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 and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe 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
Public Studio
This Place, Neyaashiinigmiing
2020
Two video projections on custom screens, carpets, wall paint
Weather Amnesia

How often do we take note of the strange weather? With the onset of global climate change, weather patterns historically used by societies to anchor and frame the concept of seasonality are becoming less predictable and reliable. Traditional tales guiding ideal preparation, planting and harvesting times lose their value as knowledge, and all life on earth, from insects to plants, from farmers to fishermen, and from insurance companies to industrial giants, are forced to evolve and accommodate to new circumstances.

At the same time, the increasingly urban nature of our lives, with climate control and accessibility to global goods and services, effectively insulates us from change. Living within modernity’s capacity and mechanics of control, it is easy to forget (and even deny) the abundant evidence of change outside. The artists’ works included in “Weather Amnesia” offer visual insight into the profound disruptions that are under way. With strangeness becoming the new normal, the exhibition makes us wonder and think about what kind of future awaits us.

Questions of broad public concern, culminating in the relationship between environmental degradation and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic

Our deep dive this past year into humanities research on climate change around the theme of “Strange Weather” was designed to respond to one of the most urgent issues of our day, environmental catastrophe. Right from the start we engaged with questions of broad public concern—the increasing frequency and intensity of storms and other forms of strange weather, rising seas and temperatures, etc.—with the year’s work culminating in the relationship between environmental degradation and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The very conjunction brought all our in-person events to a halt, but thanks to the ingenuity and goodwill of JHI staff and the Circle of Fellows, our conversations continued online with as much animation as ever.

A catalyst for the year’s intellectual work was the week-long visit in October 2019 by Amitav Ghosh, our Distinguished Visiting Fellow. He participated in programming across the tri-campus University of Toronto, including three sold-out public events on the St. George campus. His inspirational visit distilled some of the fault-lines of the academic current debates on the Anthropocene, opening our discussions outward to engage subaltern circuits of knowledge, remember historical archives of our relations with the land, and connect ethically with climate science expertise. In addition, he served as a potent incitement to us all to contribute to public-facing conversations about the environment and our historical relations with the lands and waters of Turtle Island and planet earth.

We are especially proud of the public programming we launched in 2019–2020, much of it funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for events and personnel around the theme “Humanities at Large”.

The continuing success of our research communities and working groups is also a cause for celebration at the Institute. Five years after their launch our three original research communities have taken strong root and are flourishing beyond the capacity of the Institute to provide sole support for them. The Mellon-funded North South Dialogue on Aesthetic Education has moved up and out and is now working on securing support from the MasterCard Foundation. The Digital Humanities Network has likewise engaged so many communities of researchers across the tri-campus University of Toronto that we are unable to host Lightning Lunches at the JHI because of constraints of space. And the Jackman Scholar-in-Residence program has proved so popular with students and colleagues alike that it received the Northrop Frye Award of Excellence this year.

Our Working Groups have also impressed this year, with “Practices of Commentary” winning a five-year SSHRC Insight Grant; the Environmental Humanities Network developing both a pedagogical curriculum, for inclusion in the School of the Environment and preparations to host a doctoral cluster through the Office of the VP-International, and a continuing research agenda in the form of a new JHI Research Community, Critical Zones; and “Latin American Racial Technologies” was nominated by the University of Toronto to submit an application for the Mellon Foundation’s John M. Sawyer Seminar in Comparative Cultures.

We are excited to imagine what new heights of research and community-engagement next year’s circle of fellows will reach!

Alison M. Keith
Director, Jackman Humanities Institute
How might the humanities contribute to the critical discourse on energy and climate?

The energy crisis is no longer simply about limited supplies but now concerns the very nature and place of energy in human life and society. Strange weather, a symptom of changing climate, destabilizes our trust in and certainty of our home (i.e., our planet) and provokes fantasies of control and of chaos.

How can we help frame questions of environmental degradation, scientific knowledge and its popularization, especially in their relation to social equity, and societal futures?

Overview of Activities 2019–2020

It is difficult to write about this year without allowing the global COVID-19 pandemic to occupy centre stage. And yet, until mid-March 2020, the Jackman Humanities Institute was overseeing a very full year of discussions, events, art, and growth focused on the annual theme of Strange Weather. This was the first year when an annual theme came with an immediate advocacy component, and while our activities responded to environmental necessities, advocacy was not primarily the focus of the discussions in the Thursday fellows lunch meetings. Rather, the conversation circled around the idea of time, and the ways that humans can measure time: the length of a human life measured against the length of geological and climatic periods; the ways that humans have understood, depicted, and adapted to changing climates in previous historical periods; the ways that our ways of understanding time are shaped by our planet and its seasons.

Distinguished Visiting Fellow
The visit of author Amitav Ghosh in October was transformative. His Canadian publisher, Penguin Canada, generously donated hardcover copies of his newest novel, Gun Island, to every fellow, and when his Thursday lunch arrived, a series of fortuitous coincidences led him to invite Dipesh Chakrabarty (History, University of Chicago), who was also visiting, into the fellows lunch. We enjoyed the rare pleasure of engaging with two towering intellects; old friends who have each thought deeply about time and climate.

Humanities at Large
The activities of the Mellon-funded project Humanities at Large enriched our experience at every turn. Daniel MacNeil (History, Carleton University) was a brilliant interlocutor whose questions always snapped our conversations into focus; and the addition of Khalel Abu Jayyad, our first archaeologist, proved invaluable in our frequent return to prehistory. We also hosted David Perry (staff member, History, University of Minnesota) who taught three sold-out classes on social media uses to a diverse crowd of faculty members, instructors, postdocs, graduate students and staff members in December. As 2020 got started, we were busy planning a new series of summer institutes for high school students.

