

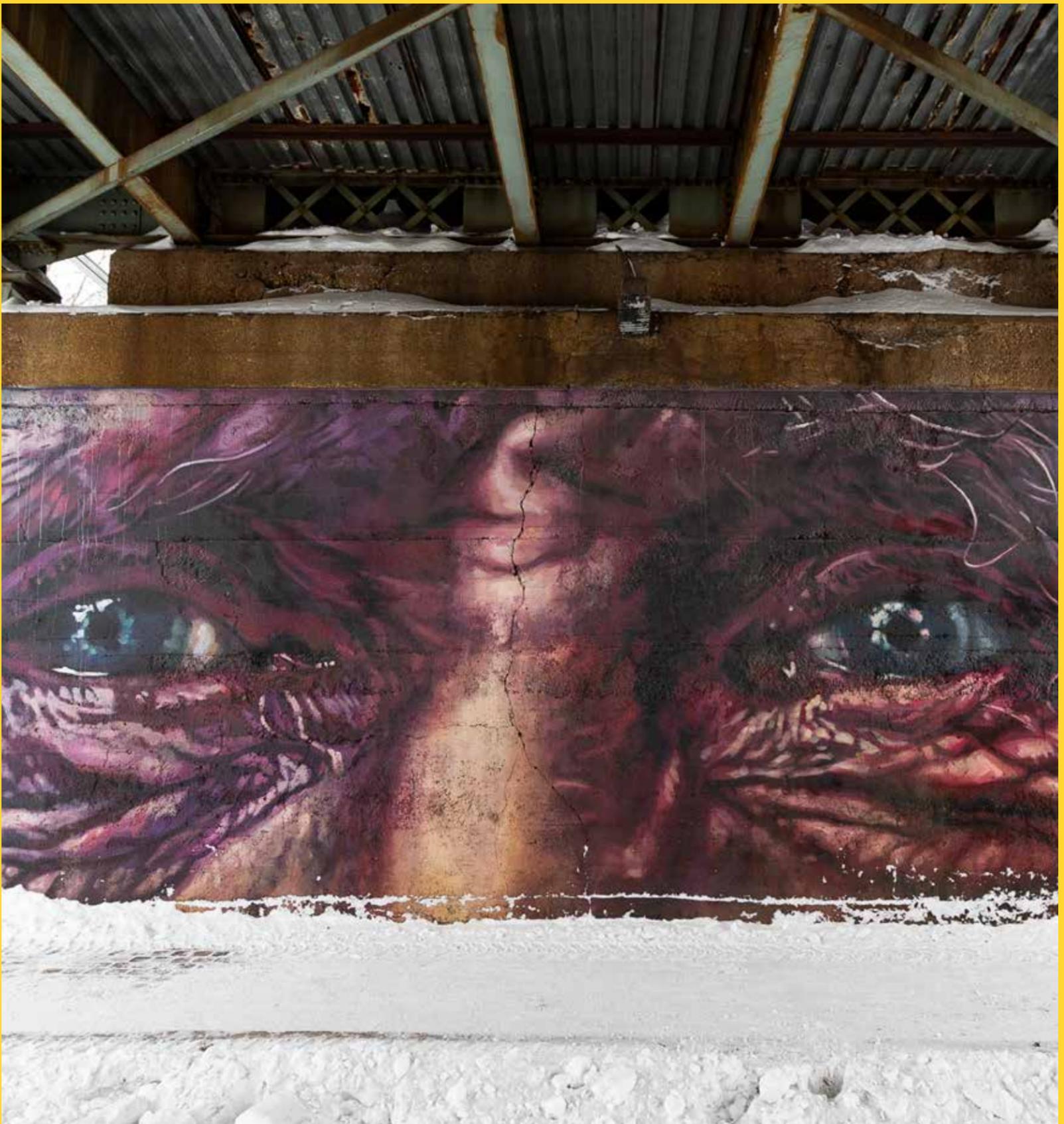
THE **U** N I T E R

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Who owns the streets?



PUBLIC ART DOES AND SHOULD REFLECT THE COMMUNITY



THE UNITER IS SEEKING A COMMENTS EDITOR

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SUPPLIED PHOTO

A portrait of the playwright Ins Choi painted by 14-year-old Winnipeg artist Essey Habtu. Read more on page 5.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

THOMAS PASHKO
MANAGING EDITOR



Hello again, readers. Do you remember how excited we were to be back in print? Back on Dec. 4, when we released our special Uniter 30 issue, we were thrilled to be back in print after a long pandemic's worth of online-exclusive publishing.

Well, that didn't last very long.

Omicron clearly had other plans, and the University of Winnipeg has moved back to remote classes in light of the massive surge in cases. It is, of course, the right move to protect the safety of students, staff and faculty. But it does feel like a disheartening step backwards after a few months of feeling like this pandemic was perhaps starting to finally wind down.

Things aren't all bad. I am glad that I was able to have a small, mostly masked Christmas get-together with my family, a year after spending the 2020 holiday apart and attempting to Zoom with relatives (success was varied, mostly along generational lines).

Prematurely believing the pandemic is over is a mistake that history has taught us not to make. I've been reading historian Dan Jones' newest book, *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages*, which describes in some detail the first plague pandemic, which began in the year 541 during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian. When Justinian himself caught, and subsequently recovered from, the illness, he declared in March of 543 that the pandemic (or as he called it, "God's education") was over.

Jones points out that Justinian was wrong, and the pandemic raged around the world for another 206 years. So, let's not get ahead of ourselves, folks.

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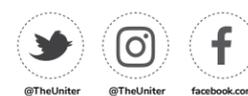
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SUBMISSIONS

Submissions of articles, letters, graphics and photos are encouraged, however, all new contributors (with the exception of letters to the editor) must attend a 45-minute volunteer orientation workshop to ensure that the volunteer understands all of the publication's basic guidelines.

In-person volunteer orientations are currently suspended due to COVID-19, but over-the-phone and remote orientations can be arranged. Please email volunteer@uniter.ca for more details.

Deadline for advertisements is noon Friday, six days prior to publication. The Uniter reserves the right to refuse to print material submitted by volunteers. The Uniter will not print submissions that are homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic, ableist, racist or libellous. We also reserve the right to edit for length/style.

COURAGE CAN MOVE A MOUNTAIN

Raine Hamilton releases an album about their passion for the land

ISABELLA SOARES | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [TW BELLASOARES0601](#) [IG BELLA_SOARES16](#)

Nature is a source of inspiration for artists across various creative disciplines. For singer-songwriter and violinist Raine Hamilton, their passion for music combined with their admiration for mountains and land formations ultimately drove them to create the studio album *Brave Land*.

“As I started to travel more, I spent more time in various mountain ranges and began to really notice the difference of those places (in comparison to Manitoba). As an artist, I really value tuning into the places around me,” Hamilton says.

Brave Land is the second project Hamilton has made alongside their string trio collaborators Quintin Bart (double bass), Natanielle Felicitas (cello) and Lloyd Peterson (producer and engineer).

“Raine had a clear vision for this concept album, while leaving space for ideas to develop as a group,” Felicitas says. “We finished tracking all the string parts right before the lockdown in March 2020. The process was particularly surreal for me, as I was pregnant throughout the writing and recording of it (giving birth in May 2020).”

Although the album was ready in early 2021, Hamilton opted to experiment with distribution and release each track separately throughout the year, so people could honour each song before listening to the full album.

“On the one hand, the pandemic deprived the music industry of touring and performing, but it also gave way to innovation and trying things out in a different way,” Hamilton says.

