21–22

Pleasure
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.
Welcome to the pleasurehome, an online exhibition responding to queer desire. Oscillating between desire and violence, these images establish a politics of pleasure informed by the experience of queerness: a textured exploration of home.

Director’s Message

Over the last year, the Jackman Humanities Institute has been able to return successfully to some in-person programming, including readings and public lectures, while we continue to mount a robust series of training workshops, readings, and lectures online.

Our online events continue to draw audiences from well beyond Toronto from across the country and around the world. We have also completed the final year of our Mellon-funded Humanities at Large programming series, including our capstone event, the JHI Humanities at Large lecture. Titled “The Perfect Wound,” the lecture was delivered in person on 4 May 2022 at the Innis Town Hall by our Mellon-funded Visiting Public Humanities Fellow, Professor Irina Dumitrescu (University of Bonn) and recorded live by our media partner, CBC Radio: Ideas, for ten days later.

Led by Irina Dumitrescu, the 2021–22 circle of JHI fellows focused their discussions on the theme of pleasure in the aesthetic, philosophical and sensory realms, and explored its realization, foreclosure, and the struggles to achieve it, across a wide array of historical periods, geographical sites, and material instantiations. Our faculty research fellows have made substantive progress on their research projects, while our graduate fellows press on towards completion of their doctoral dissertations and our undergraduate fellows undertake ambitious plans for graduate school. Among the highlights of the year, we feature our Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Michael Nylan, who catalyzed our conversations about pleasure during her stay in the early fall of 2021; our Community-Engaged Fellow Jackie Röbel, whose research on foodways both local and global has appeared on the Gastronomica podcast she produces; and our Undergraduate Fellow Mukti Patel, who goes on next year to a fully funded graduate program in Religion at the University of Chicago.

As our generous three-year grant from the Mellon Foundation comes to an end, I want to thank the Foundation for their visionary leadership in facilitating the past three years of public humanities research programming at the JHI and, especially, for their support of JHI fellows and staff. In addition to the VFHI Fellow, and the CEHR postdoctoral fellow, I want to recognize the Institute’s Communications Officer, Sonja Johnston. Over her three years with the Institute, our Newsletter audience has increased from a monthly circulation of c. 250, to a bimonthly readership of over 1075. She has also established social media accounts on Facebook (550+ followers), Twitter (350+ followers) and YouTube to advertise both our events and our fellows’ achievements. She has also updated our website—which currently averages almost 13,000 views a month, up from c. 3000 in 2019—to a Drupal 7 platform.

I want to thank all the Institute’s fellows and staff for their commitment to recovering the pleasures of in-person gathering and intellectual exchange. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we were able to host our circle of fellows largely in person and foster the shared exploration of their research. We could not have done it without our excellent staff—in addition to Associate Director Dr. Kim Yates, Communications Officer Sonja Johnston, and Research Officer Dr. Amy Ratelle, the Institute’s stalwart Finance Officer Cheryl Pasternak, and Office Manager Monica Toffoli, whose financial facility and logistical creativity have enabled the Institute to flourish.

Alison M. Keith
Director, Jackman Humanities Institute
Professor of Classics and Women’s Studies
Steering Committees

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 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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
“ONCE WE STARTED TO REALLY GET DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY, WE REALIZED THAT ACTUALLY MOST PEOPLE DOING DIGITAL HUMANITIES AT U OF T ARE DOING THIS VERSION OF CRITICAL DIGITAL HUMANITIES THAT IS COLLABORATIVE—OFTEN PUBLIC-FACING—that addresses questions and social inequality and power.”

Elspeth Brown, Director

**Critical Zones**

Launched in fall 2019, Critical Zones will be a nexus for research exchange in the environmental humanities at the U of T and beyond. We envision a network of research labs bringing together scholars and creative practitioners from different fields across the humanities, arts and sciences. It will fill a gap at the U of T and engage environmental issues in Canada’s largest city and in the internationally significant bioregion of the Great Lakes. In this way Critical Zones will give structure to research activities already happening at the U of T, facilitate new connections among scholars, stimulate the creation of innovative projects, and function as a springboard for community engagement. Critical Zones will offer enormous opportunity to engage with, learn from, and build on Indigenous knowledges and experiences. We imagine a home for Critical Zones in the School of the Environment. Environmental humanities have emerged internationally as an essential field of study in universities in this moment of urgent global concern. However, this field is not yet highly developed in the Canadian context. Critical Zones will position the U of T as a leader in the field.