Research Communities
Finally, this was year four for each of our Research Communities. Having reached the end of our original plans, each undertook a process of consideration of their future possibilities. The JHI will continue to support each in a reduced form of partnership. As the result of our work with Strange Weather, and of the multiple working groups and funded events that came this year and before, a new Research Community dedicated to the environment is taking shape under the title Critical Zones.

COVID-19 Global Pandemic Responses
And then came the closure. Global crisis caught up with us before we reached the year’s end, and the University of Toronto closed as of Monday in March 2020. All further in-person activities were cancelled. The remaining fellows’ lunches, which had been reserved late in the year for the undergraduate fellows, were moved to the online chat application, Slack. Most working group meetings were cancelled. Some events that involved visiting speakers were postponed in the hopes of presenting them during the 2020–2021 year. A few events were presented in online format. Researchers who had been abroad were called home to Canada. All JHI staff members shifted to home offices and continued to work at their usual level of assigned hours. An enormous amount of research momentum was lost. So much that had been planned simply did not happen. The bright spot was Scholars-in-Residence, which went ahead in online format, with great success.
Lisa Hirmer
Watching, Dull Edges
(the northern hemisphere of a 23°27′ tilt)
2017
photograph
24×16 inch, series of six.
Courtesy of the artist.
Environmental Humanities describes intersections across environmental studies in philosophy, history, ecocriticism, cultural geography and anthropology, and political ecology. The environmental humanities have opened up new modes of interdisciplinarity within humanistic fields in conjunction with social and natural sciences, and engage with public debates and policies bearing on environmental questions.

Critical Zones is a long-term commitment to the humanistic study of the environment, which took its shape during the 2019–2020 annual theme of Strange Weather. It is a newly emergent Research Community that has grown from the Environmental Humanities Working Group, and will be a nexus for research exchange: a network of labs bringing together scholars and creative practitioners from across the humanities, arts and sciences. It will fill a gap at the University of Toronto and engage environmental issues in Canada’s largest city and in the internationally significant bioregion of the Great Lakes. Critical Zones will structure research activities already underway, facilitate new connections among scholars, stimulate the creation of innovative projects, and provide a springboard for community engagement. Critical Zones will offer enormous opportunity to engage with, learn from, support, and build on Indigenous knowledges and experiences. Environmental humanities have emerged internationally as an essential field of study in this moment of urgent global concern, but this field is not yet highly developed in the Canadian context. Critical Zones will position the University of Toronto as a leader in the field.
Aesthetic Education: A South-North Dialogue

Neil ten Kortenaar, Director
Melissa Levin, Program Manager

Aesthetic Education: A South-North Dialogue, a collaboration between the Jackman Humanities Institute (JHI) at the University of Toronto and the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, began in April of 2016. The wager of the collaboration was that the mutual engagement of scholars from the two institutions would open new understandings of the ways that artistic endeavours can add to knowledge. The wager has paid off in the form of intellectual synergies, high-impact knowledge transfer, and research training. The project was divided into five sectors that shared a set of philosophical questions having to do with settler colonialism, artistic responses, and public history. The collaboration involved politically fraught topics sometimes filled with discomfort and suspicion, that highlighted the differences in our histories of oppression and genocide in stereoscopic focus. Each sector arranged for exchanges of faculty and graduate students in both directions and events were held at both schools. The collaboration is beginning to bear fruit and has ambitious plans for joint publications. We are now exploring further funding possibilities.

Digital Humanities Network

Elspeth Brown, Director
Andrew S. Brown, DHN Postdoctoral Fellow

Founded in 2016, the DHN’s mission is to support and enhance digital humanities research and training at the University of Toronto. The DHN now has over 120 faculty, grad students, and librarian members from all humanities and interpretive social science departments and most divisions, on all three campuses. Thirty-eight team-based faculty research projects, across the University of Toronto’s three campuses, are currently affiliated with the DHN. In an era of fake news, complex regimes of digital surveillance, and new questions about the uses of artificial intelligence in politics, commerce, and society, the Digital Humanities Network brings together researchers, students, and collaborators from both the humanities and the data sciences to tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our times. In 2019–2020, along with an ambitious program of Lightning Lunches, communications and a major visiting speaker, the DHN undertook a process of consideration that will result in a major funding application.

Scholars-in-Residence, 4–29 May 2020

Angela Esterhammer, Director
Ira Wells, Program Manager

SiR is a month-long research residency that matches teams of five undergraduate students with a faculty-led research project. Usually, the students live in residences across the University of Toronto, but in 2020, the global pandemic led to a swift pivot to online presentation. Virtual SiR offered a unique undergraduate research opportunity utilizing virtual collaboration and training tools to conduct online research. Seventeen projects were offered across all three campuses, and 85 students participated, using a wide range of electronic tools to hold meetings and manage data. The students came from disciplines including Anthropology, Art History, Classics, Computer Science, Criminology, Economics, English, Equity Studies, French, History, International Relations, Linguistics, Math, Peace, Conflict & Justice, Philosophy, Psychology, Spanish, and Women & Gender Studies, and participated from remote locations including Western Canada, Brazil, Spain, Pakistan, and elsewhere. Students and faculty members reported success in the virtual format. In Fall 2019, SiR underwent a full review, with overwhelmingly positive results. The success of this initiative was recognized when it received the 2020 Awards of Excellence–Northrop Frye Award from the University of Toronto Alumni Association.
Fellows

Rick McCarthy
Imago Humanus: shapes interacting during a Canadian winter
1979
Ink
Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid, 2019.
Circle of Fellows Overview