This is the first full-length project the singer will release since the album *Night Sky* came out in 2018.

During the process of writing *Brave Land*, Hamilton had the chance to go to the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity for a four-week residency. The new environment furthered their connection to the land, a topic they had previously explored within their discography.

Before their time outside of the Prairies, Hamilton described the land as a place of tranquility. Now the singer expresses how their feelings have shifted toward how the mountains bring out courage and strength within them.

The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity “is nestled in a valley space surrounded by mountains, and that place just blew my mind,” they say.

Banff was also the place that inspired Hamilton to write their latest single, “Eclipse.” While the instrumental idea arose while they were teaching the xylophone at a Winnipeg elementary school, the lyrics landed on the page after witnessing an eclipse in Alberta.

“There was this beautiful lunar eclipse,



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Singer-songwriter Raine Hamilton's new album *Brave Land* was inspired by mountain landscapes.

and a lot of pals who were also artists-in-residence came out and stayed at a bend in the road to watch it and sing,” Hamilton says.

As the album's mid-January release date draws near, Hamilton reflects on the feeling they want to evoke for listeners who will now get to hear all the tracks together.

“I hope that it finds the heart of any listener who resonates with it. I hope that, as

an artist, I can somehow be a part of a listening experience that is moving,” they say.

***Brave Land* will launch on Jan. 21 on streaming platforms. The album-release show that was supposed to happen at the WECC on the same day has been postponed without a settled new date.**

A RECORD HIGH

Local vinyl demand reflects nostalgic desires

ISABELLA SOARES | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [TW BELLASOARES0601](#) [IG BELLA_SOARES16](#)

Although the rise in vinyl sales has evolved for the past 10 years, the layoffs and remote work of the COVID-19 pandemic have undoubtedly reminded music admirers of the good-old feeling of switching sides of a record every 20 minutes. Adele, Taylor Swift and ABBA are a few artists directly tied to the increase in demand for vinyl and delays in manufacturing during the last quarter of 2021.

Winnipeg store Into The Music has been impacted by backlogging for quite some time. Owner and manager Greg Tonn says delays in orders are between 50 to 70 percent higher now.

“I haven't been able to stock a Black Sabbath album in over a year. Our suppliers say that it is available for ordering, but my orders date to 10 or 11 months,” he says.

Tonn also mentions that people who have been spending more time at home during the COVID-19 surges have been relying on various activities to pass the time. Reading and listening to records have been a welcome distraction. Through the store's biweekly newsletter, along with Into the Music's social-media posts, clients spot new and used albums that are back in stock, so they can reserve them in advance.

“Hearing music is one of those things that we like to do at home. When you take your time and put more effort into listening to music, the music you listen to becomes way more meaningful,” Tonn says.

The ongoing vinyl shortage is also changing things up for local artists in means of distribution. While artists in the past would

typically release physical copies alongside digital versions of their music, many now aren't waiting for vinyl albums to show up before sharing new tracks with fans.

“Often artists are having to put out their albums digitally without the vinyl, because they don't want to wait for it. Vinyl is so hard to get that most artists are waiting eight to 10 months before their album arrives,” Stu Anderson, the cofounder and CEO of Birthday Cake Media, says.

Birthday Cake Media operates in three sectors of the music industry: artist management, record production and music publishing. Some of the names tied to the label are local acts Begonia and The Bros. Landreth.

Even though the vinyl shortage hasn't stopped musicians from releasing their albums, it is still impacting a valuable source of income. This issue is especially relevant on tours, when vinyl and CDs are sold alongside merch.

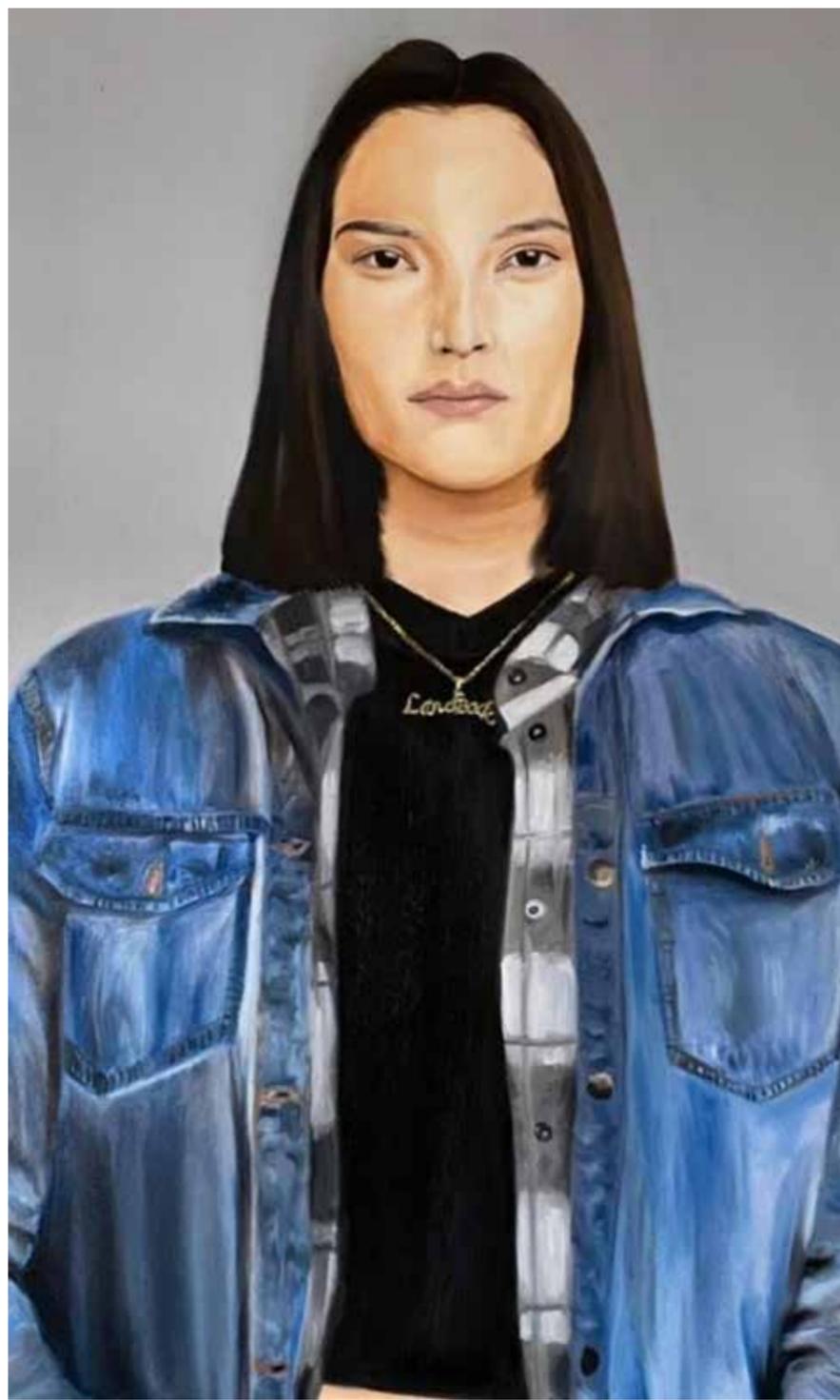
While artists are still having to postpone tour dates and cancel upcoming concerts, which interferes with physical sales, fans play a crucial role in supporting local music.