**Scholars-in-Residence**

Scholars-in-Residence (SiR) is an intensive, 4-week paid research opportunity in humanities and social sciences for upper-year undergraduates. SiR provides students with an opportunity to acquire advanced research skills and experience while collaborating with an interdisciplinary and intellectually vibrant community of peers, professors, and research professionals. Students selected for SiR work as Research Assistants in small teams on projects led by professors. Students also share group activities including multidisciplinary workshops on research methodologies, standards, protocol, and professional communication; cultural events; and talks featuring professionals such as lawyers, policymakers, and documentary filmmakers that highlight research-intensive career trajectories.

The sixth annual Scholars-in-Residence took place 2–27 May 2022 with 26 research projects supported: 11 at the St. George campus, 5 at UTM, 5 and UTSC, and 6 online. A total of 134 students participated; while there were minor pandemic restrictions (masking) in place, this year’s Scholars were especially enthusiastic about the intensive in-person experience after the long hiatus.
Fellows

Catherine Opie
Self-Portrait/Cutting
1993
Chromogenic print
40 × 29 ¾ inches
Our conversations about pleasure explored the senses and the ethical and moral responses to pleasure in a wide range of historical contexts. Michael Nylan’s visit in October provided huge impetus for conversation, and Irina Dumitrescu’s wide-ranging work as a public humanist and medievalist engaged with every other project in delightful ways. Pleasure turned out to be a more slippery focus than it seemed, offering an interesting series of jumping-off points and intellectual rabbit holes as we delved into other subjects. There was a sense of group solidarity in spite of the year’s challenges, and friendships have formed that will endure. The greatest pleasure of the year was in the shared company of these diligent and engaged researchers.
Michael Nylan

On Pleasure, Looking Back
As the last year and a half has brought momentous changes to all of our lives, Michael Nylan’s public lecture considered how the book she wrote over eighteen years ago, The Chinese Pleasure Book, would now differ, if she were to write it today. She finds reading the Chinese classics rewarding because it brings her, a small-town girl from a Kentucky farm, back to a world she once knew well, where social exchanges entailed long-term relations of trust. The antique Chinese pleasure theories were premised on the secure trust one can build within one’s family and circle of friends and trust in the beneficence of the cosmos. Nylan’s gentle, informal manner moved her listeners into a set of philosophical structures that defned the ways that artists and thinkers have defned how and whether pleasure was to be (or not be) the book’s moral. Her depth of learning and generosity opened a conversation about pleasure and the ways that artists and thinkers have defned how and whether to trust it.

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The 2022 JHI annual theme of “Pleasure” allowed me to conceive a new project and plunge into a new research direction—one of historizing the senses in general and the olfactory sense in particular. Drastically widening my training as a literary scholar of medieval China to incorporate my interest in the history of science and in premodern knowledge production, I wanted to investigate how ancient Chinese people understood and classified the world of scent, including the ways in which aromatics during the medieval era became a cultivated art form subject to analogous forms of connoisseurship as other forms of art such as music. There are numerous challenges in doing so, as scent—including those designed and curated for pleasure—is ephemeral and often resists linguistic representation. My major trust it. My major focus this year is that tenth-century anecdotes suggest an ongoing过程 in the Chinese literati circles that sought to “acculturate” imported aromatics (from Southeast Asia via the maritime silk road) into an existing olfactory culture and as part of secular and religious experiences.

Even though I had been thinking about this prospective direction for some time, without the JHI fellowship, it may have taken me many more years to work up the courage to tackle it, if at all. The incomparable gift of time granted by JHI was to allow me to read and absorb new material without interruption, to reexamine and reexamine the historical period. It was a joy to hear other fellow’s weekly presentations and to engage or even overhear discussions about their work. These weekly and daily intellectual encounters became larger than the sum of their parts, and over time opened intellectual horizons that allowed me to see more clearly my own methods and intellectual choices.