This year saw a group of nineteen passionately-engaged fellows assemble to consider how the humanities disciplines can respond to the immediate crisis of climate change. They brought approaches from a wide range of historical time periods, cultures, and methodologies to bear on the urgent questions posed by Strange Weather: how to understand the human perspective in the long perspective of geological history; how humanities research can respond to current events by reframing, rethinking, and retelling. Many of our conversations revolved around philosophical understandings of time. The visit of our Distinguished Visiting Fellow Amitav Ghosh in October was a high point for many. There was a tour to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, and another to the Art Museum to see the exhibition Qaggiq: The Gathering, and in early March, we travelled to the Doris McCarthy Gallery at UTSC to see the work of our Artist in Residence, Public Studio, This Place: Neyaashiinigmiing. We added two new kinds of fellowships this year thanks to our three-year Mellon-funded project, Humanities at Large, which brought Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellow Daniel McNeil and Community-Engaged Humanities Research Early Career Fellow Khaled Abu Jayyad into the Circle of Fellows.
Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta and grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He is the author of two books of non-fiction, a collection of essays and eight novels. His most recent non-fiction book is *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016). His books have won many prizes and he holds four honorary doctorates. His work has been translated into more than thirty languages and he has served on the Jury of the Locarno and Venice film festivals. He is married to the writer Deborah Baker and divides his time between Brooklyn, Goa and Kolkata. In 2018 the Jnanpith Award, India’s highest literary honor, was conferred on Amitav Ghosh. He was the first English-language writer to receive the award. In 2019 Foreign Policy magazine named him one of the most important global thinkers of the preceding decade. His newest novel, *Gun Island*, was released in the summer of 2019, and the Circle of Fellows received copies from the publisher, Penguin Random House.

**What the Migrant Knows: A Long View of Climate Change**

Amitav Ghosh visited UTM on 11 October 2019. A packed house at Innis College attended the reading. He autographed copies for many attendees after the reading. Stephanie Bernard interviewed Amitav Ghosh for *Orion Magazine*. He was guest of honor at the JHI Fellows lunch, and then participated in a public discussion about the environment.

**Distinguished Visiting Fellow**

**Amitav Ghosh**

**Author and Public Intellectual**

**TALK**

7 October

Ghosh presented a master class and panel discussion with creative writing students at UT-Scarborough.

8 October

Amitav Ghosh was interviewed by the Globe & Mail, and then did a public reading from his new novel *Gun Island* to a packed house at Innis College. He autographed copies for many attendees after the reading.

9 October

Public lecture to another packed house at Innis College.

10 October

Stephanie Bernard interviewed Amitav Ghosh for *Orion Magazine*. He was guest of honor at the JHI Fellows lunch, and then participated in a public discussion about the environment.

11 October

Amitav Ghosh visited UTM and engaged with creative writing students and faculty members at the Centre for South Asian Civilizations.

**Distinguished Visiting Indigenous Faculty Fellow**

**Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark**

**Political Science, University of Victoria**

**PROJECT**

Anishinaabe Inaakinogoowin: Governed by Creation

My research initially sought to explore Anishinaabe political thought and governance models expressed through relationships with Creation. Indigenous nations have long had to contend with climate change and radical transformation of creation. I intended to focus on expanding some of my previous work with Zagime First Nation, assessing traditional Anishinaabe knowledge and political principles to build an understanding of Anishinaabe governance and organizational structures that are focused on land management plans, and the development of water and hunting councils. However, my work took new direction in response to national attention to disputes between the Wet’suwet’en and Coastal Gaslink Company. I significantly revised my book project, *Stealing Fire: Anishinaabe Treaty-Making*, in light of renewed national interest in dialogue around the intersections of duty to consult First Nations in economic projects, environmental degradation and gender violence. The opportunity to reconnect with scholars in the area and meet new ones has generated a new collaborative project with University of Toronto, Ryerson, and Osgoode Hall faculty members titled “Jurisdiction Back: Infrastructure Beyond Extractivism.”

Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Victoria. She is the Director of the Centre for Indigenous Research and Community-led Engagement (CIRCLE) and the Director of the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Nationhood. She has a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota. She is the co-editor of *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World through Stories* with Jill Doerfler and Niigaanwewidam Sinclair and is the co-author of *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (3rd and 4th edition) with Dr. David E. Wilkins. She has published articles in journals such as *Theory and Event, American Indian Quarterly, American Indian Culture and Research Journal,* and *Michigan State University Law Review.* Her primary areas of research and teaching are Indigenous law and treaty practices, Aboriginal and Treaty rights, and Indigenous politics in the United States and Canada. Her research background includes collaborative work with Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada. She was awarded a SSHRC Insight Development Grant for her project titled “Sakimay First Nation Governance,” in collaboration with John Borrows which involves students, Anishinaabe Elders, and Sakimay First Nation community members, and aims to advance the development and resurgence of Anishinaabe political structures and institutions that are informed and shaped by Anishinaabe philosophies, values, and teachings.

Heidi Stark, © University of Calgary 2019.

Photo: Riley Brandt
Public Studio is the collective art practice of filmmaker Elle Flanders and architect Tamira Sawatzky. Public Studio creates large-scale public art works, lens-based works, films, and immersive installations. Grounded in the personal, social, and political implications of landscape, Public Studio’s multidisciplinary practice engages themes of political dissent, war and militarization, and ecology and urbanization, through the activation of site. Public Studio often works in collaboration with other artists.

