

# 23- 24

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Absence





The Jackman Humanities Institute acknowledges the sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. Indigenous peoples have shaped its history for thousands of years. It is on this land that they have developed distinct languages, cultures, economies, and ways of life; and this land remains a sacred gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island. It is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. This territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy of the Ojibway and allied nations to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes peaceably. Today the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in this community, on this territory.



ON THE COVER  
**Hazel Meyer and Cait McKinney**  
*The Pink Pegboard from*  
*Tape Condition: degraded*  
2016  
Mixed-media installation  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the Art Museum  
at the University of Toronto  
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid



# Annual Theme: Absence

Absence takes many forms—absence as loss, abandonment, and omission; absence as exile, separation, and unbelonging; and, paradoxically, absence as boundless, infinite, and transcendent. Ways of knowing, communal memory, as well as personal and cultural identities are all shaped, challenged, and even denied by various types of absences. Voids, silences, privations, gaps and solitudes are forces in themselves. What is not there can be even more powerful than what is there. How does absence affect our views of and place in the world? What meaning can we make of those “blank void regions”? What happens when absence is present? How are today's technologies and our networked world challenging the binary distinction of presence and absence?

## Mnemonic silences, disappearing acts

Presented by the Art Museum in conjunction with the Jackman Humanities Institute's 2023–24 research theme Absence

Works by

**Kasra Jalilipour**

**Jordan King**

**Kama La Mackerel**

**Hazel Meyer and Cait McKinney**

**Lan “Florence” Yee**

Curated by **Dallas Fellini**

The archive has long been theorized as a structuring force that informs public memory, state narratives, and the making of official history. When trans and queer histories enter the archive, the conditions upon which they are absorbed are often those of surveillance, criminalization, coloniality, and degradation. More commonly, however, these histories do not make their way into official archives at all, which results to a fragmented remembering of queer and trans pasts. The artists in this exhibition draw out the unreliable qualities of stored memory, positioning their work in the spaces where the archive momentarily goes out of focus. Through fiction-making, critical imagining, and revisionism, they gesture at and supplement histories of queer and trans people that are insufficient, compromised, colonial, or simply absent.

[artmuseum.utoronto.ca/exhibition/mnemonic-silences-disappearing-acts/](http://artmuseum.utoronto.ca/exhibition/mnemonic-silences-disappearing-acts/)

### EXHIBITION

13 September 2023–21 June 2024

### COSPONSORS

The Art Museum, University of Toronto  
Canada Council for the Arts  
Ontario Arts Council

We are grateful for the contributions of the Art Museum, both financial and in-kind, through the contribution of expertise, planning and implementation. The curator, Dallas Fellini, is a student in the MVS Curatorial Studies program at the John M. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, and they produced this show under the faculty supervision of Professor Barbara Fischer. The Art Museum team that made this exhibition possible, extending their normal frame of work, includes Noa Bronstein, Assistant Director; Marianne Rellin, Communications Coordinator (publication and didactics); Daniel Hunt, Assistant Coordinator, Exhibitions and Projects (Installation and Logistics); and Micah Donovan, Exhibitions and Projects Coordinator.

## Director's Message

Absence, the Annual Theme for 2023–2024, produced an impressively cohesive Circle of Fellows, who were very much present to each other and at the Institute. While the fellows talked and wrote, a number of other long-standing processes came to fruition.



The main focus has been the completion of our Mellon-funded programming for Humanities at Large. All three personnel lines have been integrated into the operating budget of the JHI: a new annual external Visiting Public Humanities Fellowship for a visiting external sabbaticant, a new Communications Officer position, held since 2019 by Sonja Johnston, and increased responsibilities for long-serving Associate Director Dr. Kim Yates, in 2022. The project has enabled JHI to develop more effective relations with the communities around us.

EDI initiatives have been front and centre: John Crutch, Indigenous Cultural Competency Training officer in the U of T Centre for Learning, Leadership & Culture, led a workshop on Indigenous allyship; this was supplemented by two more Indigenous workshops facilitated by the JHI's Distinguished Indigenous Faculty Fellow Glen Coulthard and Artist in Residence Olivia Shortt respectively. Professor Coulthard also delivered the fourth JHI CBC Lecture, “For the Land: Dene Self-Determination Struggles in an international Context”. Our twelfth annual art exhibit this year, curated by MVS graduate student Dallas Fellini of the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design was “Mnemonic silences, disappearing acts,” an exploration of the trans and queer Canadian artistic archive.

Our events programming was wide-ranging, innovative, and thought-provoking. Visiting Public Humanities Fellow, Professor Teresa Heffernan (English, St. Mary's University), organized a packed workshop on the question of “‘Intelligence’ in the Absence of Life,” exploring the relationship between artificial intelligence and human creativity and ethics to open a conversation about what gets obscured in the AI hype cycle. Recordings of the four keynote talks are now available on our YouTube channel. Another programming highlight was the New Faculty Salon, which introduced newly faculty to JHI's

work and developed into a new workshop for humanities faculty on JHI funding opportunities, “Finding the Right Fit with JHI Research Funding Programs”. Dr. Amy Ratelle (JHI Research Officer) has brought funding and research together in ways that support scholarship at all levels, and these events are a small sample of her work.

The year also brought a long-awaited upgrade of our facilities, with a major A/V renovation in JHB100 and a new audio broadcast/podcast studio in JHB226 which has so far seen bookings from the five divisions of the University. In the spring we recorded the JHI podcast series “Humanities at Large” for dissemination in fall '24. Hosted by Melissa Gismondi (JHI alumna, currently with CBC Radio) it presents six of the year's fellows and their research. I am grateful to Monica Toffoli, the JHI's Admin Officer, for managing both the renovation and the new space; and to Cheryl Pasternak, the JHI's Finance Officer, for husbanding the resources to finance these initiatives.

### Alison M. Keith

University Professor and Director,  
Jackman Humanities Institute



## Research Communities



Lan "Florence" Yee  
*PROOF—Community is easy  
to romanticize*  
2022  
Hand-embroidered thread  
on inkjet printed cotton  
36 × 48 inches  
Courtesy of the Art Museum  
at the University of Toronto  
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid



# Scholars-in-Residence

Scholars-in-Residence matches faculty researchers with small teams of undergraduate students across the disciplines. The students stay in residence for a month while they work together on their supervisor’s research project, learn new skillsets, and develop close friendships.

2024 provided in-person programming for 115 students across three campuses, including small-group daily research work, shared meals, accommodation, and enriching workshops and social events. The program also continued a born-digital Online/International section consisting of 6 projects and 32 students that ran concurrently with the 23 in-person projects at UT-Mississauga, UT-Scarborough and UT-St. George.

SiR 2024 was the largest iteration of the program to date. One of the biggest changes to Scholars-in-Residence this year, spurred by the 54.5% increase in students in the St. George cohort, was the reimagining of the Final Symposium. On the final day of the program, students from all cohorts (St. George, UTM, UTSC) gathered at Victoria College to share their research findings and reflect on their month’s work. CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

# Steering Committees

## Critical Digital Humanities Initiative

- Elsbeth Brown**  
Director
- Jennifer Wemigwans**  
Director, Indigenous Digital Practice Initiative
- Danielle Taschereau Mamers**  
Managing Director
- Claire Battershill**  
Faculty Fellow
- Tanya Rohrmoser**  
Communications Officer
- Julia Gruson-Wood**  
Research Officer
- Matthew Lefaive**  
Developer

- Betsy Moss**  
Events Coordinator
- Katie MacKinnon**  
Postdoctoral Fellow
- Rachel Corbman**  
Postdoctoral Fellow
- Chloe Bordewich**  
Postdoctoral Fellow
- Parita Patel**  
UX Designer

## Critical Zones

- Stefan Soldovieri**  
Director, Critical Zones Initiative
- Janice Boddy**  
Professor Emerita, Department of Anthropology
- James Cahill**  
Director, Cinema Studies Institute
- Steven Easterbrook**  
Director, School of Environment
- Susan Hill**  
Director, Centre for Indigenous Studies
- Alison Keith**  
Director, Jackman Humanities Institute
- Sherry Lee**  
Lead UofT PI, Environmental Humanities & Climate Justice IDC
- Andrea Most**  
Director, The Persephone Project
- Alexandra Rahr**  
Director of Undergraduate Programs, Munk School
- John Robinson**  
Presidential Advisor, Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability
- Matti Semiatycki**  
Director, Infrastructure Institute
- Cheryl Suzack**  
English, Acting Director, Centre for Indigenous Studies
- Jane Wolff**  
Architecture, Documentary Filmmaker and JHI Faculty Research Fellow