There are many highlights from the year for me. In September, I facilitated a reading and discussion (among the circle of fellows) to introduce the writing of our Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Prof. Michael Nylan. Her recent monograph, The Chinese Pleasure Book, brokered many of the crucial terms and concepts that have the potential of bringing together a wide range of work across disciplines. We discussed, among other topics, the questions of translation of the Chinese classical writers’ terminology (why render le as “pleasure” and not “joy,” for example). In October, when Prof. Nylan arrived in Toronto for her two-week visit, I also had the honor of introducing her at one of her public lectures and in more informal occasions (such as a graduate student workshop she conducted). Toward the end of her stay, she told me appreciatively that the JHI circle of fellows is a “wonderful group,” to which I agreed whole-heartedly!

The JHI year also came at a pivotal point in my career, as the publication of my debut novel in summer 2021 placed me in a new position of speaking about writing fiction as an academic, and therefore venture into the world of public humanities. This experience, both new in its synergy and deeply meaningful, is yet another highlight of the year for me. For this, and for the privilege of being part of a collective conversation about the multifaceted meanings of pleasure, I feel deeply indebted to JHI.

Concocting the “Heavenly Scent”:
A Cultural History of Aromatics in late Medieval China

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Imperfection

The opportunity to be a Visiting Public Humanities Faculty Fellow at the Jackman Humanities Institute came at a key moment in my career. For the past decade, I have been writing for the general public in a variety of genres: memoir, criticism, and essays, among others. This has generally been on stolen time, balanced against my teaching, administrative, research and grant duties at the University of Bonn. I wanted to see how far I could take my public work if given the time to do it as my primary occupation, both in the sense of breadth of public intellectual activities and depth of my main project, a book on imperfection. Although expertise in public humanities is increasingly valued by the academy, in Germany there is no funding that I know of that would have allowed me to do this kind of work, with this intensity. The result was new opportunities for public engagement, and a great deal of clarity about the direction in which I want my career to go. I had a significant breakthrough on my book project: it is, in fact, not about the direction in which I want my career to go. I had opportunities for public engagement, and a great deal of clarity about the direction in which I want my career to go. I had a significant breakthrough on my book project: it is, in fact, not imperfection per se. Instead, it is an exploration of perfectionism that weaves together memoir and medieval literature. Its main argument will be that the answer to perfectionism is perfection, in the Aristotelian sense of fulfilling one’s potential (which of course brings its own pleasure with it). As the fellowship draws to a close, I find I have much more energy and a greater sense of possibility.

— Irina Dumitrescu

(Ph.D. English Language & Literature, Yale University, 2009) is Professor of English, American and Celtic Studies at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn. She is a scholar of medieval English literature and her research focuses on education, celebrity, and women’s power in the Middle Ages. She also writes essays and book reviews for the public on topics such as food, dance, migration, and literature.
Dangerous Pleasures: Literature, Secrecy, and Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century England

It has been an unusually productive year of writing and research. I have made tremendous progress on my dissertation, having completed a late-stage draft of my third chapter (“The Taste of Antiquity”) and an early draft of my fourth (“Queer Humour and the Gothic”). I may be nearing a full draft of my dissertation, which is now 80% complete, and I intend to defend by Spring 2023.