The residency of Public Studio was a collaboration between the Jackman Humanities Institute and the UT-Scarborough Department of Arts, Culture and Media. During their residency, Elle and Tamira attended Fellows lunches at the JHI and offered artistic critique and mentoring to students, and participated in artist talks, professional development workshops, walking tours, and a studio visit from UTSC students to their own workshop. Their fellowship culminated in a public exhibition (in partnership with Indigenous artist Kyle Miigizi Johnston) at the Doris McCarthy Gallery titled This Place, Neyaashiinigmiing.

14 January–13 March 2020
This Place, Neyaashiinigmiing

This project is a work of stories. At whichever moment you enter, you’ll find yourself immersed in intersecting stories about land and water, energy and extraction, corporations and families, and the species that cohabit this part of the world. Neyaashiinigmiing, Cape Croker. Most of the stories are fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told. Others suggest more fragmented, purposely kept brief. Some are direct, personal, and deeply affecting but plainly told.


The Strange Nature of Urban Commons: Landscapes of an Indian Coastal City

What a rare opportunity it was, to use a whole academic year to further develop my ongoing research project on colonial hydrology associated with the urban commons of an Indian coastal city, Chennai. I conceived this project as a response to the urban crisis induced by climate change. In cities like Chennai the crisis manifests as the intensification of its old struggle with alternate cycles of ‘strange weather’: drought and flood. I learned as much about how to build community, networks, how to talk with people from disciplinary backgrounds different from mine, as I did about climate and water for my own project.

My fellowship allowed me to plunge into a new field of enquiry at the intersection of environmental and data justice, historical cartography, urban governance and the literature on the Anthropocene. Land, as I knew it as a historian of colonial India, began to shift in shape, texture, and aesthetics, as my analytical lens was enriched by my colleagues’ insights into art, religion, oil, carbon, poetry, cultural resistance, Indigenous sovereignty, weather-science and digital humanities. At the core of our discussions was a call to rigorously analyze culturally diverse anthropocentric experiences so as to ethically engage climate science expertise. What did strange weather open up to our consideration?

Seeing my own archive of historical maps refracted through the multiple lenses of my colleagues changed my methodological and theoretical approaches to this project in two ways. First, I was able to visualize concrete things, roads, bridges, urban infrastructure and the reclamation of land from water, as malleable processes. These techno-scientific responses to manage water had profound implications for Chennai’s urban design and colonial urban hydrology. Most importantly, even as I was able to focus on the hydrological substrate of a water-starved and flood-prone colonial city, I discerned that many meanings adhered to these techno-scientific technological innovations in multiple registers as different as legal judgement, vernacular ususfruct, and ghost stories. A particularity of place thus emerged from the continuous remaking of urban landscape. What might have perhaps otherwise appeared to me in the rigid terms of archive-based history and oral history, now found a shared conceptual ground in the aesthetics of places made and remade, of broken bridges and washed away roads. Another aspect of envisioning infrastructure and weather work entailed diving deeply into the politics of data, by which I mean the visualization of data as maps. I began to understand how the play between infrastructure and form of databases and human decisions to geo-tag, draw, and trace water visualize the literacy offered by digital maps. During the year, I began using ArcGIS and QGIS software, creating workflow to manage digital humanities projects, read and delve into the DH debates in the field. I was able to create a digital archive of historical maps, and now over the summer I will be working with a research assistant to complete the labour-intensive work of digitization, which will allow me to do some sample story maps over the next academic year for public viewing. I built collaborative relationships with an international group of scholars and researchers working on South Asian urban ecology and hydrology and we are working to establish a digital forum for urban ecology with a focus on the Bay of Bengal/Indian Ocean and its many littoral cities. This was a wonderful year that both deepened my learning and allowed me to think seriously about new mediums (water, digital technology) and engage with new audiences. Such opportunities are rare in a scholarly career, and I hope to be able to share what I learned and how I learned with my students and other audiences as I continue to work on my project.
My approach to public-facing humanities work is guided by a belief that the humanities may bring individuals and groups together who may not ordinarily have come together and take them to places that they may not otherwise have done so. In bringing together an intergenerational community of students, scholars, artists, and activists, the Jackman Humanities Institute has reaffirmed my faith in the ability of the humanities to foster imaginative, collegial, and transformative exchanges. My work has been transformed and boosted by mentoring undergraduate students, collaborating with early-career scholars to support their career development, interview preparation, and academic work, and participating in formal and informal conversations and discussions with visiting artists from Public Studio, the public intellectual Amitav Ghosh, and faculty fellows whose intellectual work moves between formal academic research and public communications. These discussions have provided models, insights and critical questions for talks, presentations, and interviews in which I bring humanities research out of the classroom and university presses and into the broader public realm for discussion, debate, and examination.

Book Publications
McNeil, Daniel, et al. Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture
This book is an interdisciplinary collection of essays that delves beneath the media headlines about the “migration crisis,” Brexit, Trump and similar events and spectacles that have been linked to the intensification and proliferation of stereotypes about migrants since 2015. Bringing together academics in the arts, humanities and social sciences, as well as artists and theatre practitioners, the collection equips readers with new methodologies, keywords and collaborative research tools to support critical inquiry and public-facing research in fields such as Theatre and Performance Studies, Cultural and Migration Studies, and Applied Theatre and History.

McNeil, Daniel. A Tale of Two Critics: The Cultural Lives of Young Soul Critics and Grumpy Old Men
For far too long, Armond White and Paul Gilroy have been dismissed as utopian figures and curmudgeonly contrarians. In this insightful, elegant book, Daniel McNeil traces the intellectual roots of their thought, scrutinizes their style and decipher their often-mystifying tastes. Rigorous, incisive and fair, the analysis captures America’s most contested and misunderstood cultural critic as well as the most influential intellectual writing in the United Kingdom today.