## Scholars-in-Residence

- Angela Esterhammer**  
Director
- Andreas Bendlin**  
UTM Vice-Dean Academic Experience
- Hayley Birss**  
SiR Coordinator, St. George campus
- Juliana Chianelli**  
SiR Coordinator, UTM campus
- Gabriella Cole**  
SiR Coordinator, UTSC campus
- Robin Elliott**  
Former SiR supervisor
- Alison Keith**  
Director, Jackman Humanities Institute
- Rie Kijima**  
Former SiR supervisor
- Michael Souza**  
UTSC Acting Assoc. Dean Undergraduate
- Alexie Tcheuyap**  
Associate Vice-President, International Student Experience
- Ira Wells**  
SiR Manager and former SiR supervisor
- Adrien Zakar**  
Former SiR supervisor







Photo by Minh Truong, 31 May 2024. Poster signed by SiR student participants. Used with permission.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

This year, to ensure that all students were able to present their research effectively and to give students experience in developing transferable poster-presentation skills, most research teams were asked to generate a research poster, a change that was well received by both supervisors and students. Projects that opted instead for an oral presentation delivered creative mixed-media contributions. The Online/International cohort participated in the Final Symposium remotely and gave virtual presentations on their projects.

This year's iteration of the program also included some research-creation projects and focused on the incorporation of creativity-focused programming. Students from all campuses were able to participate in the launch event for Victoria University's Centre for Creativity which included a highly interdisciplinary panel of creative professionals, a student art exhibition, and interactive creative programming led by U of T faculty.

What the Students said:

*"I gained a deeper understanding, through ongoing conversations, of perspectives that are typically not feasible in larger courses. This intensive engagement allowed for a richer and more nuanced exploration of ideas."*

*"Seeing my ideas translate into the final product of a research piece was extremely rewarding!"*

*"Engaging intimately with global education documents has significantly enhanced my comprehension of educational reforms and their varied impacts across different countries."*

What the Faculty Supervisors said:

*"I loved this program so much!! We got so much done, but the dedicated time and space where we all worked and problem-solved together made the project so much fun! It was an absolute pleasure to see my scholars become a close-knit group of friends who supported each other well beyond just the details of the research project."*

## Critical Digital Humanities Initiative

The Critical Digital Humanities Initiative (CDHI) enables trans-disciplinary collaborations that emphasize questions of power, social justice, and critical theory in digital humanities research. Its vision is to harness the very tools of the digital revolution to forge a new paradigm of critical humanities scholarship, one that bridges the humanities' emphasis on power and culture in historical perspective with the tools and analysis of digital technology. The CDHI is a new mix of research workshop and design atelier, equipping humanities researchers with the technical and design expertise to use digital tools to ask new questions, share new knowledge, and analyze power and inequality in historical perspective. In 2023–2024, the CDHI supported a Visiting Speaker series, a UX Design Accelerator for faculty members, an Artificial Intelligence & Humanities Lab, an Indigenous Digital Practice Initiative, five faculty-led Emerging Projects, two postdoctoral fellows, eight graduate fellows, and a wide range of workshops, lightning lunches, and other connection-driven work to create an energetic community of DH practitioners at the University of Toronto.



DH Fest 2024 organizers (left to right) Matt Lefaive, Katie MacKinnon, and Chloe Bordewich. Photo by Tanya Rohrmoser, 2024.

## Partnership Activities in Africa



Left to right: Retha Ferguson, Rithuli Orleyn, Zuko Sikhafungana. October 2023 on the JHI balcony. Photo by Kimberley Yates,

In the Fall 2023 term, the JHI welcomed three Ph.D. students affiliated with the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape. During their stay, they lived and ate at Massey College as Junior Fellows, connected with their mentors and others in their field of interests, and explored the city of Toronto. They shared a large office on the

second floor of the Jackman Humanities Building and made friends with the JHI Circle of Fellows. The exchange was designed to provide international perspective and access to a large research library, and to encourage progress on their dissertation writing. All three students benefitted from the experience and enjoyed their time in Toronto.

**Retha Ferguson,**  
Ph.D. candidate, History,  
University of the Western Cape  
*Neoliberal Imaginaries and Counter-imaginaries: Dispatches from Cape Town*  
University of Toronto Supervisor: Jason Hackworth, A&S Geography & Planning

**Rithuli Orleyn,**  
Ph.D. candidate, History,  
University of the Western Cape  
*The AmaXhosa Rebellion of 1857: Labour, Capital, Faith, and Cattle-Killing*  
University of Toronto supervisor: Alissa Trotz, Director, Women & Gender Studies Institute

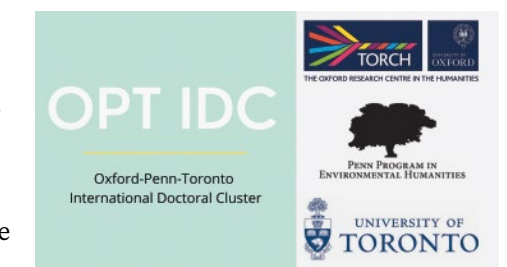
**Zuko Wonderfull Sikhafungana,**  
Ph.D. student, Anthropology,  
University of the Western Cape  
*Rethinking Community, Theatre, and "Community Theatre" in South Africa*  
University of Toronto supervisor: Kathleen Gallagher, Director, Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies

## Critical Zones

JHI continued to support the International Doctoral Cluster (IDC) in Environmental Humanities and Climate Justice. The IDC is a research partnership comprised of graduate students, emerging scholars, and faculty from all three institutions with the shared goal of fostering scholarly community and knowledge exchange. Its interdisciplinary research in the Environmental Humanities seeks to understand and explain the cultural, social, and historical contexts of environmental change and crisis. It attends to the histories and practices that have traditionally severed culture from nature,

and queries how environmental issues are imbricated with multiple cultural settings. In 2023–2024 the IDC funded five doctoral students' research visits to both Oxford and Penn, partially supported a faculty visit to Oxford, and welcomed a grad student visit from Oxford to Toronto, with two more pending in Fall 2024. The IDC hosted hybrid events in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, and a student led work-in-progress session in the spring; and both student and faculty members from all three institutions participated in a joint panel at the conference of the Association for the Study of

Literature and Environment. JHI also hosted A&S Postdoctoral in Environmental Humanities Fellow Cristiana Roffi, whose work explores ecofeminist approaches to Ovid.





# Fellows



**Kama La Mackerel**  
*Breaking the Promise of  
Tropical Emptiness:  
Trans Subjectivity in the Postcard*  
2019  
Inkjet on silk paper  
24 x 16 inches  
Courtesy of the Art Museum  
at the University of Toronto  
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid



# Circle of Fellows Overview

For the first time in four years, the Circle of Fellows not only met together, but ate together every week. They formed close friendships and were an outstandingly harmonious and collegial group. Their conversation about absence examined both actual and perceived absences, often in the aftermaths of colonial rule. The undergraduate fellows all presented polished graduate-level work that left guests and more senior fellows astonished by their intellectual acuity. Social activities included tours of the Thomas Fisher Library of Rare Books, the Art Museum, and a hands-on pottery-wheel class at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Arts.

# Circle of Fellows

## Distinguished Visiting Fellow

**Roy Sorensen**  
Philosophy,  
University of  
Texas-Austin

## Distinguished Indigenous Faculty Fellow

**Glen Coulthard**  
Political Science,  
University of  
British Columbia

## Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellow

**Teresa Heffernan**  
English,  
St. Mary's University

## Artist in Residence

**Olivia Shortt**

## Faculty Research Fellows

**Kamari Maxine Clarke**  
Criminology &  
Sociolegal Studies/  
Diaspora &  
Transnational Studies

**Nilanjan Das**  
Philosophy

**J. Barton Scott**  
Historical Studies

**Jane Wolff**  
Architecture

## Postdoctoral Fellows

**Rui Assubuji**  
History

**Chloe Bordewich**  
History

**Cristiana Roffi**  
Classical Philology

## Doctoral Fellows

**Sadaf Ahmed**  
Study of Religion

**Breanna Lohman**  
History & Philosophy of  
Science & Technology

**Paula Sanches Nuñez  
de Villavicencio**  
Information

## Undergraduate Fellows

**Jenna Barhoush**  
Public Policy/  
Environmental Studies

**Celine Hajj Sleiman**  
English

**Odessa  
Hewitt-Bernhard**  
Philosophy/Ethics,  
Society & Law

**Palvasha Khan**  
History/Literature &  
Critical Theory

**Laurel Wilson**  
Architectural Studies

**Elizabeth Wong**  
Diaspora &  
Transnational Studies/  
Ethics, Society & Law





Distinguished Visiting Fellow

## Roy Sorensen

Philosophy  
University of Texas



Roy Sorensen is the author of *Nothing: A Philosophical History* (Oxford University Press, 2022). His earlier books include *Seeing Dark Things: The Philosophy of Shadows*, *A Brief History of the Paradox*, and *A Cabinet of Philosophical Conundrums*. He is interested in epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language. In his most recent book, he explores how nothing can cause something. The absence of something might seem to indicate a null or a void, an emptiness as ineffectual as a shadow. In fact, 'nothing' is one of the most powerful ideas the human mind has ever conceived. His lecture was a lively tour of the history and philosophy of nothing, explaining how various thinkers throughout history have conceived and grappled with the mysterious power of absence—and how these ideas about shadows, gaps, and holes have in turn played a very positive role in the development of some of humankind's most important ideas.

