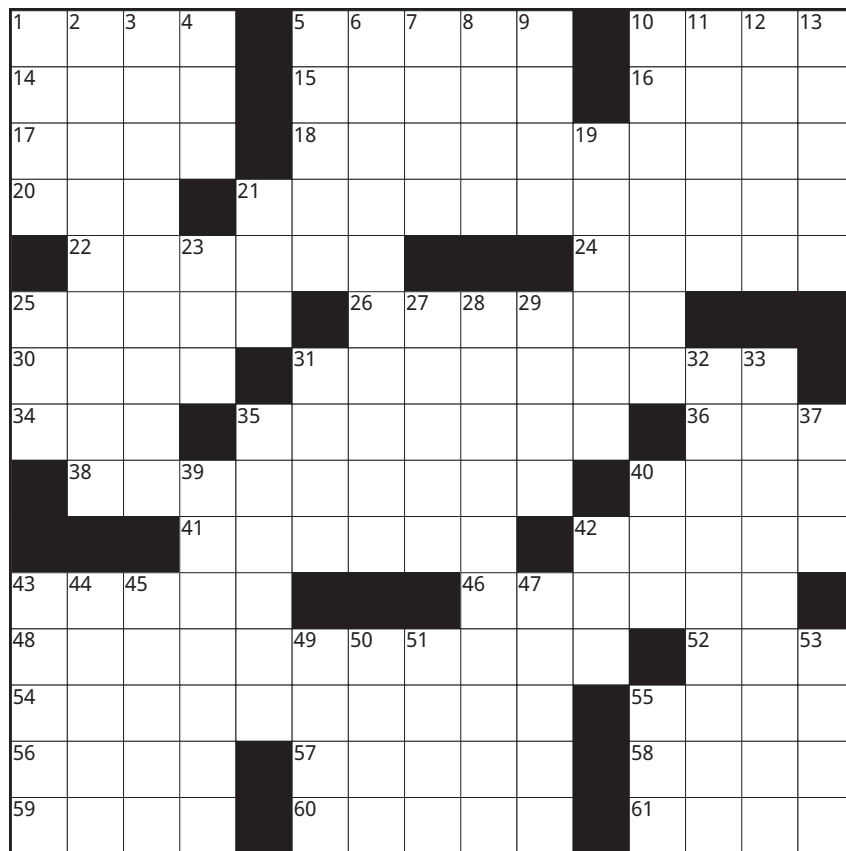


### ACROSS

- 1 Clock radio toggle
- 5 Author Maria of "How to Stand Up to a Dictator"
- 10 "Bye!"
- 14 Little piggies, sometimes
- 15 Hurt
- 16 "Consider it handled!"
- 17 1997 Natalie Imbruglia single
- 18 "Trouble is coming, buddy"
- 20 Jagmeet Singh's party
- 21 Bad influence
- 22 Wool often used in clothing base layers
- 24 Say
- 25 "You're \_\_\_" (often repeated phrase in a Zoom meeting)
- 26 Not positive
- 30 Has awakened
- 31 Stuck out, like a shark's fin above the water
- 34 U.S. spy agency
- 35 Houses, en français
- 36 The \_\_\_ Locks in Sault Ste. Marie
- 38 Face washes
- 40 MBA course
- 41 Tswana word for "fly," meaning this critter is often called a "fly fly"
- 42 Peak performance
- 43 Teeny pests
- 46 Negotiate a price
- 48 "Oh, by the way..."
- 52 Work displayed at The Power Plant gallery
- 54 Like pine and spruce trees
- 55 Mix with a spoon
- 56 "Howdy!"
- 57 Liquid measurement
- 58 Sit for a school photo
- 59 Computing pioneer Turing
- 60 "Sorry to Bother You" actress Thompson
- 61 Upper limbs