Chapter Publications


Humans and the Natural Environment in late prehistoric Caucasus
The fellowship afforded me the time, space, and resources to focus on my research, which explores the relationship between humans and their natural environment in late prehistory in the southern Caucasus. My fieldwork has revolved around gathering data pertinent to understanding the changes in settlement patterns during late prehistory (6200–4000 BC). The aim was to build our understanding of past human concerns when it comes to their settlement preference against a backdrop of changing environmental conditions. In order to do so, we developed a predictive landscape model to help detect sites and understand the spatial logic behind site selection across different periods. My fellowship enabled me to prepare an article that has since been submitted (under review) to the American Journal of Archaeology titled “The First Season of the Gardabani Archaeological Survey (GAS), Republic of Georgia: Late Prehistoric Interactions and Social Boundaries”.

As an archaeologist from a social science background, this year has allowed me to expand my horizon through exposure to the humanities. The engagement with the multidisciplinary community of fellows working on tackling Strange Weather through different cultural experiences, perspectives, geographical locales, temporalities, and methods, has opened my eyes to new approaches and provided me with a totally new language in which I can engage the public. Inspired by our talks, and thinking through community outreach and public engagement, my colleague (Natalia Handzuik) and I co-authored a paper titled “Experiential Pottery Making as a Pedagogical Device for Understanding the Chaîne Opératoire: Results from the Gadachrili Gora Archaeological Project (Republic of Georgia)”. The paper was presented at the American Society for Oriental Research (ASOR) conference, 2019 in San Diego, United States, and will be published in the Archaeological Review from Cambridge. It advocates for situated learning as a means to communicate complex theoretical approaches to students, and for having them take a more active role in the construction of archaeological knowledge. I also gave a talk to the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies on my Ph.D. research which explored pastoral mobility during the Late Chalcolithic (4600–3700 BC) in Northern Mesopotamia.
Wisdom and Other Feelings: Affect, Knowledge, and the Senecan Subject

My major accomplishment from my year as a Chancellor Jackman Graduate Fellow was the completion and successful defense of my dissertation. Over the last year, I wrote the final chapter, introduction, and conclusion of my dissertation and revised the whole; I passed my defense on 7 January 2020. My graduate fellowship provided me with the time and space to complete this project, as well as the opportunity for stimulating discussions, which spurred ideas for future projects.

Since my defense, I have focused on developing two additional research projects. The first is a standalone article that concerns flattery and praise in Imperial Rome. I analyze an excerpt from a 1st CE treatise, in which the Roman philosopher and tragedian Seneca the Younger claims that flattery presents a unique problem: even when we know praise directed at us is false, we nevertheless derive pleasure from it. I argue that this passage exposes the contradictions and tensions within Seneca’s Stoic philosophical approach, which usually posits that emotions can and should be rooted out through a rational refutation of the false beliefs that form their core. I was initially drawn to this topic because of a conversation I had during the question period after my lunch presentation, in which one of the fellows encouraged me to think more critically about Stoic theories of the emotions.

I have also begun preliminary research on a second, long-term project, which relates directly to many of the questions that were raised during our lunchtime discussions. This project will examine the relationship of wonder to knowledge in a wide range of Roman scientific texts. I will ask, how do Roman scientific authors address the disjuncture between our objective knowledge of natural laws and our instinctual wonder in the face of unexpected phenomena? I hope to uncover both the shared anxieties expressed by these authors about feelings of wonder, and the varying solutions they pose to such anxieties. My theoretical approach is informed by foundational texts from the Environmental Humanities, many of which we read and discussed as a group. In a number of ancient texts, wonder arises out of a sense that human rationality has been displaced; I will place scholarship on the epistemic questions raised by climate change in productive dialogue with ancient literature.

Environmental Justice: Individual, International, Intergenerational

My research was on the political philosophy of climate change mitigation, especially with regard to the conservation of carbon sinks like rainforests. The project developed slowly initially, as I struggled to narrow the massive mandate of Strange Weather into a specific thesis. I’m not sure how much my project was directly affected by contact with the JHI activities. The lunches and excursions were interesting and valuable, and I learned a ton from everyone’s presentations. These activities must have had an indirect influence on my thinking in terms of what I chose to emphasize, and I definitely tailored the final presentation towards the kinds of broad issues we had discussed during the lunches. The big advantage of assembling a group like we had, which cut across lots of disciplines and areas of interest, is the opportunity to talk in the broadest terms without getting lost in the methodological weeds. My own project always felt distinct from the kinds of work that I was hearing about every week, probably because no one else was doing a project in philosophy. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about everyone’s work.

I’ll be staying at the University of Toronto next year to start my J.D. at the Faculty of Law. It was super interesting and productive to work on this research, which had a distinct legal and political focus, while looking ahead towards law school. Part of the reason that I was interested in the Institute in the first place was because I was trying to decide whether to do law school or graduate school in philosophy. I saw this fellowship as a way to immerse myself in humanities research in a way that is otherwise not available to undergraduates. I’m really grateful to have had this wonderful and most productive opportunity.
Program for the Arts

Lisa Hirmer
Watching, White Ibis (detail) 2019
archival pigment print on aluminium panel
60.96 × 91.44 cm, triptych
Courtesy of the artist.
Program for the Arts Overview

The Jackman Humanities Institute Program for the Arts supports a range of activities designed to raise the profile of the arts at the University of Toronto. In 2019–2020, nine proposals were selected that focused on artistic activity and relevance to the annual theme, Strange Weather. This year’s program featured exhibitions, symposia, walking tours, film screenings, and a performance by poet Anne Carson that examined global climate change from a wide range of perspectives. The closure of the University of Toronto in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of an exhibition and the postponement of a symposium (rescheduled for 2020–2021).