Roy Sorensen's visit was deeply engaging for members of the tri-campus Philosophy department, who came out in strength for every event. He also shared meals with members of all three departments, connecting with philosophers across a wide range of interests. His work was perfectly aligned with the annual theme of Absence, and his challenging discussions left the Circle of Fellows with intellectual puzzles to consider as they widened their own projects. He was a generous and funny speaker, and it was a pleasure to learn from him.

### ROY SORENSEN EVENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>21 November</b><br>UTSC visit                                     | <b>23 November</b><br>Public Lecture,<br>"Photographing Absen es:<br>An Illustrated History" |
| <b>22 November</b><br>UTM visit                                      |  |
| <b>23 November</b><br>Thursday Fellows Lunch:<br>informal discussion | <b>23 November</b><br>Graduate workshop,<br>"A New Way of Seeing<br>Holes"                   |

Distinguished Visiting Indigenous Faculty Fellow

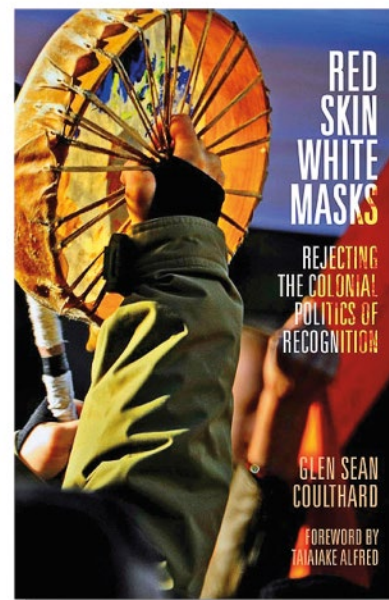
## Glen Coulthard

Political Science and  
Indigenous Studies  
University of British Columbia



Glen Coulthard has written and published numerous articles and chapters in the areas of contemporary political theory, Indigenous thought and politics, and radical social and political thought (Marxism, anarchism, post-colonialism). His work on Frantz Fanon and the politics of recognition won Contemporary Political Theory's Annual Award for Best Article of the Year in 2007. He is the author of *Red Skin, White Masks* (U. Minnesota Press, 2014), which received multiple scholarly awards, and he is a co-founder of Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, a decolonial, Indigenous land-based post-secondary program operating on his traditional territories in Denendeh (Northwest Territories). He is Yellowknives Dene.

During his fellowship he wrote his second monograph; parts of this study were presented as the F.E.L. Priestley Memorial Lectures in the History of Ideas, and as the CBC-JHI Annual Lecture, "For the Land: Dene Self-Determination Struggles in an International Context". He was an interested and serious interlocutor of the fellows, exploring each of their ideas with care and respect.



Glen Coulthard's award-winning *Red Skin, White Masks* published by University of Minnesota Press in 2014

Featured Faculty Research Fellow

## Kamari Maxine Clarke

Criminology & Sociocultural Studies/  
Diaspora & Transnational Studies



### The Elusive Work of Visibility: Toward a Theory of Absence

My fellowship was wonderful. I loved everything and would not have changed a thing.

I worked on multiple projects related to Absence in the Black Atlantic World. The most substantial piece was the clarification of a conceptual tool. I developed the concept of *Pedagogies of the Emergent* which reflects a deep engagement with the complexities of African and Black diasporic modes of presence-making in the context of absence as the hegemonic order. By embracing uncertainty and possibilities as inherent in absence, the concept of the emergent invites us to envision new modes of understanding for engaging with the world, particularly for Black Atlantic social thought. I wrote three chapters about how knowledge about histories in the Black Atlantic world is constantly being remade and reimagined.

I co-organized the Sawyer Seminar Series on the theme of "Evasion" during which I helped organize 22 talks from scholars across various fields, each exploring different dimensions, understandings and implications of evasion. The series fostered rich, cross-disciplinary discussions on how individuals and groups navigate, resist, and subvert social, political, and cultural constraints.

I co-organized MemoLab 2024 in Toronto, themed "Difficult Archives: Transformations in Black and Indigenous Worlds." This event is a collaborative effort by colleagues at UBC, Queens and local community-based organizations. Our program included an exhibit, multi-modal workshops, walking tours, and creative reflection sessions, all designed to illuminate lives overshadowed by violence and dispossession. The exhibition explored visual, audio-visual, and interactive artwork. MemoLab 2024 involved music, dance, lectures, poetry, spoken word, and live performances—all pointing to the challenge of the archive and ways to create new futures.

In May, I participated in Scholars-in-Residence 2024, expanding my database project in collaboration with five undergraduate students. This project addressed the absences in existing archives to make Black lives and practices more legible. We developed new analytical and methodological tools tailored to the complexities of Black social thought. The emergent

became the cornerstone for our pedagogical endeavors and has offered invaluable insights into decolonial knowledge. The emergent not only facilitated the transformation of absence into presence but sparked a reimagining of creative knowledge formations to illuminate emergent possibilities. Our database is more than a repository of archival documents: it is a dynamic platform that interprets silence and ambiguity to uncover new layers of meaning. It stands as a testament to the transformative power of collective inquiry, embodying practices of world-making that shape and reshape the landscapes of knowledge and understanding.





## Teresa Heffernan

English Language and Literature  
St. Mary's University



### “Intelligence” in the Absence of Life

Although the field of artificial intelligence, from its inception, has claimed to mimic human intelligence and creativity, this claim elides both the materiality of resource-intensive machines and the business of AI. What happens to the humanities, the centuries-old study of human society, when it is swallowed up by the very different type of knowledge generated by algorithms, big data, and machines that do not traffic in facts or evidence and that strip data of context, culture and history? If the AI industry has long marketed the idea that there is no difference between the human and the machine by appealing to overly literal readings of fictions, this project reclaims fiction as fiction to investigate the question of creativity and intelligence in the absence of life.

The highlight of this fellowship was a one-day symposium which drew a full house crowd to consider artificial intelligence in the context of the humanities.

**Teresa Heffernan**'s current research is on the science and fiction of robotics and Artificial Intelligence. She is currently working on a new book, *Where AI Meets Fiction*, and her previous publications include the edited collection *Cyborg Futures: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics*, (2019); *Veiled Figures: Women, Modernity, and the Spectres of Orientalism* (2016); and *Post-Apocalyptic Culture: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Twentieth-Century Novel* (2008/2011).

Website: [socialrobotfutures.com](http://socialrobotfutures.com)

This event was fully recorded, and the four lecture recordings are available at [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEsGUYfsyHZofmLf2K81\\_umM1ttL6dvE7](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEsGUYfsyHZofmLf2K81_umM1ttL6dvE7)

## Olivia Shortt



### iskwe-ay’ii: at the end of it

Mx. Shortt collaborated with JHI and the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies (CDTPS) to produce the first live production of their multimedia theatre work/installation, which was commissioned in 2020. The work engaged live performance elements to tackle big questions around environmentalism, climate change, and the end of humanity from an Indigenous perspective. Olivia Shortt also provided training in improvisation and sound design and served as advisor to the annual CDTPS undergraduate MainStage production. They offered workshops for students, staff, and faculty members on sound and text-based improvisation, creation and improvisation based on extant texts, and professionalization for artists and held weekly salons for discussion with students about the meaning and practice of collaboration. They continued their work with a residency at Carleton University in Winter 2024.