“Go to your local stores and see what is in stock. Take chances on some local music that you might not be familiar with. If an artist you like is putting out an album, request it in your local store,” Anderson says.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The increased demand for vinyl albums has combined with supply-chain backlogs to create challenges for local shops and labels.



PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Left: 14-year-old Winnipeg artist Essey Habtu / Right: Habtu's portrait of playwright Darla Contois

PTE COMMISSIONS PORTRAITS FROM YOUNG WINNIPEG ARTIST

Essey Habtu's playwright portraits featured in the theatre's lobby

REBECCA DRIEDGER | ARTS AND CULTURE REPORTER | [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#) REBECCADRIEDGER

Some artists take years to specialize in their field. Others pick up a pencil or a paintbrush and instantly feel a connection. Fourteen-year-old Essey Habtu has only been painting for the last couple of years but has already started to make a name for himself in Winnipeg's arts scene.

Habtu started drawing at about eight years old – all because of his brother.

"He used to draw and do little sketches, and I always thought they looked so good, so cool," Habtu says. "When I first tried, it was definitely a fail, but his sketches inspired me, and I went on to practice and practice."

Although his brother was the one to inspire his drawing, Sheri Kovacs, his French teacher at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle School (WMEMS) encouraged him to try painting.

"I was a little scared to try it, because I was very used to the pencil's clean, controlled lines," Habtu says.

Painting is different than drawing, but his online viewers were amazed by what he could do. When he first started post-

ing on Instagram, he was painting portraits of people that looked like himself and his Eritrean family members. He also liked taking inspiration from Pinterest photos of a variety of people.

Once his posts began gaining traction, he started getting commissions for his paintings.

After CBC News wrote an article about his work, Habtu caught the attention of someone pretty high up in Winnipeg's arts community.

Thomas Morgan Jones, Prairie Theatre Exchange's (PTE) artistic director, was scrolling through social media one day in August of last year when he happened to catch a glimpse of Habtu's work in a post from CBC.

After talking it over with the team at PTE, Jones sent Habtu a message over his Instagram account, @esseys_portraits.

"I read this article, and the first thing I thought was, 'well, we should commission him to paint some portraits of some of the playwrights we have in the

upcoming season,'" Jones says.

From there, Habtu began painting portraits of playwrights Darla Contois and Ins Choi, whose plays are featured in PTE's current season.

Darla Contois is a Cree-Saulteaux actress and playwright. She studied theatre at Manitoba Theatre for Young People and the University of Manitoba. She is also an alum of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre. *The War Being Waged*, Contois' first major theatrical work, premiered in 2021.

Ins Choi is a Korean-Canadian actor and playwright most known for his play *Kim's Convenience*, which was adapted into a hit CBC TV show. His play *Bad Parent* also premiered at PTE. Unlike *The War Being Waged*, *Bad Parent* will have a rolling premiere, with it being performed at PTE, then at The Cultch in Vancouver with Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre (vAct) and finally at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts with Soulpepper in Toronto.

Both of the playwrights got to choose which photo of themselves would be used as a reference. The portraits took Habtu three months to complete. He delivered the paintings on Nov. 1, just a few days before the live premiere of *The War Being Waged*.

"We decided that a really meaningful thing to do was to have all this ready for the reopening of our theatre to the first live audiences we've had in 20 months," Jones says.

"This whole art experience has been shocking," Habtu says. "I would have never thought I would be doing this two years ago, let alone selling my art."

Jones found it to be impactful that audience members of *The War Being Waged* – the first in-person show to be presented at PTE since the COVID-19 pandemic began – could observe Habtu's portraits before entering the theatre doors.

The portraits "had proper lighting and were very prominent. It was like he had his

own little gallery in our space," Jones says.

With live events slowly returning, Jones emphasized how grateful he was to work with Habtu and to bring this collaboration to life.

"We're a midsize theatre company that focuses a lot on new works, but almost exclusively on Canadian works. We love celebrating the community and finding ways to have intersection between the work that we do in theatre and any number of other disciplines," Jones says.

Jones was also very drawn to Habtu's story and his inspiration: the Black Lives Matter movement.

"I want to shine a light on People of Colour," Habtu says. "I got really inspired when BLM started. It is what gave me the spark to start painting (People of Colour)."

The PTE commission gave Habtu the opportunity to further this vision by spotlighting two BIPOC playwrights through portraiture.

Although Habtu may have a bright future in Winnipeg's arts community, he says art isn't the only thing he is excited about.

"I am also passionate about science. I love knowing about the things in our world and how they work," Habtu says. "My plan is to do something in the medical field. I am not sure what yet, though."

Habtu's sudden push into the spotlight was something he never thought was possible. He says the whole experience, from interviews to commissions, has been intense, but in a good way.

"I am so thankful for all these opportunities and support. I have no words to explain how thankful I am," Habtu says.

"I can't believe how young he is, because the work is amazing, but also I can totally believe it," Jones says. "One of the greatest things that we can do with young people who are expressing themselves in this way is to support them as much as possible."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

ABOUT ENDLESSNESS

Plays at Cinematheque Jan. 14, 16 and 25



THOMAS PASHKO | MANAGING EDITOR | [TW](#) [IG](#) THOMASPASHKO

Veteran Swedish writer-director Roy Andersson has long been an idiosyncratic favourite of the arthouse crowd. Known for his deliberate pacing, dry humour, dark worldview and sporadic output (he's released only six feature films in 50 years, with a 25-year gap between 1975's *Giliap* and 2000's *Songs from the Second Floor*), his latest film is an often-comedic exercise in stillness and dread.

About Endlessness, which premiered at the 2019 Venice International Film Festival,

consists of dozens of short, seemingly disconnected sketches or vignettes, an approach he's also used in the films of his "Living Trilogy." Each scene consists of a single unbroken take, and Andersson encourages his actors to take their sweet time. He uses the deliberately glacial pace to mine comedy and dark poignance from the scenes, many of which focus on how personal crises bump up against the banality of daily life.

With cinematographer Gergely Pálos,

Andersson gives *About Endlessness* an intentionally drab look to match its leaden pace. Most of the characters have the unmistakable grey-blue pallor of a corpse. They aren't undead zombies – they're dentists and priests and waiters. But while they aren't dead, few of them can certainly be said to be truly living. The few characters nourishing themselves with joy do manage to glow with a slight blush of colour.

Even the world around these characters is grey and dreary. It's not the modern, minimalist Swedish greyness of IKEA, either. The buildings, streets and rooms of *About Endlessness* (filmed on location in Stockholm) are medieval and Renaissance leftovers. The most modern locations have the nondescript, mass-produced character of industrial post-war office buildings. But for the most part, these people walk on cobblestone streets and sleep in centuries-old bedrooms.

The age of the surroundings feels deliberate. Andersson seems focused on topics like the past, aging and the passing of time. A small number of scenes explicitly

take place during the Second World War. Others address the aftermath of war: a busker who survived a landmine attack or a couple visiting the grave of their son, a fallen soldier.

For Andersson, who was born in 1943, there's an intention in weaving these moments with modern daily minutiae. Sweden controversially remained neutral during the Second World War, providing material aid to both sides. Andersson grew up in the immediate aftermath and has made a film that is, to some extent, about the only Sweden he's ever known, one that had just lost its innocence and never really recovered it.

The film plays sort of like a book of absurdist single-panel cartoons like *The Far Side* or *Non Sequitur*, but with much darker subject matter. Some sketches lack a punchline entirely, content to live in the tragedy (or the insignificance) of the moment. It might not be the antidote to the COVID blues that some audiences want. But it's funny, often moving and, in the era of bloated blockbusters, a mercifully short 78 minutes.