In 2019–2020, seven of nine funded proposals generated 21 events, with a total audience of 4,382.

Strange Weather: Cinematic Climates

How can histories and theories of cinema contribute to debates about today’s climate crisis?

Since the late nineteenth century, moving images have constituted an increasingly powerful virtual world through which humans both encounter and (re)imagine the natural and built environments. That virtual world has long depended upon vast networks of resource extraction with far-reaching material consequences.

This symposium explored cinema’s contribution to “strange weather” along these two intersecting paths: the aesthetic and the material. We aimed to explore cinema’s relationship to the environment and its role in contemporary debates about climate change and to take stock of the current state of academic research in this emerging field. Papers from the symposium will be published by the journal *Representations* as a fast-tracked special issue.

SCREENING

*Anthropocene: The Human Epoch*

The event began with a free public screening of the film, along with a live conversation with the film’s co-director, Jennifer Baichwal.

SYMPOSIUM

*Strange Weather: Cinematic Climates*

Five invited speakers came together to think about media and climates from a global perspective:

Jennifer Fay, Professor of Cinema & Media Arts, Department of German, Russian and East European Studies, Vanderbilt University

Debashree Mukherjee, Assistant Professor, Center for Comparative Film, Media & Media Arts, School of the Arts, Columbia University

Selmin Kara, Associate Professor, Film & New Media Studies, OCAD University

Katerina Korola, Ph.D. student, Cinema & New Media and Art History, University of Chicago

Jennifer Peterson, Chair and Professor of Communication, Woodbury University

This exhibition focused on the video works by the internationally renowned Isuma artists’ collective. Officially founded in 1990 by Zacharias Kunuk, Paul Apak Angilirq, Pauloise Quittiluk, and Norman Cohn in Igloolik, Nunavut, this first ever Inuit production company produces video from an Inuit point of view, which includes language, storytelling, and ways of thinking. Their films are imbued with the voices of elders and young Inuit, with mythology, memories and nightmares, and above all with oral histories of times before contact and the trauma of encounter that includes Christian conversion and forced relocation. Directly relating to the JHI’s Annual Theme for 2019/20 of Strange Weather, Isuma’s activist works are part of the ongoing, ever present struggle to sustain Inuit futures in the massive transformation of the North through resource extraction projects and climate change.

**EXHIBITION**

21 September–30 November 2019
Qaggiq: Gathering Place

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**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYMPOSIUM**

15 November 2019
The Ends of Social Media

This symposium was designed to explore the so-called “techlash,” a term which journalists coined to describe a resistance against platform companies especially after the news on the manipulation of elections via social media in the U.S. Presidential Elections and the Brexit vote of 2016. It was designed to bring together scholars who were investigating the ways in which different political entities and institutional stakeholders are imagining how to end the dominance of the current social platforms through, for example, privacy restrictions, monopoly law, or political decision making. The conference included two public keynote presentations (Rena Rivens, Carleton University and Mel Hogan, University of Calgary) and eight paper presentations. The public keynote session was attended by approximately 50 participants. The theme of Strange Weather was taken here metaphorically to describe people’s changing attitudes towards social media companies and to highlight the environmental nature of these services both descriptively (as in social media surround us everywhere) and literally (for example Hogan’s previous work is on the environmental impacts of data farms).

**EVENT SERIES**

12-17 January 2020
Weather Soundings

This was an innovative combination of scholarly exchange with artistic performance and multiple opportunities for student and public engagement. Our goal was to bring new sonic practices and sound epistemologies into current critical discourses of climate and environment, to critically consider the use of creative technologies that shape or reflect our relationship to “nature” as technology’s “other,” and to interrogate sonic narratives of peripheral places and environments. Distinguished guests included veteran soundscape composer and acoustic-ecology activist Hildegard Westerkamp, music and landscape researcher Daniel Grimley of Oxford University, and virtuoso pianist Rachel Iwaasa, a contemporary music specialist and noted queer arts advocate. Over the course of several days we participated in public listening sessions and discussion panels, undergraduate classroom visits, multimedia sculpture-installation and live-electronic music performance, a public lecture, and free soundwalks on the UT-Scarborough and UT-St. George campuses. “Weather Soundings” allowed us to critically consider how art and imagination may have the capacity to constitute vital interventions in today’s ecological crisis: how creative sound-making might mediate the intersections of environment and culture in the context of anthropogenic climate change; and perhaps most of all, whether close listening engagement can encourage new modes of attunement to our environments, contributing to the revelation and remedy of ecological and social inequities and foregrounding questions of sonic agency.

**WORKSHOP**

25 November 2019
Talking About the Weather: The Science and Art of Climate Change

Climate change is often framed as an exclusively scientific issue; a matter of rising carbon dioxide levels, decreasing arctic ice and species extinction. But humanists and artists also grapple with this environmental crisis, and today deeply engaged, thought-provoking and artistically savvy responses to climate change are showing up in galleries, concert halls and theaters as well as in universities across the globe. Indeed, much recent art deftly incorporates scientific research and methodologies. Too often climate science and environmental humanities travel two parallel tracks, functioning as concurrent but not collaborative projects. Conjoining the two is a force amplifier. Without artists and humanists, science is frequently lost in translation, while artistic work that disregards science risks irrelevancy. This symposium brought together climate scientists, humanists, and artists including photographer Diane Burko to bridge this disciplinary gap, welcoming guest speakers and artists who are committed to—and practiced in—the current paradigm shift toward less siloed thinking about climate change.
Lecture on the History of Skywriting

27 February 2020
Anne Carson

Heralded as one of the most important contemporary poets in the English-speaking world, Anne Carson’s recent, extraordinary, genre-bending performance writes her own voice as that of the sky. Together with her collaborator, Robert Currie, Carson performed a staged reading of a text that tells creation stories while adopting the viewpoint of the sky.