(They/Them: Anishinaabe, Nipissing First Nation) **Olivia Shortt** is a Tkarón:to-based storyteller and performing artist. They are a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, noisemaker, improviser, composer, sound designer, video artist, drag artist, curator, administrator, and producer.

Website: [www.olivia-shortt.com](http://www.olivia-shortt.com)



Olivia Shortt in performance at @send.receive in Winnipeg in September 2022 by Robert Szkolnicki.

## Chloe Bordewich

History



### Leaking Empires: The Long Struggle over Information in the Eastern Mediterranean

My fellowship has given me the freedom to develop my academic identity in new directions, support for professional development, physical space to think, and, especially, a sense of community. Before coming to JHI, I had grown frustrated with the siloed nature of discourse in my field of modern Middle Eastern history. Here, formal weekly lunch presentations with the other fellows and informal conversations in the kitchen easily stretched across disciplines and geographies. The non-hierarchical nature of JHI allowed me to learn as much from the undergraduate fellows, sometimes while assembling a puzzle, as from faculty. I was able to form a special bond with my fellow postdocs, since all of us were coming to the University of Toronto from other countries, separated from our partners, and learning our way around the institution together. I have never had an office where I looked forward to working. The 10th-floor view of downtown Toronto, emerging each morning from the fog, my books all close at hand, room to cover the walls in sticky, and the open doors of other fellows made for serendipitous thought processes.

In the past year, I completed a draft of my book proposal, submitted three essays for publication and worked on several other pieces in progress. I also organized the Lightning Lunch series for the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative and served as a member of the CDHI Executive Committee, and taught Introduction to Digital Humanities in the Department of Historical Studies. Finally, I organized a full-day workshop on 8 March 2024 titled “A Blank Space of Delightful Mystery? Cartographic Absences” which drew kindred scholars from across the University of Toronto and helped me to reconceptualize an article. I continued work on the Boston Little Syria project, including an invited lecture, a walking tour, a symposium presentation, and a guest appearance in a graduate course. I also participated in the JHI’s Public Writing workshop and was interviewed their new podcasting series. I am deeply grateful for the proactive and substantial support I received this year.

“Shared ideas, personal relations, and bonds brought people together from diverse parts of the world into the Circle of Fellows this year. I leave my fellowship filled with pride.”

— **Rui Assubuji**  
Postdoctoral Fellow, History



## Breanna Lohman

History and Philosophy of  
Science and Technology



### The Ends of the World: An Environmental History of Nuclear Defense Infrastructure

My experience at the Jackman Humanities Institute has been both personally rewarding and professionally productive. The intellectual atmosphere and reprieve from regular university commitments provided me with the time and opportunity to complete drafts of two dissertation chapters, in addition to crafting the dissertation introduction. Thanks to the support from the JHI staff and fellow scholars, I am excited to share that I have been awarded three fellowships for the 2024–2025 academic year. I am on track to defend my dissertation in the coming winter, and I expect to graduate in June 2025.

I will remember my time at the JHI fondly. The Thursday luncheons were a weekly highlight. The opportunity to hear and share works-in-progress as our scholarship matured both collectively and individually was an invigorating experience. I appreciated that the JHI brought together a cross-section of scholars from all professional stages. I particularly valued the contributions from my undergraduate colleagues, whose work was incisive, urgent, and deeply engaged with the scholarly conversation. I am also grateful for the activities organized by the JHI: the tour of the Fisher generated new primary source materials to incorporate into my work, and Teresa Heffernan's AI event was the most intellectually stimulating and provocative conference I attended all year. I am grateful for the workshops, conferences, talks, and outings which enriched my time at the JHI. The friendly, welcoming culture of the JHI and the drop-in conversations with colleagues are among my most cherished memories and I will miss the sense of collegiality that was fostered here.

"I thrived in the JHI's intergenerational scholarly setting. Some of my most enriching and inspiring conversations were with undergraduates who kept me hip and current, and some of the soft mentorship key to shaping the framing of my research came from interactions with postdocs and senior faculty."

—Sadaf Ahmed  
Graduate Fellow, Religion

## Celine Hajj Sleiman

English

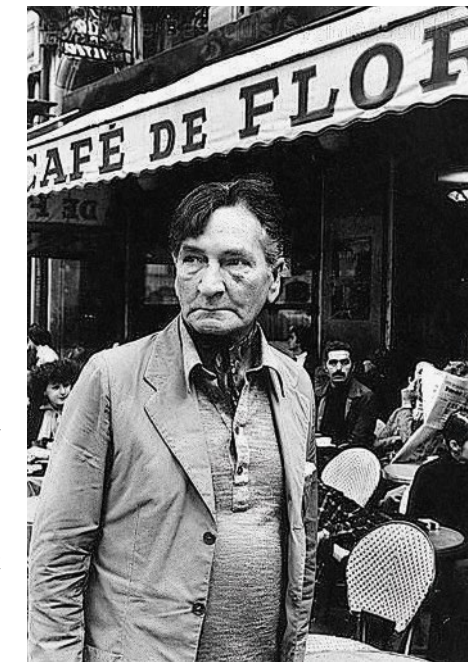


### The Imagination in Exile: Albert Cossery's Egyptian Underground

My project targeted an absence in scholarship on surrealism: the novelist Albert Cossery, whose preoccupations with beggars, idlers, and failed revolutionaries have defined the surreal in Egypt. After an underwhelming initial reception, public interest in his work sparked in the wake of the Arab Spring. I chose to focus on his five exilic texts, which experienced a resurgence in their English translation: *Laziness in the Fertile Valley* (1948), *Proud Beggars* (1955), *The Jokers* (1964), *A Splendid Conspiracy* (1975), and *The Colors of Infamy* (1999). My paper drew on theories and reception histories of surrealism to reposition Cossery within the wider legacy of diasporic literature. I argued that Cossery's comedy uniquely situates him outside the convenient niches of a comparative discipline; rather his contradictions and sources of tension make his work a faithful depiction of the state of exile, and the condition of permanent revolt that is perhaps the only thing native to it.

The interdisciplinary environment at the JHI had the greatest impact on my research. In an early conversation, my supervisor Kamari Clarke posed questions that defined how I positioned my research in the broader realm of exilic literature. She encouraged me to consider why this work was relevant to a broader academic community, what distinguished Cossery from his peers, and how to justify why those idiosyncrasies should matter to the reader. Another conversation with Sadaf Ahmed helped me to rethink the functions of comedy, the lure of laughter over the tragic impulse that Cossery seems to fight: I realized that where the surrealists had failed was where Cossery succeeded. His direct opposition to the inherited Anglophone framework of tragedy defers to the reader's laughter as a narrative authority in a refusal of the illusion of doctrinal knowledge. By drawing insights from other disciplines, I was able to present a piece of research that had resonances in history, philosophy, and visual arts as well as in literature. I justified Cossery's place in scholarship to draw attention to his quiet legacy.

This summer I will begin study in the Ph.D. program in English literature at Yale University. Though my fields of interest—Early Modernity and Milton studies—are quite different than my work at the JHI, the undertaking of a thesis project has prepared me for the level of work and rigor demanded by a doctoral degree.



Albert Cossery in Paris,  
7 Octobre 1975. Photograph  
by Sophie Bassouls.



## Program for the Arts



Lan "Florence" Yee  
*Leaving Space*  
2019  
Hand-embroidered nylon thread,  
tulle, and galvanized steel wire  
10 × 7.5 × 15 inches  
Courtesy of the Art Museum  
at the University of Toronto  
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid



# Program for the Arts Overview

The Program for the Arts supported eleven proposals on the annual theme of Absence in 2023–2024. In total, at least 3,475 people attended these events; because so many were public exhibitions, it is impossible to provide a finalized tally, and this number is probably higher. Nearly all events were held in-person this year: only two events offered any hybrid programming, and the uptake had more to do with geography than pandemic precautions. The move back to in-person event planning has not caused a drop in the reach of our programming; in the previous year, the attendance total for a mostly-hybrid series of events was 1,935. This year's events also generated two podcasts and an audio recording, which will continue to expand their reach.

## Program for the Arts Featured Event

### Hip-Hop Diaspora: Archiving and Celebrating 50 Years of the Culture



Konspiracy at The Concert Hall  
circa 1996. Photo by Demuth Flake.