### DOWN

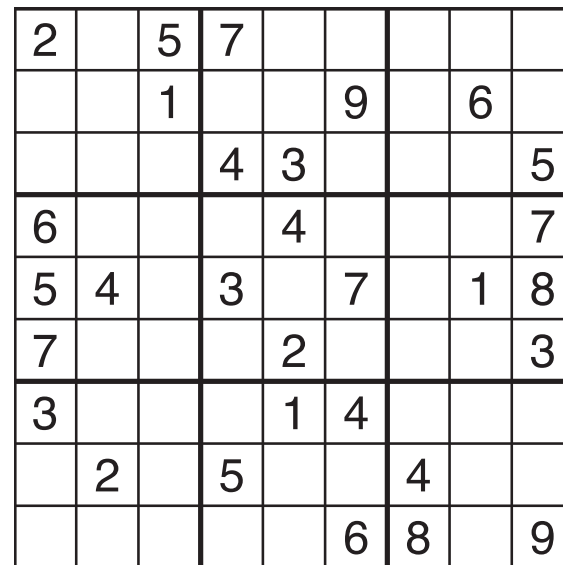
- 1 Memo abbr.
- 2 Tunes played to establish a specific vibe
- 3 Eternal
- 4 \_\_\_ Messenger (early 2000s instant messaging service)
- 5 Silky synthetic fabric
- 6 Traveller concerned with lowering their carbon footprint
- 7 Closed
- 8 Arid
- 9 Yemeni port
- 10 Took over, in a way
- 11 Not suitable
- 12 Plane walkway
- 13 Marine animal that holds another's hand when sleeping
- 19 Second sign of the Western zodiac
- 21 Got \_\_\_ of (discarded)
- 23 Public image, in brief
- 25 Word after lapel or before drop
- 27 Snoots, more formally
- 28 Some information in a Google Business Profile
- 29 Ornamental vases
- 31 Window section
- 32 Moving staircase
- 33 Extremely pessimistic worldview
- 35 Mountain formation
- 37 What a loonie is worth
- 39 Summer Mediterranean wind
- 40 Word with good or Easter
- 42 Get older
- 43 Chocolatey coffee order
- 44 How fritters are fried
- 45 Singer and songwriter Taga
- 47 Totally lost
- 49 Shoulder muscle, in short
- 50 Pelee Island locale
- 51 Forget-me-\_\_\_
- 53 "\_\_\_ bien!"
- 55 Place for pampering



# CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

CROSSWORD PUZZLE  
BY EMMA LAWSON

SUDOKU PUZZLE  
BY WEBSUDOKU.COM



### PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

6	3	8	9	7	2	4	5	1
1	7	4	3	8	5	9	2	6
9	5	2	4	1	6	8	7	3
3	4	5	8	2	9	6	1	7
8	1	9	7	6	3	2	4	5
7	2	6	5	4	1	3	8	9
5	5	6	1	2	3	4	7	9
2	9	7	6	5	8	1	3	4
4	8	3	1	9	7	5	6	2

S	W	R	Y	Y	S	S	B	L	N	V	T	Y
E	S	O	D	E	R	I	I	T	V	A	I	H
R	I	I	S	S	N	O	R	E	J	I	N	O
L	V	E	I	O	N	3	Q	I	S	V	N	Q
E	T	G	G	V	H	S	E	L	L	W		
E	W	A	V	E	S	I	E	S	L			
N	O	C	E	S	R	S	N	V	A	I	C	
O	I	S	M	A	S	N	O	S	T	V	I	C
Q	E	D	N	R	I	O	N	E	D	N	S	I
E	R	E	U	S	N	Q	E	L	U	W		
R	E	I	U	O	N	I	E	W				
E	T	d	d	V	N	E	I	O	R	d	D	N
I	S	V	O	I	E	R	N	O	A	N	R	O
I	I	N	O	G	E	H	O	V	A	S	E	O
O	V	I	C	V	S	S	E	R	W	d	W	