"Tuesday I became clouds." In her often-humorous text, Carson assumes the perspective of the sky: "Do hawks and falcons look so fantastic, rising and falling because they have the sky as background? Or would they look equally good flying through mud or a piece of corduroy?"

The performance also includes a dialogue with Robert Currie as the absent, "non-arriving" character ‘Godot’ from Samuel Beckett’s play Waiting for Godot (1952), as well as a recorded reading in Arabic by Faisal bin Ali Jaber, an engineer from Yemen, whose nephew and brother-in-law were killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2012.

Working Groups

Tania Kitchell
Occupy
2012
3D-printed ABS plastic, dimensions vary.
Courtesy of the artist.
After twelve years, we have a large cohort of experienced researchers who know how to make the most of the opportunity. Working groups offer connection and support, the chance to interact with scholars from other contexts and disciplines, and to work across the gap in power and experience that separates doctoral students and recent graduates from faculty members. In 2019–2020, the Jackman Humanities Institute supported 12 working groups, five of which were new, and seven of which were renewals. A total of 268 people participated, including 105 faculty members and 95 graduate students at the University of Toronto, as well as 41 who were librarians, postdoctoral fellows, community professionals, undergraduate students, and affiliates from other universities. Working groups can grow into larger initiatives and spark new forms of research.

Working Groups Overview

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Highlights

Practices of Commentary received a five-year SSHRC grant

Environmental Humanities, with the School of the Environment, evolved into a new Research Community

Latin American Racial Technologies generated a Scholars-in-Residence project and the University of Toronto’s application for the John M. Sawyer Seminar in Comparative Cultures Award

Bridging Disciplines in Manuscript Studies is planning a digital portal of resources for students studying manuscripts

Deep Time launched a local geography initiative that will identify and map Indigenous marker trees.

Featured Working Group

This working group addresses a gap in scholarship at the University of Toronto in environmental scholarship by humanities researchers. Our goal is simple: to establish a network of EH scholars—faculty and graduate students from various campuses—and explore options for establishing an institutional home for EH at the University of Toronto. During the year we explored art, attended conferences, and shared works in progress. These meetings offer environmental humanists the opportunity to learn about their colleagues’ work.

This year has seen substantial progress on the working group’s primary goal: establishing an institutional home for Environmental Humanities at the University of Toronto. One major step forward is Critical Zones: Promoting Transdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in the Environmental Humanities. This project, led by Stefan Soldovieri of the German Department and other working group members, will be a nexus for research exchange in the environmental humanities at the University of Toronto and beyond. We envision a network of transdisciplinary research labs that brings together scholars and creative practitioners from different fields across the humanities, arts and sciences, and imagine a home for Critical Zones in the School of the Environment, which is actively seeking to intensify its connections to humanities fields. A doctoral cluster in EH research, designed and led by working group member Sherry Lee, is also in development, having already secured partners and initial funding. An exciting program which would bring together University of Toronto scholars with colleagues at Oxford and other universities, the cluster would attract EH graduate students, build the University of Toronto’s reputation as a disciplinary centre and provide invaluable experience for students in this expanding field.

The EHN continues to expand its reputation as the hub for local EH work. The EHN is now being invited to partner and consult on environmental humanities events across all three campuses. Our partners have included University College’s Alexander and Priestley lectures, Massey College, UTM’s Sustainability Management program, Hart House Global Commons, the German Department, Water Allies and Works in Nineteenth Century Studies. As well, the EHN is developing an ongoing and hopefully sustaining partnership with the School of the Environment.

Environmental Humanities Network

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The Practices of Commentary group began in 2018–2019 with the goal of bringing scholars from a wide range of disciplines together to discuss commentary as it is used in historical and literary materials from several traditions. We emerged with more questions than answers. In the coming year, we will probe the ways that the conceptual and technical aspects of commentary intersect with technological revolutions (the introductions of paper, print, and digital media; the takeover of palm-leaf manuscripts and papyrus rolls by codices; the shift from oral to textual modes of commentary). Our group attends to moments of transformation to explore how different commensal communities responded to material changes. We also look at developments in the organization and sociology of these communities, and the ways that these engendered new hermeneutics and interpretive modes. Finally, we examine the heritage of nineteenth-century scholarship, which brought philological methods and theories of commentary into frame contemporary debates about comparative work in the Humanities.

It is with great delight that we look forward to continuing our research under the auspices of a five-year SSHRC Insight grant. Led by Professors Wald Saleh (Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations), Amanda Goodman (Study of Religion, East Asian Studies), Jeannie Miller (Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations), and Markus Stock (Germanic Languages and Literatures), and with the active participation and support of our colleagues Suzanne Akbari (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton) and Christina Lechtermann (Goethe Universität Frankfurt), the project unites participants from many additional humanities discipline at the University of Toronto, including Classics, English, Philosophy, and Medieval Studies. It also brings together world-leading scholars from Carleton University, McMaster University, the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Needham Research Institute, and the National University of Singapore.

**SSHRC Insight Grant: Practices of Commentary 2020–2025**

**Featured Working Group**

**Organizers**
- Wald Saleh
  - Study of Religion and Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations
- Kenneth Yu
  - Classics

**Practices of Commentary**

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Native Performance Culture and the Rhythm of An-Conciliation: Re-Membering Ourselves in Deep Time

Now at over 40 members, the Deep Time group, has, since its inception in 2016, been committed to moving slowly and carefully through the processes of building relationships—with each other, with the work that we are doing, with the communities with whom we do our work, with the Indigenous stewards (our treaty partners) in these territories, and with the land itself. We have come to understand that it is only through painstaking engagement with the tangled history of settlement that future conciliation might be operationalized; how to facilitate such conciliation in our own work, we have, since our beginnings, plunged into a series of workshops, peripatetic teachings, and artistic encounters to establish methodologies through which to devise works that will build a legacy of honest-encounter and ethical, sustainable research partnerships upon which future generations might build.