Rapping, DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti are hip-hop's four core elements. Practitioners and scholars recognize knowledge as hip-hop's fifth element, as a non-aesthetic religio-philosophical element that encompasses activism,

pedagogy and freedom practice. However, accounts of hip-hop knowledge production practices in Canada, the Caribbean, and Europe and their turns to decolonial memory-making, curatorial, non-institutional archiving and the

#### ORGANIZERS

Pablo D. Herrera Vietia and  
Mark V. Campbell, Arts Culture & Media

#### EVENT WEBSITE

[hiphopdiaspora.com](http://hiphopdiaspora.com)

#### PARTNERS AND CO-SPONSORS

- Afrosonic Innovation Lab
- Faculty of Music
- Center for Caribbean Studies
- Critical Digital Humanities Initiative
- Department of Arts, Culture and Media of the University of Toronto, Scarborough
- Northside Hip Hop Archive
- Hip-Hop Education Center
- Habana Hip-Hop
- Art Gallery of Ontario
- Loop Sessions Toronto
- Roland

affordances these offer to the field of digital humanities remain understudied. The emergence of digital and physical hip-hop archives amplifies the need to preserve this undercurrent, non-mainstream element. From Toronto to Havana, to London and Stockholm, we considered the relationships between hip-hop street culture practices, archiving, and preservation.

The event opened at the JHI with “Everybody Wins: Using the Power of the Institution to Advocate for Hip-Hop Communities”, a keynote by Courtney Chartier, Director of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Columbia University. One of main events was the launch of *Hip-Hop Archives: The Politics and Poetics of Knowledge Production*, a new volume that Mark V. Campbell and Murray Forman edited for Intellect Books, followed by a roundtable discussion with Francesca D’Amico-Cuthbert, Chartier and Pablo D. Herrera Veitia. Later that day, Martha Diaz, Jaqueline Lima Santos,



# Program for the Arts 2023-2024



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

and Jon Green offered a panel on hip-hop archives and their institutional alignments. The day closed with a workshop/showcase organized by Loop Sessions Toronto: Canada’s very own beatmakers Astro Mega and Cosmo discussed the status of industry-standard music technology brands as institutions and their connections to hip-hop archives and the digital humanities with Dustin Good, Product Manager at Roland Americas, and Matthew LeFaive, the Digital Humanities Developer for the Critical Digital Humanities Initiative.

Day Two at Scarborough campus, the keynote session, “Breakin’ Convention, How does hip-hop vocabulary define contemporary theatre and dance archives?” was a conversation between Jonzi D, Creative Director and Dr. Mary Fogarty, Associate Professor of Dance at York University. Three more panels followed: firstly, K. Anwer Shaikh, M. Fogarty, Khalid El-Hakim, Serguei Ivanov, and Jason Noer discussed “Doing the Knowledge: The Politics of Archiving Hip-Hop Histories in Canada, the US and Russia”. Then, Sean Robertson-Palmer, James Gabrillo, Pacey Foster, Giuseppe Pipitone, and Jacob Kimvall discussed “Challenging Archival Forms: Hip-hop Oral Histories, Bottom-up Historiographies and Non-institutional Archivist Efforts in the US, Philippines, Sweden, and the UK”. Lastly, Owen Kohl, Leonard Schmiedling, and Pablo D. Herrera Veitia explored “Beyond the Nation: Practitioners’

Cultural Labour to Produce Archival Work Beyond the Constrictions of the Nation in Yugoslavia, Germany, and Cuba”. Cuban-born, Chicago-based DJ AfroQbano closed the UTSC events with a dynamic selection of Cuban post-1959 music on vinyl.

The Day Three finale was at the Art Gallery of Ontario where, after an introduction by Martha Diaz, Fred ‘Fab Five Freddy’ Brathwaite gave an engaging closing keynote titled “The Archive of the Future”. Brathwaite’s talk and Q&A were followed by the screening of *Inventos: Hip-Hop Cubano* by Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi.

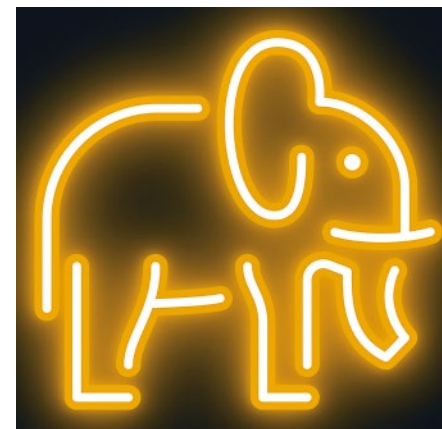
Hip-hop street culture practices, education, and innovations ushered in many of the affordances attributed to the digital humanities. The nature of our panels allowed us to explore new ways to define and expand human/technology relations, as well as decolonial, horizontal, and study-up approaches to historicizing, sharing knowledge, and designing research. Roland made an important donation of two SP-404 MKII samplers to the Afrosonic Innovation Lab, Department of Arts, Culture and Media, UTSC. This equipment will be used to development courses in music production on the Scarborough campus.

Without exception, every attendee commented on the value of Hip-Hop Diaspora as an event that offered practitioners, scholars, and students a rare meeting space for reflection and synergies that are so necessary for future understanding of culture in the twenty-first century.

## WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE

1 September 2023  
**The Last Mammoth**

“The Last Mammoth” was a month-long theatre workshop designed to explore the possibilities of developing a scholarly-artistic collaboration with the performance company Good Old Neon with the capability of teaching young children (approximately ages 6-11) about climate change in a way that honestly confronted the challenges and injustices their generation will face, while still offering hope. The actors participated in an intensive workshop with Professor Rebecca Woods that culminated in the development of a scripted performance piece, “The Last Mammoth,” performed at the Palmerston Library Theatre. The play centers on the journey of Mads and a baby woolly mammoth she finds reanimated in the basement of a museum, and her subsequent attempt to reunite the mammoth with its herd—ultimately an impossible task. A talk-back session following the performance provided feedback on the script, and clearly demonstrated how powerful the narrative, and the mammoth puppet around which it was built, were for the audience. Viewers of all ages felt emotionally connected to the characters, felt the weight of climate grief and injustice, and yet felt hopeful at the conclusion of Mads and the mammoth’s story.



TOP LEFT: Crew shot, left to right: Jonzi D, DJ DTS, Martha Diaz, Mark Campbell, Pablo Herreira Vietia. BOTTOM: The Last Mammoth image by Nicole Wilson, 2023.

## VISITING SPEAKER

25–26 September 2023  
**Oblivion and Historical Memory in Columbia**

Renowned Colombian author Héctor Abad Faciolince visited the University of Toronto. He is the author of the memoir *Oblivion*, in which he tells the story of his father, Héctor Abad Gómez, a leading public health and human rights advocate murdered by rightist paramilitary gunmen in Medellín in 1987. The book is a memorial and an artist’s meditation on absence and memory. First published as *El olvido que seremos*, it is one of the best-selling books in Spanish of the twenty-first century. The author engages with literary and cultural theory, history, and politics, and has become one of the most admired figures in Latin American letters. His work is the subject of a feature film, *Haunted Heart* (2009), and a documentary, *Letter to a Shadow* (2015). He is also the author of the forward to the book *A Colombian Suitcase: The Colombian Experience of Exile and the Truth Commission* (2021). Abad participated in multiple events including a public discussion, a screening of *Letter to a Shadow* with Q&A, a podcast interview, and a tour of the Thomas Fisher Library of Rare Books. This was his first-ever visit to Canada and it offered a uniquely valuable experience to students and scholars of Latin-American literature.

## MULTI-MEDIA INSTALLATION

25–29 September 2023  
**The Neighbours: Forms of Trauma (1945–1989)**

*The Neighbours* is a multimedia installation about how we remember, carry and forget trauma. The exhibition excavates the silenced memories of survivors of state violence from Bulgaria’s socialist era (1945-1989) and explores its troubling legacy in the present. During this period, countless individuals were sent to forced labour camps without trial, faced imprisonment, systematic persecution, forced resettlement and ethnic

assimilation—political dissidents, peasants who refused to give up their land, artists, queer people, Muslim minorities and everyday people who defied the regime’s ideology. The installation offers a way of confronting and working with denied histories, cultures of silence, purged archives, and histories subjected to both past and contemporary political pressure. In so doing, *The Neighbours* challenges prevailing narratives and takes a vital role in unsilencing. In June 2024, it represented Bulgaria at the Venice Biennale; it has been reviewed worldwide by arts journals and newspapers including the *Guardian*.



TOP: Photograph by Krasimira Butseva from the multi-media installation, *The Neighbours: Forms of Trauma (1945-1989)*. BOTTOM: Still from *Our Terrible Country* (2014), co-directed by Mohammad Ali Atassi and Ziad Homsî.