I chose to present my first chapter, on the threat of blackmail faced by homosexual men in the mid-eighteenth century. At first glance, the blackmail panic seems to have little to do with pleasure, but the careful reader discovers dazzling particulars in trial records and gossipy pamphlets about sex acts both imagined and performed. The rise in blackmail cases, and their increasingly high-profile targets, reveals a new sense of the plausibility of homosexual existence, its visibility and availability. It also reveals the dangers in pursuit of that pleasure—humiliation, imprisonment, mob violence, and exile, to say nothing of the death penalty. It is easy to think of pleasure as a light and idle thing, as plain and simple as a pig rolling about in mud. But as any queer historian will tell you, pleasure, but the careful reader discovers dazzling particulars in trial records and gossipy pamphlets about sex acts both imagined and performed. The rise in blackmail cases, and their increasingly high-profile targets, reveals a new sense of the plausibility of homosexual existence, its visibility and availability. It also reveals the dangers in pursuit of that pleasure—humiliation, imprisonment, mob violence, and exile, to say nothing of the death penalty. It is easy to think of pleasure as a light and idle thing, as plain and simple as a pig rolling about in mud. But as any queer historian will tell you, pleasure, but the careful reader discovers dazzling particulars in trial records and gossipy pamphlets about sex acts both imagined and performed. The rise in blackmail cases, and their increasingly high-profile targets, reveals a new sense of the plausibility of homosexual existence, its visibility and availability. It also reveals the dangers in pursuit of that pleasure—humiliation, imprisonment, mob violence, and exile, to say nothing of the death penalty. It is easy to think of pleasure as a light and idle thing, as plain and simple as a pig rolling about in mud. But as any queer historian will tell you, pleasure.
Evan Sprout
Untitled
2020
Wood and rope
8” × 30” × 2”
Photo by Brigitte Patenaude
In this second full year of pandemic disruptions, most events were planned as online offerings. A notable feature of this year’s Program for the Arts is the unusual number of new works that were developed and brought to virtual performance—five in total—including an opera, a play and three new musical compositions. The recordings of these performances are publicly available and will enrich Toronto’s art and music scene. This year’s events touched scholars and performers from around the world, bringing the annual theme of Pleasure into dialogue with racial, environmental, technological and political issues, and generating conversations that continue to resonate.

Visualizing Pleasure was a virtual symposium with companion screenings of commissioned artists’ moving image works from Canada and South Africa. Dedicated to exploring the complex relation between racialized, ethicopolitical dimensions of pleasure and practices of freedom, the symposium explored concepts of pleasure animated through cinematic and performative methodologies. Foregrounding black feminist and queer critique, the symposium provided key provocations towards understanding interrelationships between the aesthetic, freedom, and pleasure.

In engaging questions that arise from the overlapping rhetoric of race, sexuality and the sensorium, the symposium brought together inquiries into the relationships between audio-visual media and questions of pleasure: the erotic, the sonic, and the racialized body, attending to the sensuous dimensions and emancipatory potentials of such encounter.

At the same time, participants engaged with interdisciplinary methods of scholarship that brought visibility into conversation with related fields in the humanities, exploring pleasure as an analytic to theorize aesthetic and political practices of freedom that configure racialized difference otherwise. The symposium was designed to create a much-needed conversation between scholars and artists across Canada and South Africa who recognize pleasure as a vital analytic in both scholarly and creative work as means to up-end normative readings of the political. Emphasizing a South-North dialogue, Visualizing Pleasure presented a two-day program of plenary, keynote, and scholarly panels, with commissioned artists from Canada and South Africa in conversation with interlocutor-scholars on specific questions of pleasure, aesthetics, and practices of freedom in the 21st century.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23


PLENARY LECTURE
Isaac Julien
artist and film maker,
UC-Santa Cruz

ARTIST ROUNDTABLE
Fela Gucci
South African performance artist

Desire Marea
South African singer

Jordache A. Ellapen
University of Toronto

ARTIST ROUNDTABLE
Githan Coopoo
South African designer

Abdi Osman
Somali-Canadian multidisciplinary artist

Naveen Minai
University of Toronto

SCHOLARS PANEL
“Global Blackness and the Aesthetics of Pleasure”
Nzingha Kendall
Pace University

Kwame Otu
University of Virginia

Lwando Scott
University of the Western Cape

Rinaldo Walcott
University of Toronto

ARTIST ROUNDTABLE
John Greyson
video/film artist,
York University

Bongani Ndodana-Breen
South African composer,
Yale University

Warren Crichlow
York University

PODCAST SERIES
6 August–17 December 2021
Artists-in-Presidents: Transmissions to Power