ARTS BRIEFS

CIERRA BETTENS | ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR | [TW](#) FICTIONALCIERRA [IG](#) CIERRABETTENS

The Trews at The Burt

On Jan. 28, Juno-nominated rock band The Trews will perform with W3APONS at the Burton Cummings Theatre (364 Smith St.). The show begins at 8 p.m. Entry may be subject to COVID-19 rules and restrictions. Visit burtoncummingstheatre.ca for ticket information.

Hoist exhibition at Platform Gallery

Montreal-based artist Karen Kraven's solo exhibition *Hoist* is the latest installation at the Platform Gallery (121-100 Arthur St.). Kraven's work examines themes of time, doubt and grief through photography, sculpture and installation. The exhibition runs from now until Feb. 11. Visit platformgallery.org/exhibition/hoist for more information.

Comeback Kid releasing *Heavy Steps*

A hardcore band with Winnipeg roots is back on the radar in 2022. On Jan. 21, Comeback Kid will release their LP *Heavy Steps*. The band, whose members had been living in various parts of Canada, returned to Winnipeg's Private Ear Recording studio to work alongside producer John Paul Peters. Look for it on major streaming platforms.

Honouring Cliff Eyland

The Winnipeg Art Gallery's forthcoming exhibition will highlight the work of late Canadian artist and curator Cliff Eyland. *Library of Babel – A Retrospective* is a collection of Eyland's work, heavily influenced by the postmodern themes of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. The exhibition opens on Jan. 22 and runs until May 15, 2022. Visit wag.ca/event/library-of-babel for more details.

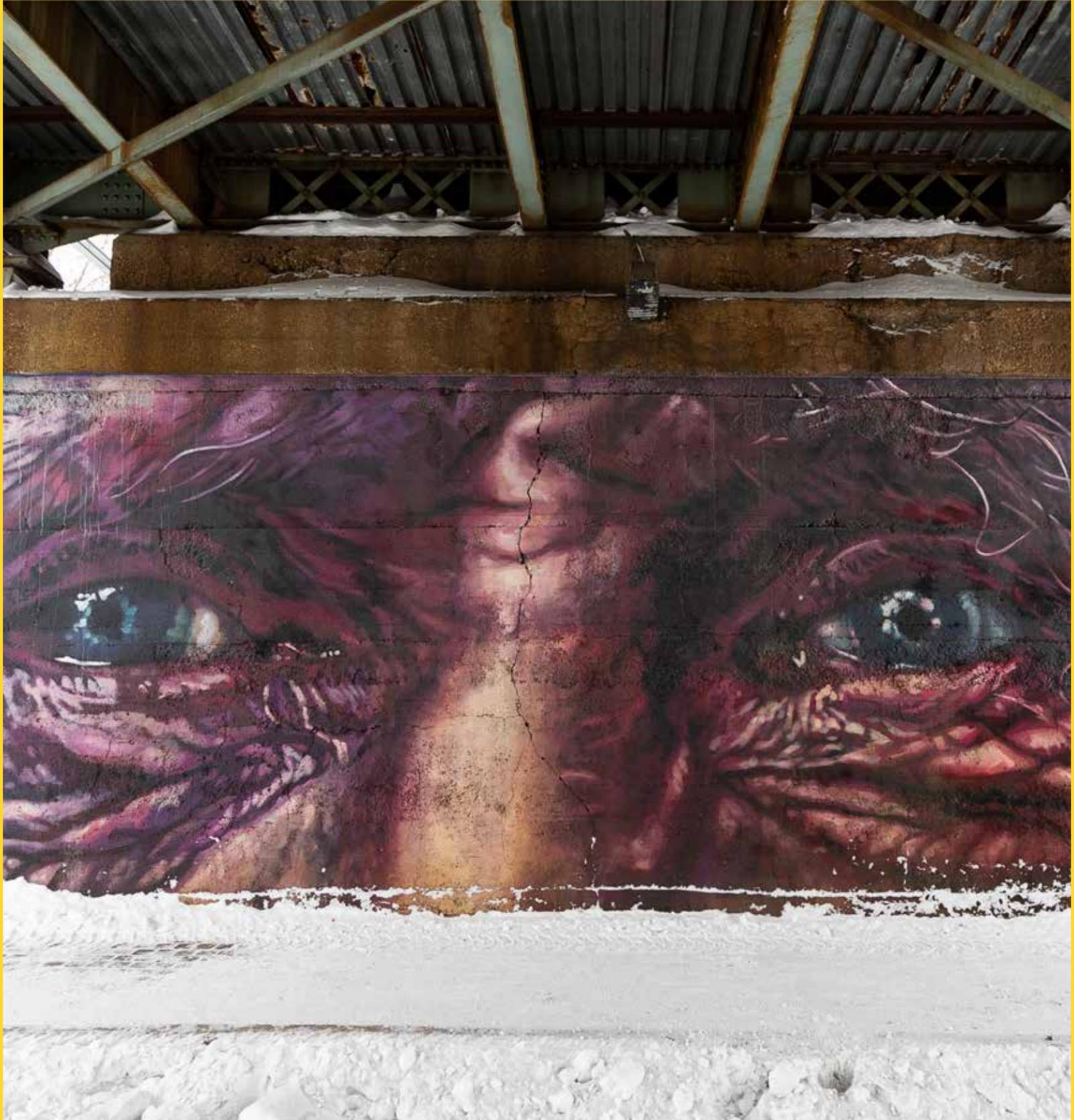
Hone your grant-writing skills

The Winnipeg Public Library is hosting a free virtual Intro to Grant Writing for Writers workshop on Jan. 29 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The library's writer-in-residence, Anna Leventhal, will introduce participants to the basics of grant writing, with a specific focus on arts organizations. The event is open to Manitoba residents and will take place over Zoom. Visit winnipeg.ca/library to register.

Art exhibition expanded into podcast

Though the Plug-In Institute of Contemporary Art exhibition wrapped up in December 2021, *When Veins Meet Like Rivers; bᑎᑦᑦᑦ / okhīžata / maadawaan* will continue in podcast form. Artists asinna-jaq, Dayna Danger and Kite will discuss "the meaning and behind-the-scenes creation of the exhibition," touching on themes of kinship, survival and desire. Visit anchor.fm/plug-in-ica to tune in.

Who owns the streets?



A mural by artists Lacey Jane and Layla Folkmann below the rail bridge at The Forks. The mural is part of the Wall-to-Wall Mural & Culture Festival.

Public art does and should reflect the community

Winnipeg – particularly in the urban areas – is rife with street art, from stickers to murals and beyond. Passersby may notice reclaimed household items, painted and em-

blazoned with a simple message: *press on*. Posters are modified with robot heads, and the lost character from *Where's Waldo* can be found repeatedly in different iterations.

More and more street art seems to have appeared in the past decade. Who's behind it?

Public space

Winnipeg Waldo is a street-art take on the character hidden in the pages of the popular series of children's puzzle books.

According to the artist behind *Winnipeg Waldo*, there is a sense of public ownership over public space.

"It's a space that we all sort of occupy. We all have some sort of claim over (it), because we're the ones who are walking around and seeing it every day. It's artwork directly interacting with people."

Recognizable to most is the Jerry Pizzaman character, the angry-looking slice eating itself. The artists behind these pieces go by the name Toxic and describe their work as "part guerilla and part utilitarian."

"Instead of waiting for a gallery or museum or whatever to show our art, we can just put it up," one of the artists behind Toxic says in an emailed statement to *The Uniter*.