## EVENTS SERIES

22–24 November 2023  
**Bidayyat [Beginnings] in Syrian Revolutionary Nonfiction**

Bidayyat (trans. Beginnings) is a Syrian organization based in Beirut which was founded at the start of the Syrian Revolution. Bidayyat mentored young filmmakers and produced dozens of internationally acclaimed nonfiction films over the past decade. While Bidayyat’s films have been recognized at prestigious film festivals across the globe, the organization has not previously received any focused scholarly attention.



The events included three screenings followed by post-screening discussions with the filmmakers at Hot Docs Cinema and one panel discussion. The invited speakers were filmmaker and Bidayyat founder, Mohammad Ali Atassi, filmmaker Rania Stephan, anthropologist Stefan Tarnowski, and filmmaker Saeed al Batal. University of Toronto professor Brett Story, and World Records editor, Jason Fox, also participated.

**PERFORMANCE CONCEIVED, CHOREOGRAPHED AND DIRECTED BY FAYE DRISCOLL**

18-21 January 2024  
**Weathering**

*Weathering* is a multi-sensory performance, conceived by Driscoll as a moving human sculpture made of bodies, sounds, scents, liquids, and objects. Ten performers perpetually enact a morphing “tableau vivant” on a mobile raft-like stage. Their life raft surges and spins through crisis and alienation, with their voices generating a score that crescendos and resonates as they clutch, careen, and cleave on a platform too small to contain them. The audience embanks the performers, close enough to smell the

sweat and feel the steam of the scenes unfolding before them. *Weathering* enacts conflict, eroticism, and care arising from a messy and mutable collectivity. In *Weathering*, the well-trod norms and critiques of Anthropocene discourse are elided in a performance that considers the effects of climate change on us individually and collectively at a bodily scale. It reflects the forms of alienation—environmental, social, and economic—many of us feel. It demands slowness and elicits undivided attention, at a time when media saturation and ubiquity have transformed human attention into an economy. It calls on viewers to pay attention using all of their faculties—as a multisensory experience, *Weathering* foregrounds the necessity for deeper attunement to the many ways we inhabit the Earth.

**VISITING SPEAKER AND EXHIBITION**

January–February 2024  
**Embroidering Absence**

*Embroidering Absence* brought a visiting speaker and public exhibition that showcased the embroidery produced by women who fled the Salvadoran Civil War

(1980–1992) and sought refuge in United Nations camps in Honduras. The exhibition featured nine original embroideries made by Salvadoran women refugees, as well as interactive panels on the significance of these embroidered works. Popular educator Teresa Cruz visited the University of Toronto from 10–19 February, during which time four events were held to explore how women’s memory work challenges and heals the absence created by war. Cruz discussed her experiences as a teenager in a refugee camp and her current work with intergenerational memory workshops in El Salvador that use embroidery to pass down memories of the civil war. There was also a screening of Peter Conrad’s film *The Road to Virtue*, which documents life in Salvadoran refugee camps in Honduras in the 1980s, and a public embroidery workshop for community members, primarily women from the Salvadoran diaspora. Despite the difficult topics covered, there was intense joy and conviviality in these events. They fostered community connections with the university and highlighted the importance of women’s memory within war archives typically dominated by male perspectives.



LEFT: Performance of *Weathering*, conceived, choreographed and directed by Faye Driscoll. Photo by Maria Baranova. RIGHT: Guest speaker Teresa Cruz (left) with *Embroidering Absence* event organizer Maria Mendez (right). Photo by Mariel Rivera, 2024.



LEFT: Deantha Edmunds. Courtesy of the artist. RIGHT: Still from *Neptune Frost* co-directed by Saul Williams and Anisia Uzeyma, screened at Calling the Conjurers. Courtesy of Kino Lorber.



**RESIDENCY BY DEANTHA EDMUNDS**

21 and 24 March 2024  
**Watershed: Hearing Absent Voices**

This project created an all-Indigenous musical performance and educational experience at the Faculty of Music during March 2024. The centrepiece was the residency of Deantha Edmunds, Inuk soprano. She performed with the choir, music she has composed for Women’s choir and Soprano solo, as well as her own repertoire, and offered Public Masterclasses for Voice students at the Faculty of Music. “Teachings of Water” was the 18-minute highlight of a concert performance. While originally written in the language of the Squamish First Nations, choirs across Canada have been encouraged to use the original music, written by Métis composer Patrick Carrabré, and in respectful collaboration with local Indigenous peoples create an adaptation using the languages of the local space. The final creation honoured the original caretakers of the land on which the University of Toronto is situated, recognized the urban reality of the diversity of Indigenous Peoples who now live here.

**EVENT SERIES**

23–26 May 2024  
**Calling the Conjurers: An Otherwise Symposium for Technologies of Black Life and Study**

Calling the Conjurers was a four-day series of musical performances, thought-provoking discussions, arts showcases, and creative workshops centered around the necessary technologies and creative techniques rooted in Black life and community. Co-hosted by The Collaboratory for Black Poiesis and *Logic(s)* magazine at Toronto’s It’s Ok\* Studios, it gathered the material and aesthetics concepts that challenge and nourish to ask: What is our calling? And what technologies must we conjure, compose, and corral to meet and make these calls?

**VISITING SPEAKER, PERFORMANCE, AND CONFERENCE**

25–26 May 2024  
**Worlds Apart: Music, Nostalgia, and Absence in Canada’s Diasporic Communities Since 1945**

Pianist Christina Petrowska Quilico performed a recital of Canadian works related to multiculturalism on 25 May at the Faculty of Music. The program included:

- Larysa Kuzmenko: “Victims of Chernobyl/Dance Diabolique”
- David Jaeger: “Lament for the People of Ukraine”
- Ruth Schonthal: “The Canticles of Hieronymus”
- Oskar Morawetz: “Suite for Piano”
- Peter Paul Koprowski: “Rhapsody on a theme of Brahms”

She is one of Canada’s most celebrated pianists. Equally adept at Classical, Romantic and contemporary repertoires (though best known for the latter), she is also a noted champion of Canadian composers.



# Working Groups



**Kasra Jalilipour**  
*Gut Feelings: Fragments of Truth*  
and *Gut Feelings: Fragments of Fiction*  
2021  
Video, 12:16 and 3:04  
Courtesy of the Art Museum  
at the University of Toronto  
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid



# Working Groups Overview

Working Groups bring faculty researchers and graduate students from multiple disciplines into conversation with each other, with scholars at other institutions, and with artists, advocates, and community experts. They are potent generators of collaborations, communities, and new questions. While a group may form around any subject, they tend to coalesce around topics that are under-researched, misunderstood, or in need of an update. They examine the things that scholars want to talk about in the moment, and thereby provide an interesting barometer of intellectual developments in motion. Working Groups germinate the seeds of larger endeavors that will blossom in the next few years.

## Featured Working Group

### ORGANIZER

**Anup Grewal**  
Historical &  
Cultural Studies



## Emerging Interventions in Contemporary China Studies

This group is a forum for those engaged in China studies, from a variety of disciplines, at both the tri-campus University of Toronto and other local universities, to come together as a community of scholars after years of relative isolation, and at a time of political and academic urgency affecting the field. Under these conditions of urgency, this working group has created space for participants to share their current projects and to discuss methodology, sources, themes and research questions.

There was such overwhelming response for faculty and graduate students to present and discuss their projects

that we focused on this need. Our meetings examined pre-circulated work-in-progress papers, with a presenter-discussant format which allowed maximal participation by graduate students and junior scholars and rebuilt a scholarly community. The year was very successful in terms of thinking together about emerging topics, methods and conditions of research in the field. It was incredibly generative, and we learned a lot from each other. We also had guest presenters who shared their innovative work in Queer China Studies, Hong Kong studies, underground grassroots histories of

the 1950s–1960s, and the transcultural history of science.

As this group progresses, we will focus on thematic and archival discussions about new areas and needs in the field of China studies. We plan to expand our session formats to include targeted reading group events and discussions around the changes in archives, methods, and other developing issues. Our goal is to generate a pair of panel sessions for the 2026 Associate of Asian Studies conference (which will meet in Canada), and ultimately, a collaborative grant proposal and publications.