Additionally, we continue to seek opportunities to meaningfully offer our time, and physical labour to support Indigenous community projects that work to strengthen Indigenous individuals. A high point of this year was the dramatic production called ‘Encounters at the Edge of the Woods’ that responded to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As we approached the year’s end, a new research project took shape: Marker Tree Mapping will identify and map trees that were altered to mark trails, food caches, freshwater sites, and sacred locations. The locations and contexts of these trees will reveal undocumented histories.

Practices of Commentary

Our focus this year was on the relationship between modes of commentary and scholarly production. Many found that the discussion was thematic in nature, focusing on a single introduction of paper, print, and then digital media; the takeover of palm-leaf manuscripts and papyrus rolls by codices; the shift in oral to textual modes of commentary). It became obvious to us that the practice of commentary is not only an exegetical act but a totalizing phenomenon that mobilizes much broader reading, writing, and interpretative practices and cultures. Our focus on the material dimensions of commentary also encouraged us to think more deeply about the economic aspects of commentary: How does one procure the tools and resources required for the practice of commentary? Who financed the production of massive dictionaries, grammatical handbooks, and other encyclopaedic aids that aided in commentarial endeavours? To what end? How do the material costs associated with commentary limit participation in commentarial activities, and what alternatives do excluded individuals have to engage in commentary?

Another highlight of the group’s work was reflecting on the similarities and differences between ancient and medieval commentaries, on the one hand, and modern scholarly commentaries, on the other. We detected red threads in this long durée history of commentary, but also significant differences, especially as regards the organization and sociology of exegetical communities, as well as the ethical and political commitments of those who called themselves commentators. We look forward to continuing our research under the auspices of a five-year SSHRC research grant.

Rethinking Iranian Studies

Rethinking Iranian Studies explored contemporary debates and disciplinary formations in Iran. We will be reflecting on the similarities and differences between modern and medieval commentaries, on the one hand, and modern scholarly commentaries, on the other. We detected red threads in this long durée history of commentary, but also significant differences, especially as regards the organization and sociology of exegetical communities, as well as the ethical and political commitments of those who called themselves commentators. We look forward to continuing our research under the auspices of a five-year SSHRC research grant.

Lectures at the University of Toronto

This Soundscape was conceived as a forum to gather scholars and art activists to engage in conversation with the University of Toronto with acoustic and sonic-environmental interests, in order to foster future growth and collaboration in research of the cultural study of sound and its spatial contexts. This field challenges disciplinary definition and has proven an ideal locus for the gathering of a wide array of scholars in media and communication studies, musicology and ethnomusicology, literary studies, anthropology, education, and art and architectural history. A particular objective was to bring sound to the surface of the contemporary humanities discourse on environment and climate. We dedicated several sessions to visiting local exhibitions and installations, where we arranged curatorial tours followed by group discussion.

We might single out two highlights of the year: in January, we conducted a walkabout during a special visit to

Working Groups 2019–2020

Working Groups 2019–2020
Looking Ahead

The JHI will begin the next year on Collectives in a socially distanced format necessitated by the global pandemic. As we work remotely and online, our focus will be on building collectives around the people who make up the Institute: the circle of fellows, the working groups, and the publics that we serve.

In the coming year, Humanities at Large will be in its second year of operations, and we will have the pleasure of working with Public Humanities fellow Robyn Autry (Sociology, Wesleyan University) and Community Engaged fellow Francesca D’Amico-Cuthbert (History, York University). We look forward to Distinguished Visiting Fellow Dionne Brand in March 2021, and to working with Distinguished Visiting Indigenous Faculty Fellow Max Liboiron (Geography, Memorial University), whose work with the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research sets a brilliant example of collective research in action. We will be partnering with the OISE Department of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning to bring two Artists in Residence: Vanessa Dion Fletcher in the Fall term and Ange Loft in the Winter term. Together, we will build collectives.

Annual Theme, 2020–2021
Collectives
From political parties to literary coteries, from fan groups to sports teams, from terrorist organizations to online groups, our collectives, associations, and communities are multiform and complex. How do we band together and why? In teaming up, how does membership of a collective affect one’s own agency and standing—what do we lose, what do we gain? Can collectives truly be agents and how do group dynamics emerge? How do we balance the interests between collectives, of individuals and collectives, and of the individual within the collective?
The Office of Gibert Li

PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Weather Amnesia, curated by Yuluo Wei, produced by the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in collaboration with the JHI.

Photos by Toni Hafkenscheid, 2019.

This Place, Neyaashiinigmiing by Public Studio and Kyle Miigizi Johnston.

Photos by Toni Hafkenscheid, 2019.

FELLOW PORTRAITS

Diana Tyszko

ILLUSTRATIONS

Michael George Haddad

PRINTING

Warren's Waterless

PAPER

Rolland Enviro Print

This brochure has been printed with a waterless printing press. Waterless printing eliminates the use of vast amounts of water and the need to dispose of effluents into the environment.

The paper is made from 100% post-consumer waste fibre, is acid-free, processed chlorine free, EcoLogo-certified, and was manufactured with biogas energy in Quebec. The paper and printer are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.
“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 longstanding generosity of the Honourable Henry N.R. Jackman.