The artists admit that it is a lot of work, especially as "90 per cent of it gets torn down in the next couple days," but they enjoy the idea of putting art where it isn't supposed to be.

"It makes it a little more interesting and exciting for people to discover. To see it over and over again and think to themselves 'What is this? Is it supposed to mean something?'"

A hidden world

The artist behind *Winnipeg Waldo* says their favourite part of street art in any given city is following specific artists or characters.

"It's almost kind of like you're collecting them, right? It's like its own little scavenger hunt."

Usually accompanied by a bird, the message *press on* is painted on reclaimed materials and posted around the city, whispering a subtle message of hope and perseverance. The artists behind *Press On Winnipeg* talk about the importance of street art in an emailed statement to *The Uniter*.

"Grassroots-level street art can challenge the status quo. It can challenge the unhealthy systems of our society, inspire others to create. (It) brings a mysterious 'hidden' world to discover, forms a sense of community and can simply bring a smile to someone who is having a bad day."

Whether it be stickers, posters, cardboard cut-outs or large sculptures, there's a way to get messages out there.

The artist behind *Winnipeg Waldo* describes the challenging process in getting the large-sized Waldo out onto the Perimeter billboard: a really tall ladder, lots of cardboard and a drill.

"The nice thing about cardboard was that I was able to fold it up without destroying it," they say.

Press On Winnipeg uses reclaimed materials for a variety of reasons.

1. It makes art far more affordable.
2. We see it as a positive direction when using art to clean up the earth.
3. There is a beauty in taking someone's trash tossed on the ground and making it into something new for people to enjoy.
4. It adds a bit of randomness to our city (who wouldn't want to walk around the corner and find a frying pan on a telephone pole?).
5. 'Almost anything can be a canvas' is a personal challenge for us," they say.

The *Winnipeg Waldo* project began in 2017 after the artist visited cities overseas where street art was embraced – and not just sanctioned art, but grassroots-level art, as well.

"It was something that I was like, man, *Winnipeg* is really missing that sort of thing, that kind of folk street art that's made by the people who kind of occupy the space," they say. "I wanted to start a cool idea that I would have wanted to see walking around the city."

While *Winnipeg Waldo* is kept local, *Toxic* strives to spread their art nationwide by putting up art when they travel and by giving stickers to fans and friends so they may do the same.

"In an ideal world, I'd have a *Toxic* robot on every street in every city," they say.



The Pallet Pillar is a collaborative art installation between street artists *Winnipeg Waldo*, *Press On Winnipeg* and *Toxic*, located across from Shaw Park near The Forks.



Street art "is artwork directly interacting with people." - *Winnipeg Waldo*



"Grassroots-level street art can challenge the status quo." - Press On Winnipeg

Representing community

"The city and community is generally welcoming to street art and graffiti, and ... it's not generally super-frowned upon or prosecuted," the artists behind Toxic say, adding that law enforcement doesn't seem focused on penalizing street artists.

"It's cool that we have more freedom to express ourselves in this medium in our country and community if we want to."

"Street art really allows for turning our streets into contemporary public-art galleries that are accessible to (the) public at large and as many people as possible at all times," Andrew Eastman, co-founder and co-creator of Wall-to-Wall Mural & Culture Festival and Synonym Art Consultation, says. "We want people who are walking our streets to have the opportunity to engage in discourse around public art and feel connected to works of art."

Eastman says Synonym Art Consultation strives to highlight artists who are underrepresented in the community, helping them to get their work out there and develop their careers.

"We're really also founded on an idea of trying to get opportunities for artists who sometimes exist outside of the more institutional (structure) – be that school-of-art structure or art-gallery structure," he says.

The mural-planning process at Synonym Art Consultation varies depending on the project.

"Sometimes that will be a sort of youth-led initiative on the design of some murals. We will often work with Indigenous elders, (and) almost all of our projects are collaborations with local community organizations," Eastman says.

He lists Graffiti Art Programming, Sunshine House, North End Community Renewal Corporation and Spence Neighbourhood Association as partners.

Eastman says Synonym Art Consultation strives to create work that not only reflects the community but also acts as "visual identity markers for the community."

"Street art really has this ability to centre the artist themselves while also taking into account the community and its needs and dreams and desires," Eastman says.

"We simply think both avenues of art bring happiness and beauty to the city, one form being generally larger in scale and more official and the other generally being smaller in scale and less official."

There are some barriers to creating sanctioned street art, however. Getting a project with a company can be highly competitive, the artists behind Toxic say.

"It still shuts out a lot of artists, only giving funding and exposure to the 'winners.' With street art, you don't need permission. You don't need a committee to

deem that your art is worth seeing or that what you're saying deserves to be heard. You just go out and show it to the world on your own terms."

The artists add that grassroots-level street art can be democratizing, giving artists a chance to showcase their art without the confines of a gallery.

"That being said, street art also kind of isn't important ... and that's the point," they add. "A lot of street art and graffiti sucks, but it's cool that anybody can go out there and scribble on a wall. It doesn't need to be profound or important or even good."

"It seems like every month there is a new piece of art on a building around Winnipeg, and it is a beautiful thing," the artists behind Press On Winnipeg say.

"We simply think both avenues of art bring happiness and beauty to the city, one form being generally larger in scale and more official and the other generally being smaller in scale and less official."

A flourishing decade

Synonym Art Consultation has been in operation for nearly a decade.

"We've just strived from the beginning to try and make art more accessible to the public and try and bring art into people's everyday lives," Eastman says, adding that Synonym does performance art, public events, concerts, music and mentorship, as well as public art and street art.

The artist behind Winnipeg Waldo says they have noticed more street art around the city in the past five to 10 years.

"The Wall to Wall mural festival has done a lot for street art in the city. I mean, it's still sanctioned. It's still not quite that

sort of grassroots-level street art, but it's still more of sort of a modern direction and kind of in touch with maybe those cities around the world that more embrace street art as an asset in the city."

Press On Winnipeg has been around for about as long. It "started just over 10 years ago at the top of the Waterfront (CN) bridge."

"The spirit behind *press on* was to bring a little hope and happiness to those who may stumble on it. We would maybe do one or two big or small projects throughout the years."

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the group decided to do more.

"At the time COVID hit, everything was uncertain, and we thought (the) message *press on* was something that we should throw out on the streets in a larger capacity than we had before to bring something positive and hopeful in a time that was challenging, to say the least."

Collaboration > Competition

Press On Winnipeg, Toxic and Winnipeg Waldo recently collaborated on a large sculpture, a pillar created with pallets. The theme of the piece is "isolation," according to Press On Winnipeg.

"We named our robot sculpture *Iso-3000*. Originally on the chest of our sculpture was a caged heart, but later on in the process of creating the sculpture, the idea of a no-wifi sign made more sense for the piece. This COVID era that we live in has rapidly grown our connection to one another via social media/internet (for better or worse), and a no-wifi signal seemed fitting as a symbol portraying isolation in our present time."



Two works of street art by local collective Press On Winnipeg

Toxic says the idea behind the collaborative piece is “to have some nice public art for people to look at and one that can be (a) collaboration with anybody in the city,” especially given the constraints of lockdowns.

“The biggest message that we (the Press On crew, Toxic, Waldo) want to get out to the public about this pallet-pillar collaboration is for everyone to add art to

it (whether it is an art piece about isolation or not),” the team behind Press On Winnipeg say.

“We find great joy in creating art spaces for people to enjoy but also to join and add their own beauty to these spaces. Collaboration > Competition.”