Artists-In-Presidents was a polyvocal art project with 21 episodes released weekly in 2021. Through transmissions from a diverse international group of artists, it composed a rousing collection of imaginative proposals for the leadership we need in this moment of global crisis and possibility. Inspired by Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Depression-era radio broadcasts called the “Fireside Chats” as a framework for speaking frankly and directly to the people, Artists-In-Presidents replaced the one-man hero story that plagues our histories and governing bodies around the globe, and compiles calls for unity by asking, “What messages do we need to broadcast to our nation(s) and relations now?” Twenty-one artists, public intellectuals, performers, and writers created audio addresses to expand and reimagine vernaculars and aesthetics of power with the bodies and voices of brilliant thinkers, artists, writers, performers, and musicians—calling on them to assume authority over our collective future. This project brought together artists from across Turtle Island, England, Bahrain, Brazil, France, Germany, Mexico, Indonesia, India, Afghanistan, and Lebanon.

NEWLY COMMISSIONED OPERA AND SYMPOSIUM
29–30 October 2021
The Art of Love

This project was a new opera in “naïve style” by Norbert Palej, with a libretto based on the poetry by Ovidius Naso. It was presented online in a hybrid of animation and pre-recorded singing in Classical Latin. In tandem with the performance, a symposium brought together classicists and composers to discuss Ovid and the compositional process.

Visit: blackwoodgallery.ca/program/artists-in-presidents-transmissions-to-power

Recording of symposium: youtube.com/watch?v=U4c0AXO_z8t&tl=5s
18 February 2022
Problematic Pleasures in Digital Games and Play

Games, of all the popular arts, are perhaps most inextricably bound up in notions of pleasure, but in spite of its primacy, the concept is rarely interrogated in game studies. However, in recent years a number of game scholars have applied intersectional lenses to understand pleasure in all its complexity, challenging both canonical theories of play and celebratory marketing rhetoric. This event brought four prominent international game scholars into dialogue with University of Toronto faculty and students to critically unpack the diverse and not always harmless ways that pleasure moves us in and through play.

Recording of symposium
youtube.com/watch?v=IQiSYKV3b84

8 April 2022
The Pleasure of the Dawn Chorus: Preserving the Pandemic Soundscape

We began with the fascination around hearing birdsong again in our urban environment in the context of the pandemic lockdowns as human created noise abated. It was as if people had rediscovered the nature which had always already been there. Generating an environmental consciousness, based not on eco-anxiety alone, but in eco-appreciation, is an essential part of addressing our environmental crisis. The project collected recordings of the urban dawn chorus, taken from parks and backyards across Toronto, in collaboration with faculty and students in music, wildlife biology, and ecology and religion. These recordings were musically analyzed and transcribed, inspiring a new composition that reflects upon the pleasure of hearing birdsong. Musically, the themes of COVID-19 and nature rediscovered—displeasure and disconnection, pleasure and reconnection—are explored and contrasted in the composition. The resulting composition expresses the joy of reconnecting with nature’s music, and the hope that this renewed connection can be maintained and strengthened as we emerge from the pandemic. The project culminated in a lecture recital as we emerge from the pandemic. The project culminated in a lecture recital and disconnection, pleasure and reconnection are explored and contrasted

Visit: ajhampton.com/dawnchorus

American Psychological Association (APA) conference in 1972 where queer activists organized an academic panel called “Psychiatry: Friend or Foe to Homosexuals”. The panel featured Dr. H. Anonymous, a closeted gay psychiatrist who participated in disguise, wearing an oversized tuxedo, a wig, and a mask. Using a voice-distorting microphone, Dr. H. Anonymous gave a blistering speech about the destructive effects of homosexuality being labelled a sickness by the field of psychiatry. This moment of queer activism resulted in the APA taking homosexuality off the list of mental disorders in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, changing the lives of countless people who no longer felt they needed to be cured of the feelings they had for the people they loved. The 50th anniversary of the APA’s 1973 removal of homosexuality from the DSM is in 2023, and the performance project will be staged as part of the Toronto Pride Festival in June 2023.