# Working Groups 2023-2024

## Elite Africa

Both popular and academic treatments of Africa tend to feature the weak, the small and the poor. There is a curious squeamishness about examining those who are the most powerful, effective and influential on the continent—its elites. Where elites are considered, they tend to be treated as uniformly corrupt and self-serving. These approaches ignore the burgeoning ranks of globally renowned artists, prominent intellectuals, innovative businesspeople, accomplished scientists and many others who are flourishing on the continent and, in the process, transforming both Africa and the global fields within which they work. This group seeks to challenge the narrow and often racist popular and scholarly understandings of elites in Africa as comprising only a venal comprador class; to map the dynamics of elite formation in Africa; and to theorize power as a process that is transformed by this dynamic, rather than simply as an object to be captured.

ORGANIZER: **Antoinette Handley**, Anthropology

## Medieval World Drama

This working group is intended to make the study of medieval plays less insular. Each month, we gather to read through a

pre-1500 play that has been translated into modern English. We often seek texts from outside western Europe. Thoughtful, productive discussions of the text naturally emerge from this shared reading experience. In the coming year, we will review, re-perform, and discuss the “greatest hits” of the past four years in order to develop a public syllabus of medieval world drama to be unveiled in July 2025. We will also invite a physical-theatre specialist from the Viewpoints Institute in New York to teach a practical workshop in body-based perception and performance skills adapted specifically to medieval performance practices.

ORGANIZER: **Matt Sergi**, English

## Public Writing in the Humanities

This working group provides a supportive and critical space for humanities scholars to write, read, and learn together about public writing. As academics pressured by the demands of research productivity, there are few opportunities to slow down and focus on one of the essential tools of our trade – good, engaging writing. While this focus on the craft of writing is invaluable, institutional structures rarely accommodate it, although as researchers, we are expected to communicate with a broader public.



Our group carves out a space for sustained and supported writing to occur through workshops and regular writing sessions. Several members have publications in the pipeline, from accessible academic articles to non-fiction books; one has an agent, and her book proposal will be auctioned this summer for the American market. In the coming year, we are planning a two-day symposium on public writing.

ORGANIZER: **Christy Anderson**, Art History

## Rethinking Policing, Penalty, and Pandemic

This group brings established, junior and emerging scholars together across academic institutions, communities, and areas of research and organizing to discuss and analyze scholarship, reports, and current events related to policing and penalty. We share a sense of responsibility and commitment to pursue collective work oriented toward good relations with one another and with land, and to work creatively and compassionately with one another and more broadly, with Black, Indigenous, migrant, queer, racialized, trans, disabled, street-involved, and poor people’s communities in and around Toronto. Key foci include

Community-university relations and the role of the university in society; notions of “pandemic,” “public health,” and the contexts and consequences of neoliberal capitalism; carceral logics, practices, and institutions; and notions of safety, food sovereignty, and housing precarity in and around Toronto.

ORGANIZER: **rosalind hampton**, Social Justice Education

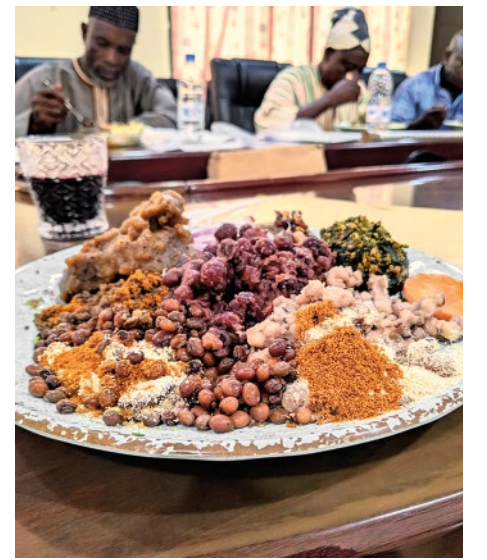
## The Other Sister: New Research on Non-Cloistered Women

This group aims to restore the history of medieval and early modern non-cloistered religious women, whose voices are conspicuously absent from the historical record. Traditional historiography has positioned the cloistered nun as the archetypal expression of feminine religious devotion. In so doing, it marginalizes the numerous women who lived as religious in the world. A closer look at sources reveals that these women, who were known as house ascetics, beguines, penitents, secular canonesses, seroras, bizzoche, and pinzochere (among other names) held a vital and vibrant role in their societies. Scholarly exploration of their significance and multiple roles only began seriously in the last two decades and remains unsystematic and narrowly focused. Our working group is planning for the publication of an essay collection on these women (primarily but not exclusively in Europe), their communal dynamics, and societal contributions.

ORGANIZER: **Isabelle Cochelin**, History/Medieval Studies

## Theorizing Scholar-Activism and Global Food Sovereignty Movements

Global hunger is exposing the fragility of food systems caused by political economic systems that privilege the commodification of food over fundamental biophysical necessities and human rights. Food sovereignty is the right of people to define their own food systems so that healthy, sustainable, delicious and culturally appropriate food is accessible. Our team of food studies scholars,



TOP: *Black Lives Matter Sit-In Occupy Bay Street, Toronto Police Headquarters*. Jason Hargrove, 2020. Wikimedia Commons CC 2.0 Generic Licence. BOTTOM LEFT: *Beguine of Ghent*. Excerpt from a manuscript of the beguinage of Sint-Albertus, Ghent, c. 1840. BOTTOM RIGHT: Food Sovereignty Ghana activity supported by researcher Siera Vercillo in 2023 via this working group.

environmental geographers, historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and public health specialists are theorizing food sovereignty movements such as the Ghana Food Movement, Cocina Poderosa (Peru), Thanal Trust (India) and Feed Scarborough in order to develop public-facing knowledge outputs that promote their local strategies globally; to evolve

north-south research partnerships by connecting universities and practitioners from Canada, Peru, Ghana and India; and to contribute to the digital food archive at UTSC. In the coming year we will consider foodways in Mexico and the Americas, including gardens and public markets.

ORGANIZER: **Jayeeta Sharma**, Historical & Cultural Studies



TOP: Manuscript Codex Manesse Von Obernburg, UB Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. germ. 848, fol. 342v. Wikimedia Commons, public domain. BOTTOM: Elite Africa project website.



**Thinking Infrastructures in Global Asia: New Perspectives and Approaches**

This working group used lens of infrastructure to study Asia in global contexts, and to reflect on the possibilities and limits that the recent “infrastructural turn” in the humanities and social sciences can bring to our understanding of Asia in its global dynamics. By attending to the agency of infrastructures and their power of world-making, we are able to historicize Asia’s emergence as a site of global; to consider how infrastructures and their contestations sustain and remake lifeworlds in Asia; and to contribute to debates on racism, modernity, de/coloniality, materialism, and environmentalism. Our extremely interdisciplinary group hosted a variety of events including book launches, film screenings, graduate workshops, dissertation workshops, reading group sessions, art exhibitions, and artist talks. The engaging conversations and intellectual community we fostered have inspired ideas that will shape evolving research endeavors in the future.

ORGANIZER: **Julie Yujie Chen**, Information

**Toronto Jesuit History Research Group**

This is an interdisciplinary hub for Jesuit studies. In our fifth and final year of activity, we focused on informal round tables, talks with respondents, moderated conversations with guests, workshops, film screenings, and field trips. Our topics included the Jesuits’ role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2015, the intersection of Jesuit and native spiritualities, Jesuit missions in East Asia, and Jesuit portrayals in modern film, and Jesuit contributions to cartography, theatre, and Baroque art. The group has grown to nearly sixty members from a startling range of disciplines, universities, communities, and stages of life.

ORGANIZERS: **Andreas Motsch**, French; **John Meehan SJ**, Trinity College; **Jean-Olivier Richard**, Christianity & Culture

**Transformative Sustainability Pedagogies**

In response to the increasing ways that sustainability is enacted across the University of Toronto, this group provided a way to think critically about our orientation to sustainability, praxis and

pedagogy, and to foster solidarity and collaboration. We focused on the definitions, conceptualizations, and guiding principles of sustainability with a justice stance that includes Indigenous knowledges and Black liberation. A literature review revealed that there is little research about teaching and learning of sustainability in higher education. Most initiatives focus exclusively on operations and infrastructure. We are writing a collaborative auto-ethnography that outlines our personal and collective motivations for engaging in and coordinating a community of practice. Our website includes event summaries, webinar recordings, readings and summaries. See [www.oise.utoronto.ca/home/scan/get-involved/community-of-practice](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/home/scan/get-involved/community-of-practice)  
ORGANIZERS: **Michael Classens**, School of the Environment; **Hilary Inwood**, Curriculum, Teaching & Learning; and **Liat Margolis**, Architecture

**Uncertain Worlds: Comparative Perspectives on Risk**

This group provided space for an updated interdisciplinary conversation

about risk. Following pioneering work in risk studies in the 1990s, most scholarship now approaches risk as a consummately modern phenomenon that is a feature of capitalism. Our group challenged this temporally narrow reading by examining how diverse societies across time and space confronted and managed uncertainty. We heard from a wide range of specialists in archaeology, ancient history, law, political science, philosophy, mathematics, and sociology who explored the management of uncertainty in non-western and non-modern communities and demonstrated that approaches to risk were often situational or contextual. Moving forward we are planning a major event in Fall 2025 that will support an edited publication.