Supporting street artists can mean collaborating on public pieces or buying merch when available, but Toxic

says just being a fan means a lot, too.

“Messages, sharing art on social (media) and even just following and interacting with us (online or off) is a huge help. It’s partly just that our egos need the fuel of adoration, but it’s also inspiring when you see that people are enjoying and connecting with your art.”

Follow these street artists on Instagram at [@winnipegwaldo](#), [@press.on.wpg](#) and [@exclamationt](#).

CITY BRIEFS

ALEX NEUFELDT | CITY EDITOR

Omicron gives winter term a detour

On Dec. 23, the University of Winnipeg announced that the winter term would be delayed by one week, in alignment with the Government of Manitoba’s decision to delay the start of elementary, junior-high and high-school terms until Jan. 10. Most courses will also be taught virtually until reading week at the earliest.

Biking on bodies of water

Spark Rentals – Ice Cycles, a business which rents and sells ice bikes (bicycles with a front blade allowing for skating along ice on the Assiniboine River) – launched on Jan. 8. Ice cycles are available for rental or purchase at the Bonnycastle Park access point on the main river trail.

New scholarship supports students

Three Indigenous students from St. John’s High School in the U of W’s Integrated Bachelor of Education program will be the first recipients of a new scholarship from the Schroeder Foundation. The scholarships cover up to \$30,000 in the first year and up to \$25,000 in subsequent years and will cover all education and living costs for the selected students.

Jordan Scott becomes new writer-in-residence

The University of Winnipeg announced that acclaimed Canadian poet and children’s author Jordan Scott will be the university’s 2022 Carol Shields Writer-in-Residence. The Writer-in-Residence program runs from Feb. 7 until March 11, excluding reading week, and will include a lecture and book reading in the winter term.

Have your say in Winnipeg’s financial future

The City of Winnipeg is seeking public feedback regarding the Winnipeg Police Funding Model. The public engagement efforts include a survey on the City’s website that can be accessed until Feb. 2, as well as multiple virtual public workshops and a telephone town hall. For the full schedule of feedback opportunities, visit [winnipeg.ca/publicengagement](#).

DANGEROUS SIDEWALKS

Accessibility concerns persist annually

CALLUM GOULET-KILGOUR | CITY REPORTER |  CGOULETKILGOUR

There is no question that Winnipeg is known for its winters. Winnipeggers acknowledge it as an unavoidable part of their existence and something to go through every year. This is what has led many to ask why the City of Winnipeg is so poorly prepared for winter. Specifically, why does “Winter-peg” have so much difficulty, year after year, adequately maintaining its sidewalks to ensure safety and accessibility for all?

This year, as usual, many took to social media to express their frustration. @julespinner tweeted: “I am so tired of this. Do the people who plow Winnipeg’s streets ever walk on its sidewalks?” @ChelseaBreanne cheekily noted that the “best leg workouts are wearing slippery boots on uncleared Winnipeg sidewalks.” @ltwpg made a stellar marketing pitch: “winnipeg sidewalks rebranding as slide-walks.”

Comic relief aside, properly cleared roads and sidewalks are extremely important, especially for people with mobility issues. It is especially frustrating since roads are regularly cleared, likely at the expense of sidewalks. David Kron, executive director of the Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba, says this problem isn’t anything new.

“We have this conversation – and I get interviewed – every year ... after the first snow (about) how poor the snow clearing

is for folks that have a mobility issue or just aren’t the most steady on their feet,” he says.

Coun. Matt Allard represents the St. Boniface ward. He holds various other positions, including council liaison for intermodal connectivity, chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and member of the Executive Policy Committee.

“I believe strongly (that) we need to improve our snow-clearing level of service for active-transportation users,” Allard says in an email to *The Uniter*.

“Over the last two years, I have moved and supported multiple motions seeking new resources, new equipment and prioritization of accessible snow clearing, with some success in bike lanes and more work to do on slippery sidewalks.”

Kron says the City of Winnipeg must do much more to address this issue.

“They’re the ones with the equipment and the plan to make active transportation active year-round,” he says.

“I can deal with minus-40 and clear sidewalks, but when it’s minus-1 or 2 and just ice, it’s practically impossible to move around,” Kron, who uses a cane, says.

“It’s not just folks with disabilities. This affects everybody,” he says.

Allard acknowledges that more needs to be done.

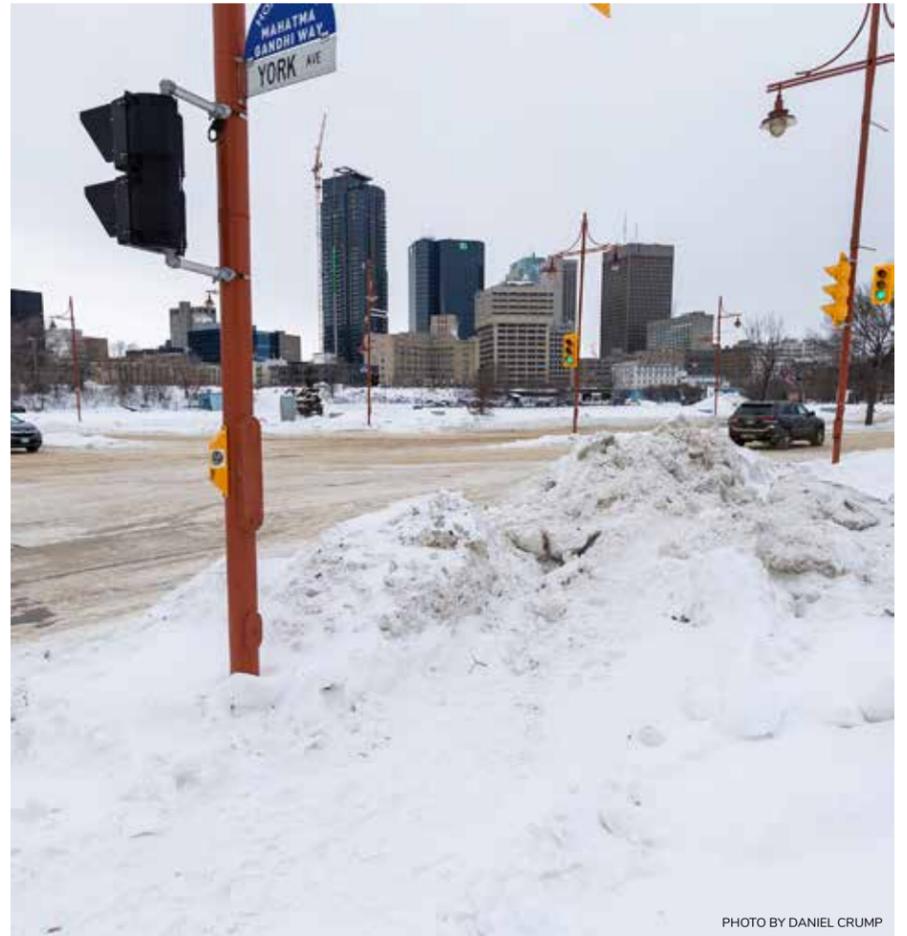


PHOTO BY DANIEL CRUMP

Winnipeg has had to deal with brutal winters for its entire existence, but city hall still can’t seem to properly maintain sidewalks.

“Pre-emptive sanding, plowing to pavement surface on sidewalks and specialized sidewalk equipment are just some of the tools we need and which I’m committed to pursuing,” he says.

The City of Winnipeg has created two online forms which try to address this issue. The first is for requesting sanding on slippery roads or sidewalks and can be accessed at bit.ly/3f0clvM. The second is for requesting snow removal and can be accessed at bit.ly/3t5jLvq.