Speculative AI: Octavia Butler and Other Possible Worlds

This project supported the design of a Butler Speculative AI that models other possible worlds in reorienting the normative framework of AI design. It is based on a critique of the application of the default normative training data for most AI systems that replicate and predictively reinstate historical bias along the lines of race, cisgender, and other modalities of stabilizing data norms as an output of historical bias and injustice. This design orient itself around precepts, aesthetics, and politics of Afrofuturism in the design of an ML visualization system which will expand toward a world system of behaviors (sonic, language, environmental, etc.) in a virtual exhibition.

This project received further funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, which permitted it to expand in terms of scope and technological possibility. The AI underwent further refinement, and we learned along with our AI as we produced images of increasing size and complexity. An in-person exhibition, accompanied by a printed catalogue, is planned in Fall 2022.

Fall 2022
Patching Seas of War: Convivial Culture and the Joy of Defiance

This is an interdisciplinary, participatory, art-based research project that patches stories of conflict and war across the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas. Through cultural production, curation, discussion and analysis, the project aims to document, memorialize, and address the destructive effects of displacement, dispossession, and violence in the lives of women and gender nonconforming people from conflict zones of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It also explores the pleasure, the joy of defiance, in women and gender nonconforming people’s stories. We have had four meet-ings with all the collaborators and international artists. In those meetings we developed the ideas for the exhibit that we will put together in the fall of 2022.

Speculative AI: Octavia Butler and Other Possible Worlds Project-generated image

Patching Seas of War: Convivial Culture and the Joy of Defiance

Photo by Kurdishstruggle, Creative Commons.
Working Groups

Kaeten Bondi
Reclining Burnout 2
2018
18 x 24 inches
The Working Groups program continued in this second pandemic year with most meetings and events held online. It became clear that although spontaneity may be more challenging, online work does permit for a greater range of activities by enabling connections with a wider range of scholars and specialists. Working Groups became scholarly windows to the world, enabling international conversations and facilitating immediate scholarly responses to the public events taking place in a tumultuous year.

This working group brings together interdisciplinary perspectives on Indigenous, environmental, and settler pasts, presents and futures around the Circumpolar North to examine the complex visual/textual cultures of this region. The group encompasses research interests in northern landscapes, borders and environmental history, nineteenth-century settler-colonial expeditionary narratives, contemporary and historic militarization and defense, and Indigenous arts, modernisms, and cultural heritage across Canada and the wider circumpolar North. We confront north-south dialogues and divides, drawing attention to cultural, social, and environmental dynamics between Indigenous communities and settler populations across Alaska, Canada, Greenland, the Nordic countries and Russia, offering a collaborative and interdisciplinary forum to consider these historic and contemporary environments and communities.

Although we had planned for a hybrid format from the beginning, we decided to go largely virtual in the new year and have continued to successfully run a meeting almost every month. The virtual meeting environment has made it possible to invite guest speakers from further afield and extend our ‘physical’ as well as scholarly reach across the circumpolar north. This has also allowed our group members who don’t live in Toronto or who are on sabbatical/research leave elsewhere to still participate. This shared yet virtual community has also garnered significant interest from the wider research community through social media platforms such as Twitter. We look forward to building upon these far-reaching networks as part of our future outputs. We have also taken advantage of opportunities to visit galleries and temporary exhibitions and engage physically with artworks beyond our computer screens. We focused on augmentations to reading texts in preparation for our meetings, such as documentaries or the short films such offered through Isuma TV and artist websites. This approach has offered an exciting and rewarding alternative to reading and — combined with our gallery visits — extended our visual thinking on topics such as Indigenous Knowledge, Arctic militarization, glaciology, and ecological sound and performance art.

Our plans for the next year involve a greater emphasis on archival and gallery visits that offer a means of engaging with objects and images from the multi-faceted perspectives of our respective group members, and on providing a forum for graduate students to engage in a research group environment.
Working Groups 2021–2022

Jesuit History Research Group
This group serves as a hub for Jesuit Studies at the University of Toronto. Thanks to Zoom, it also draws its membership and guest speakers from other Canadian and international institutions of higher learning as well as the world-wide network of Jesuit scholars. Our virtual roundtables, workshops, lectures, and discussion groups cut across several disciplines: history and historiography, history of science and medicine, Indigenous studies, theology, religious studies, and literature, thereby fulfilling a need for the interdisciplinary integrations and collaboration. We feature the work of graduate students and emerging scholars, provide a forum for workshopping new projects, and promote Canadian scholarship whenever possible.