ORGANIZERS: **Seth Bernard**, Classics; and **Emily Nacol**, Political Science

**Visual Cultures of the Circumpolar North**

For the past three years, this group has fostered interdisciplinary conversations centred around the circumpolar north. We have explored realms we never anticipated, including current glaciological research, women-led expeditions to the Arctic, and photographic histories of the Canadian Arctic. The virtual meeting environment has extended our physical and scholarly reach to allow participation of researchers in the north. The group has also garnered significant interest from the wider research community through social media. Many of our guest speakers provided short videos or publicly accessible materials, and we were also fortunate to experience work-in-progress, and to hear and see the work of speakers in the far north. This range extended our visual thinking. We published a third part in our VCCN series for the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE), with the fourth part scheduled for Fall 2024, and will maintain our connections with a listserv where can share research updates, events, exhibitions, and provide a supportive community for graduate students. See: [niche-canada.org](http://niche-canada.org)

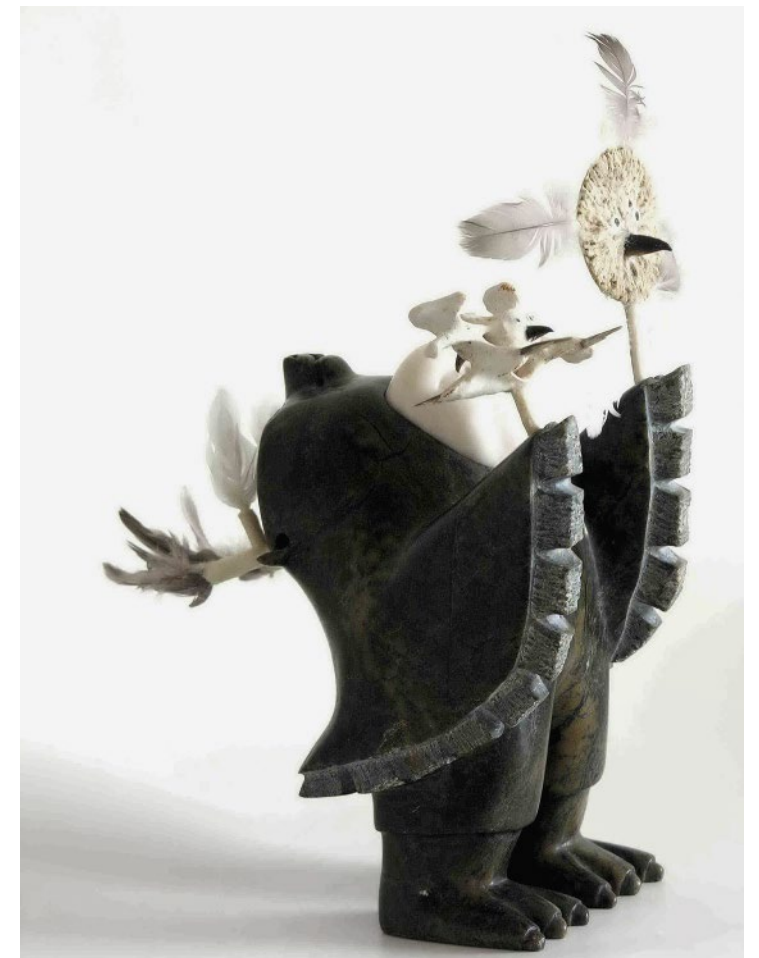
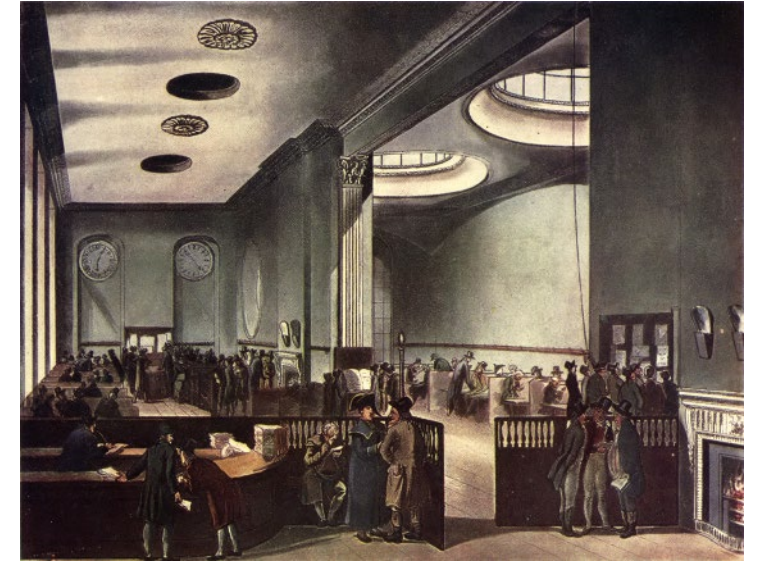
ORGANIZER: **Matt Farish**, Geography



LEFT: *A View of the Jesuits College and Church*, Richard Short, 1760, Musée McCord, M970.67.7.



RIGHT: Transformative Sustainability Pedagogies working group gathered outside Hart House for a campus tour. Photo by Michael Classens, 2023.



TOP: “Lloyd’s” in *The Microcosm of London or London in Miniature*. William Henry Pyne and William Combe, London, 1809, Plate 49. Public domain. BOTTOM: *Angakkuq* (Shaman). Serpentine, caribou bone, feathers. Made by Palaya Qiatsuk, Cape Dorset, Nunavut, 1998. Photo by Ansgar Walk, 2005. Wikimedia Commons CC Attribution Share-Alike 205 Generic License.



# Looking Ahead

In the coming year, the Institute will explore the underside. The Circle of Fellows will be researching burials, fungus, subways, tombs, underground pathways of art, literature, printing, theatre and music, as well as of water, dust, warfare, resistance politics, and the experiences of the persecuted. These diverse projects intersect across disciplines, historical periods, and geography. Distinguished Visiting Fellow Katherine McKittrick (Queen's University) will lead us into Black Geographies; Distinguished Visiting Indigenous Faculty Fellow Aroha Harris will bring the Maori perspective, and Artist in Residence Tamara Abdul Hadi will share her photographer's eye for the visual history of the marshlands of Iraq. We look forward to the opportunity to go deep into the underworld.

**JHI EXHIBITION OF ART**  
**MORPHING LANDS,**  
**IMPALPABLE CURRENTS**

**CURATED BY**  
Yantong Li

**EXHIBITION**  
11 September 2024–  
20 June 2025

**Annual Theme, 2024–2025**  
**Undergrounds/Underworlds**

Undergrounds have figured powerfully in human histories and imaginations as places of alterity, concealment, exploration, and discovery; of fear, transition, transportation, and transmutation. They have also figured as spaces of hope, refuge, and fugitivity that weave them into radical traditions and visions of the future. From the Epic of Gilgamesh, through the Greek katabasis and Dante, to crime rings and chthonic gods, infrastructures and escape routes, DJs and the Dark Web: our languages are fascinated with depth. But our surface worlds depend crucially on subterranean networks of extraction, exploitation, and disposal. Now more than ever, we need to understand the place of underworlds in human pasts, presents, and futures. What might a descent into the underworlds reveal?



Alvin Luong, *Hole Story*, 2019–2023. Video.  
Courtesy of the artist.









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## Jackman Humanities Institute

*“The humanities are the heart, root and historical basis of any great university.”*

The Honourable Henry N.R. Jackman (BA 1953, LLB 1956, LLD 1993)

The Honourable Henry N.R. Jackman is one of Canada’s leading philanthropists and an exemplary citizen of the University of Toronto. To mark his dedication to his alma mater, in 2002 and again in 2007, the former Chancellor gave gifts totalling \$30 million, which were double-matched by the University for a historic investment in humanities education and research. The Jackman Humanities Institute was established by the University of Toronto to support and expand dialogue and scholarly investigations in the humanities.

The University of Toronto gratefully acknowledges the long standing generosity of the Honourable Henry N.R. Jackman.