SKIING IS IN SEASON

Sport’s popularity soars during pandemic

CALLUM GOULET-KILGOUR | CITY REPORTER |  CGOULETKILGOUR

The seemingly never-ending COVID-19 pandemic has caused shifts in habits and “trends” (such as, most notably, homemade sourdough bread). Cross-country skiing has emerged as a very popular activity. This trend can, in fact, be observed all over the world. In Manitoba, specifically, seasoned skiers and equipment sellers have noticed an increased interest in the sport.

Dustin White, who works at Winnipeg sporting gear store Bikes & Beyond, says the demand for cross-country ski equipment at his store has undoubtedly increased during the pandemic.

“It is overall up by (more than) 20 per cent,” he says in an email to *The Uniter*. “The demand continues to be high enough that we’ve already pre-sold some of (the) ordered skis for December 2022.”

Raphaël Boutroy, a longtime cross-country skier and competitive racer, is not surprised by this. “In Manitoba, because of the long winters, it is important for people to find winter activities,” he says in an email to *The Uniter*.

“Conveniently, skiing is an outdoor activity that is easy to enjoy while keeping your distance,” Boutroy says. “For newer skiers, the sport offered an opportunity to socialize and interact safely, all while getting some fresh air.”

Boutroy has noticed many more beginners on the ski trails since the start of

the pandemic.

“There (are) more new skiers who seem to be benefiting as much from the exercise as from the opportunity to spend time with someone, other than online,” he says.

Cross-country skiing is a relatively affordable sport and can be enjoyed by beginners with no experience.

“The activity itself is not beyond reach. The movements used in skiing are present in our everyday life,” Boutroy says.

Windsor Park Nordic Centre, located on Des Meurons Street, is the main ski centre in Winnipeg, with approximately 15 kilometres of groomed and lit trails. During the summer months, it is a golf course.

“With demand increasing, we’re hoping that other seasonal-use facilities make themselves available to winter activities, so that there are more options available,” White says, adding that “we’re going to see growth in the demand, as long as there is snowfall and routes available for skiers.”

“An ‘if you build it, they will come’ axiom comes to mind,” he says.

Many cities in Nordic countries, with similar winter climates to Winnipeg’s, have taken the urban integration of cross-country skiing to a whole new level. Last year, the Finnish city of Lahti “launched the world’s first urban ski-sharing program.” So reliant on cross-country skis are Oslovians that the



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The popularity of cross-country skiing has exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Norwegian government brought snow to their downtown amid warmer-than-usual temperatures.

Though Winnipeg has yet to reach that level of winter infrastructure, White is optimistic about the future of the sport.

“There’s also some grassroots clubs that

are growing from word of mouth and a new generation of skiers carrying the torch and getting younger skiers into the winter activity,” he says.

Find more information on cross-country skiing in Manitoba at ccsam.ca.

FROM THE CAMPUS TO THE COMMUNITY

How campus-based community outreach initiatives gave back in December

ALEX NEUFELDT | CITY EDITOR

While rising COVID-19 case counts and cold temperatures had many Winnipeggers keeping their social circles small during the winter holidays, the University of Winnipeg Students Association (UWSA) and Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre both held community outreach initiatives to spread some support.

Jonathan Henderson, vice-president external affairs with the UWSA, coordinated the Hot Meals for Unsheltered Relatives Initiative, a project which distributed over 300 hot meals from Feast Cafe Bistro to unsheltered people residing near Thunderbird House on Dec. 21.

Henderson led a similar initiative in 2020, when he put out a call for donations during a cold spell that corresponded with the second wave of COVID-19.

“One day, some students got together two carloads of donations in two hours and enough money to purchase 70 hot dogs from Costco, and we gave them to the shack collecting donations by Thunderbird House,” Henderson says. “This year, I wanted to do something a little more formal with a little more time, not just a spur-of-the-moment thing like last year.”

The initiative received contributions from the UWSA, University of Winnipeg, Canadian Federation of Students – Manitoba

and University of Winnipeg Sustainability Office. Henderson says there are plans for additional initiatives in 2022.

“We’ve seen a lot of talk about unsheltered relatives in the past year, and the bus shacks as shelters. Especially with COVID, we just wanted to do something to give back,” he says. “I know it’s not solving all of the problems, but this has a ripple effect as well when we give back. A simple idea can go a long way and inspire others to do their simple ideas.”

Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre also held a community support initiative in December: their annual toy drive and holiday dinner. Angeline Nelson, their director of community learning and engagement, says the event has been going on for longer than the six years that she’s been at the centre.

“The toy drive is a big part of this event. We want to make sure we’re supporting families during the challenging times of the holidays,” Nelson says. “With COVID, it’s even more important to host an event like this, because there’s been some limited support available.”

The event serves over 200 participants, some who are registered with Wii Chiiwaakanak and others from other programs who may benefit from the event. Under pandemic conditions, it includes a meal delivery, gifts for children in the household and activities for families to do together, such as board



Jonathan Henderson (left), vice-president external affairs of the UWSA, coordinated the Hot Meals for Unsheltered Relatives initiative.

games or cookie-making kits.

Whether virtual or in-person, the holiday dinner and toy drive is always a collaborative effort. This year, Wii Chiiwaakanak partnered with Diversity Food Services, which provided the dinners, and Urban Systems, which Nelson notes did an especially good job of ensuring that there were gifts and entertainment suited for older children.

The University of Winnipeg staff and faculty contributed the most donations to the dinner and toy drive this year, and Nelson says Wii Chiiwaakanak is “really grateful for their continued support.” Les Marmiton and the Office of Indigenous Engagement at the university also made significant contributions.

REGINA’S U-TURN ON PUBLIC DELEGATIONS

Analyzing the value of public presentations at council meetings

DEVON HANEL | VOLUNTEER | [@DEVONHANEL](#)

On Nov. 24, the City of Regina announced it would ban oral presentations by public delegations at city council meetings. However, during a Dec. 8 council meeting, the City reversed course, deciding to maintain the status quo.

The overturned proposal aimed to make council meetings more efficient by limiting public delegations to executive committee meetings.

Aaron Moore, associate professor in the University of Winnipeg’s Department of Political Science, understands why some municipalities may wish to phase out presentations by public delegates, as he believes they are “an old way of doing things” that can “only have limited impact.”

Moore explains that by the time the public delegations are heard, “city council is usually not in a position to make significant changes,” as “most of the issues have been addressed.”

“My view (is that), increasingly, there’s a lot more discussion and opportunity for public input well before you get to this period where delegations are made, as delegations usually occur at the very end of the discussion,” Moore says.

In addition to public delegations, municipalities provide other venues for public input. These include open houses, community councils, roundtables and various ad hoc meetings. Moore notes that, unlike public delegations, these processes are largely informal.

Much of what comes before city council is simply there to be “rubber-stamped,” Moore says. However, he adds that “there are cases where council is not prepared to actually make a final decision yet, where there’s still a lot more discussion, and delegations can matter in that context.”