Organizers: Andreas Motsch, French; Jean-Olivier Richard, Christianity & Culture; Fr. Thomas Worcester, Regis College

Manufacture of Consensus: A Critical Examination of Government Approaches to COVID-19 Recommendations
This working group examined the extent to which the scientific consensus that is implicit in orders and recommendations from Health Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic satisfied the knowledge-based model of consensus and, indeed, how this consensus should be characterized. We also critically examined other non-cognitive explanations for this consensus, drawing on studies of social scientists, and considered various explanations why consensus may fall short of the conditions for knowledge-based consensus.

Organizer: Brian Baigrie, History & Philosophy of Science & Technology

The Politics of Labour: An Interdisciplinary Approach
Labour issues have risen to the forefront of both academic and popular discourse.

Organizers: Emily Halliwell-MacDonald, Ph.D. cand., English; Emily Nacol, Political Science

Practicing Dialogue
Voices across the cultural spectrum call attention to the increasing divisiveness and the risk of tribalization that threaten our democracies. Social scientists work at identifying the various triggers or causes, such as parenting strategies, the polarization of information, isolation exacerbated by digital media consumption, and the fall of reason. Of all the

Organizer: Emily Nacol, Political Science

Bridging Disciplines in Manuscript Studies
The study of manuscript material connects researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines; yet opportunities for professional exchange are often missed due to institutional divides. Since 2018, the “Bridging Disciplines in Manuscript Studies” group has addressed this need by creating interdisciplinary dialogue and a platform for collaborative research to further raise scholarly awareness of manuscript collections in the Greater Toronto Area and provide opportunities for practical training in manuscript studies.

Organizers: Florian Mueller, Ph.D. cand., German; Adam Cohen, Art History

Ongoing workers’ strikes among meat-plant workers, Amazon employees, graduate students, and teachers, alongside the often immensely anti-union efforts on the part of universities and corporations, have demonstrated a revived interest in labour issues and their radical suppression and denial. Essentially interdisciplinary, concerns with labour coalesce issues of political science and political economy, literature, technology, history, environment, and philosophy, to name a few. Addressing these issues demands that scholars think collaboratively through critical discourse on labour both within its historic and present contexts. This group provides a forum in which to do so.

Organizers: Emily Halliwell-MacDonald, Ph.D. cand., English; Emily Nacol, Political Science
Working Groups 2021–2022

causes that have been pinpointed we focus on one: our diminished capacity to engage in true dialogue: our failure to simultaneously dissent and respect boundaries. As members of a multilingual and multiethnic society, we are aware of the impact of divisiveness, and the ambiguous nature of calls for the greater good, which can degrade into a call-out culture which silences valid stances in the name of other greater goods. We tend to retreat into our small groups, where we can reinforce our beliefs with information that targets and fuels our own biases. Our goal is to develop strategies for training ourselves on an alternative path: the developing of a capacity for dialogue, which involves recognizing and meeting people whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ along all possible dimensions in a space created by the force of respectful listening and a desire for mutual learning.

Organizers: Laura Colantoni, Spanish & Portuguese; Ana-Teresa Pérez Leroux, Linguistics and Spanish & Portuguese

Public Writing in the Humanities
This working group was designed to build a supportive and critical interdisciplinary space for humanities scholars at various stages of their careers to write, read, and learn together about public writing. While originally conceived as a series of workshops on the “business” of public writing for academics (pitching, working with editors, etc.), we found that our group was interested in getting back to the basics of our shared craft. We organized a series of workshops breaking down the essential elements of the writing process. Collectively, these workshops explored topics like structure, editing, creative non-fiction, and the translation of academic research into public writing.