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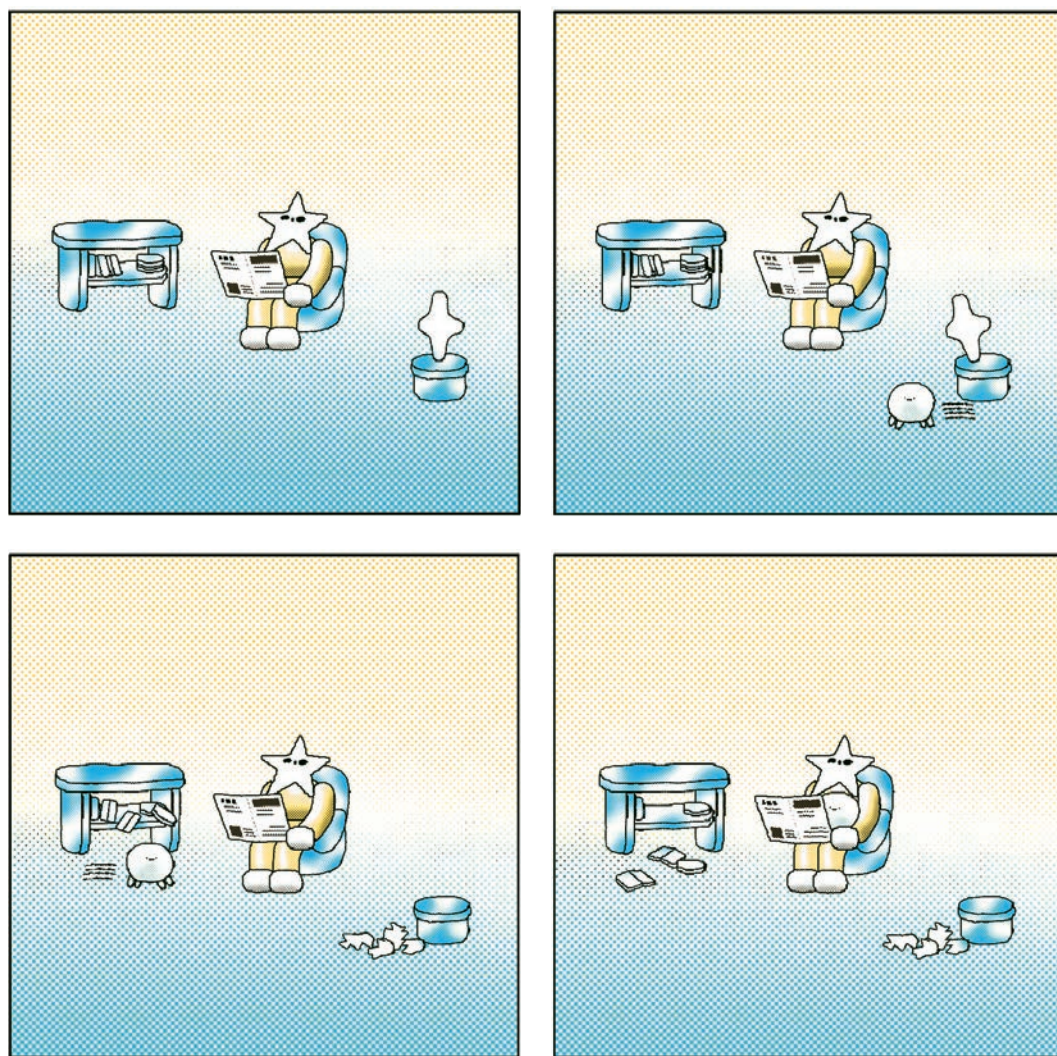
DANU SOCIAL HOUSE

EVERY MONTH'S THIRD SATURDAY

BY ALEXANDER LAIRD ALAIRD.COM



BY MUI WANG MUIWANG.SITE



# RANDOM ADVICE

This month, we stopped into Gilmore Coin Laundry in the Junction to find creative solutions to one of the oldest problems of city living:

I live in a high-rise and I have a bad mouse problem. I keep a really clean apartment but no matter what I do, they're everywhere. After I talked to a neighbour in the lobby, we realized it might be a problem with the whole building. So we called management and they sent the superintendent to put traps in our units. But we're still getting mice. I read online that we can file a T6 form with the Landlord and Tenant Board for health and safety complaints, but it can take months to get a hearing. And I'm not sure they can force the landlord to do maintenance on the building itself. Any ideas?

## Zandra DOING LAUNDRY

When we had a mouse problem, we lived in Windsor and it was a problem in the area. Everyone knew. There were mice in the top and bottom units of our house. We just contacted our landlord, and they sent over a person to set up traps inside random little holes and told us not to keep food out, which completely got rid of the mouse issues. But we had a pretty good connection with the landlord. If it's a building where the landlord is a company, and if there's multiple people in the building with the same problem, I feel like the next step is to rally up and do a petition. If the landlord doesn't deal with it, that's a very unstable living condition. At that point, it's just wrong.



## Scott ALSO DOING LAUNDRY

I had this issue at the last place I was living, in Montreal. It seems like the renter's laws do not protect you in Toronto like they do in Montreal, and they barely protect you there. So no one gives a shit about you here. I don't know anything about the process of filing this T6 form, but I would say that's a waste of time. Talking to your landlord is a waste of time. I had exterminators come in, I had all the traps set up, months of work trying to get rid of the mice and nothing worked. The only thing you can do is to buy a cat and the mice will learn not to go there. And if your landlord doesn't want you to have a cat, say, "I have an infestation. Do something about it, or this cat's staying with us."



Are you dealing with a complicated work situation? Is your landlord being shady? Do you have a relationship question you can't ask your friends about? We're here for you. Email us at [info@thegrindmag.ca](mailto:info@thegrindmag.ca) and you might find the answer you're looking for in the next issue.