Organizer: Christy Anderson, Art History

Rethinking Policing, Penalty, and Pandemic
This working group brings together established, junior and emerging scholars across disciplines to examine and discuss policing and penalty in relation to racialized, poor and street-involved populations in Toronto. We are a diverse, multilingual group of faculty and students whose combined areas of research include Afro-Latin American Studies, anticolonial studies, Black Studies, criminology, critical geography, critical race feminisms, disability studies, emancipatory pedagogies, equity and solidarity, and public health. As social justice researchers, we share a sense of accountability to communities in and around our universities, and particularly a responsibility for the well-being of those populations who are marginalized and excluded through inequitable social relations and structures and who are targeted by state violence. These obligations are all the more pressing in the context of the COVID pandemic, which has foregrounded how policing in its many forms disproportionately endangers the lives of Black, Indigenous, migrant, queer, racialized, trans, and other marginalized folks.

Organizers: Rosalind Hampton, Social Justice Education; Vannina Sztainbok, Social Justice Education

Tamil Studies: A Discipline in Motion
Tamil is a language, but it is also a social and political identity that has shifted across time and place. Therefore, its study spans the humanities and the social and political sciences, with varied trajectories in South and Southeast Asia, Europe, North America, and the diaspora. The specific institutions, motivations, and intellectual histories that have fostered Tamil studies over the years deserve further reflection. As such, we assemble a diverse group of scholars from the humanities and social sciences, who research ancient as well as modern Tamil sources and phenomena from a number of disciplines, methods, and media, in order to understand more fully the modes by which Tamil has been understood across time and place.

Organizers: Mark Balmforth, postdoctoral fellow, Historical & Cultural Studies; Stephanie Duclos-King, Study of Religion; Jesse Pruitt, Ph.D. cand., Study of Religion; Bhavani Raman, Historical & Cultural Studies; Srilata Raman, Study of Religion; Kristina Rogahn, Ph.D. student, Study of Religion

TOP: Illustration by The Office of Gilbert Li. MIDDLE: Photo by Ilgar Sagjedev, 2004. Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 4.0 licence. BOTTOM: Photo by JUN2/iStock.
Looking Ahead

As the pace of life picks up again after two pandemic years, we are planning for an energetic year of explorations on an extremely relevant theme. We will be hosting Distinguished Visiting Fellow Kathi Weeks (Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies, Duke University) in October, and Visiting Public Humanities Fellow Ruby Lal (Middle Eastern & South Asian Studies, Emory University) throughout the Fall term. As well, we look forward to the fellowship of Distinguished Indigenous Faculty Fellow Dale Turner (Political Science, University of Toronto), postponed from 2020–2021. Our cohort of fellows will be researching subjects including slavery in Ancient Rome and Early Modern Britain, vanilla workers and robots, and labour conditions in Pakistan, Egypt, and the Toronto restaurant and comedy scenes, among many others. With the return to in-person work for many, the opportunity to think together about what work means to the human experience comes at the perfect time.

Annual Theme, 2022–2023
Labour

From the labour of childbirth to the travail of making a living, human beings are labouring animals who derive meaning and experience meaninglessness in work. Historically, human creativity has long flourished both through and against labour-saving technologies. In a globalizing and climate-changing world, rising nationalist movements call for the fortification of borders that would stop seasonal flows of labour, while women call for pay equity and harassment-free workplaces to allow for the freedom to work in peace. In a world of increasingly precarious labour, thanks in part to automation, what does the future of work portend for both people and the planet? What forms of resistance are possible when workers face both the irrelevance of their labour and its exploitation?

JHE EXHIBITION OF ART
THE CENTRE CANNOT HOLD: LABOUROUS MEMORIES
EXHIBITION
14 September 2022 to 30 June 2023
CURATED BY
Atif Mikhail Khan,
Sherry Chunqing Liu,
and Erin Storus

Jhi exhibition of art exhibition
The Centre Cannot Hold: Labourous Memories
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pleasurehome, curated by Logan Williams, produced by the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in collaboration with the JHI.

ILLUSTRATIONS
Julien Posture

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.
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.