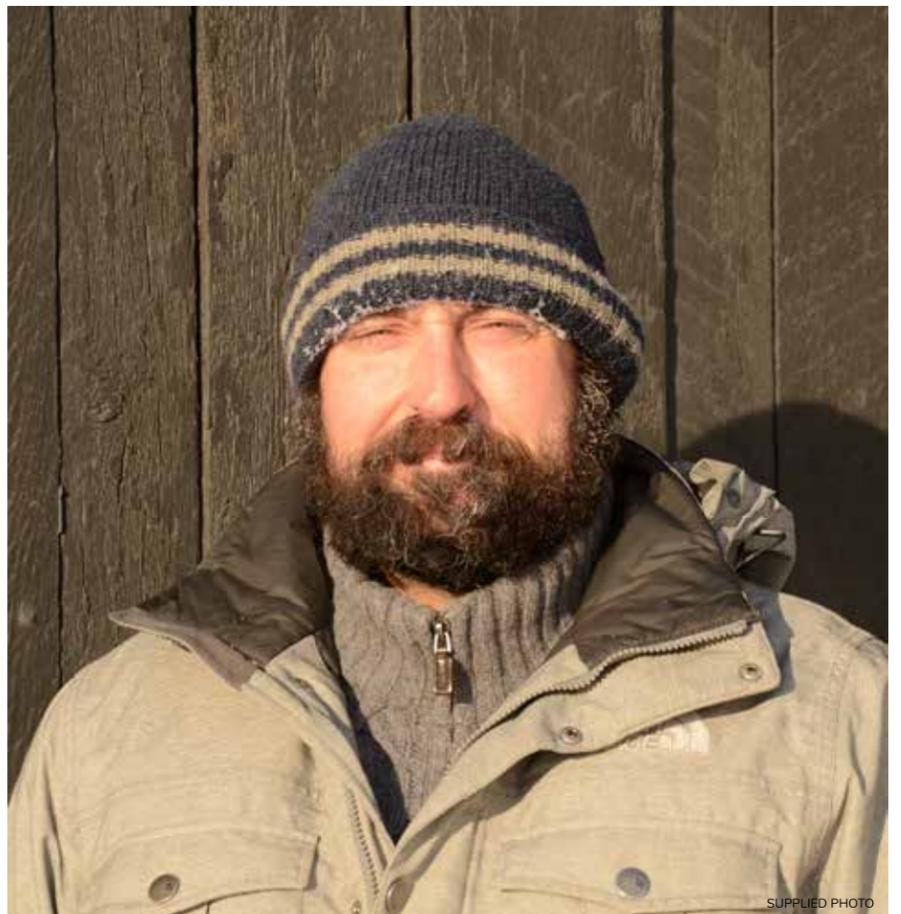
Molly McCracken, director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) – Manitoba, appeared as a delegate to the Winnipeg city council on Nov. 25, speaking against a proposed private-public partnership for upgrades to the North End Sewage Treatment Plant.

McCracken emphasizes the value of public delegations for the CCPA, noting that the process allows them to “speak at particular moments that are important,” particularly around budget time and with regard to the city’s poverty-reduction strategy.

Although the CCPA also meets with councillors one-on-one, McCracken believes in the importance of speaking directly to “the decision-making body to hear their feedback, rebuttals, (and) thoughts to us.”

As an example of the value of presenting before council, McCracken points to the alternative municipal budget under development by the CCPA. McCracken says the CCPA will present their view of the City’s budget and offer alternative proposals regarding policy areas like climate action.

In turn, councillors will offer their



Aaron Moore, associate professor of political science at the University of Winnipeg

perspective on the budget, explaining the action they believe they are taking. The feedback received from councillors to the CCPA’s proposals “will inform our work ... for the next year or for the upcoming municipal election in the fall of 2022,” McCracken says.

In addition to their utility to the CCPA, McCracken notes that presentations by public delegations allow statements to be

put on the public record and points out that these statements are often covered by the media, meaning “more than just council hears the message of the delegations.”

In Winnipeg, members of the public can appear as a delegation before city council or a committee of council, such as the Executive Policy Committee.



FUNDAMENTAL TO MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Jason Brown, instructor, Department of Classics, U of W

CHARLIE MORIN | FEATURES EDITOR | @MILLENNIAL.DIGS

Although his speciality is medieval history, Jason Brown, instructor in the Department of Classics at the University of Winnipeg (U of W), has studied Latin extensively.

“Latin is really fundamental to medieval studies,” Brown says.

Brown first obtained his BA in history at the University of Manitoba, then his MA and PhD in Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto.

Brown started in the Department of Classics at the U of W by teaching a Latin course. He has taught a few Classics courses, as well as a number of history classes at both the U of W and the U of M.

Currently, Brown is teaching a course called The Medieval World and another called Introduction to the History of Western Civilization.

“I really like teaching, and so I generally enjoy all of my courses,” Brown says.

Brown says the second-year course on medieval history is his favourite to teach, but admits it might be a tie for first place with Intermediate Latin Texts, a sec-

ond-year Latin course.

“Essentially, all we did was just read classical Latin literature, and it’s just great,” Brown says.

What is the best thing about your work?

“Engaging with students about history is really fun and rewarding ... just the way that the students engage with the history and kind of bring their own thoughts to it and the things they find important and react to and comment on.”

What’s something you have learned from your students?

“Always leave time for follow-up questions.”

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

“The power to locate any missing object.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Student Services

Study Skills Workshops

Study Skills Workshops are designed to improve your learning skills and help you achieve your academic goals. Topics include note-taking, reading strategies, time management and more!

Organized by Academic & Career Services, the series of six workshops runs Jan. 17-Feb. 2 on Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 to 1:20 pm, via Zoom.

Registration in advance is required. For details and to sign up, see: www.uwinnipeg.ca/academic-advising/study-skills-workshops.html

Winter Term Add/Drop Period

The Winter Term (U2021W) Add/Drop Period continues until **Jan. 19**. The last day to drop a U2021W course and not be charged the fees is Jan. 19. Students who drop a U2021W course Jan. 20 and onwards are still responsible for paying all of the course fees.

Tuition Fees for Winter Term

Pay the easy – pay online through your financial institution.

1. Use the bill payment feature on your

financial institution’s website.

2. Log on to your bank’s website Add The University of Winnipeg – Tuition as a bill payee
3. Use your seven-digit student number as the account number

(International payments can be made via flywire.com.)

U2021W fees are due **Jan. 24**.

Webinar Wednesdays

Student Services staff share some valuable strategies and tips to help you succeed at UWinnipeg. Upcoming dates/topics include:

Jan. 26 – Finding Freedom from your Inner Critic

Feb. 9 - Budgeting and Financial Literacy

Feb. 16 - Building Resiliency

All sessions are from 12:30 to 1:00 pm via Zoom. For more information and to register online, please go to: www.uwinnipeg.ca/student-services/webinar-wednesdays.html

UWinnipeg Award Applications Now Open

For current students:

- Winter 2022 Bursaries - Online application deadline Feb. 1. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html>
- UWSA Student Conference/Travel Fund Award - Online application deadline March 15. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/apply-for-awards/index.html>

For new students:

- 2022-23 Entrance Awards - Online application deadline March 1. <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/awards-bursaries-and-scholarships/international-students.html>

2022-23 President’s Scholarship for World Leaders – web application form now open; deadlines vary by term start and program of entry (PACE, ELP, Collegiate, Undergraduate, Graduate Studies). <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/awards/awards-bursaries-and-scholarships/international-students.html>

Student ID Cards

New students for Winter Term and others who need an ID card: The next deadline for ordering your card is coming up on Feb. 2 (for pick up Feb. 4).

For instructions, please go to: www.uwinnipeg.ca/accepted-students/getting-ready/student-id-cards.html

Student Services Goes Remote

Departments in Student Services are now offering their services remotely. No appointments for in-person meetings are available. Please see this webpage for details about each department: www.uwinnipeg.ca/student-services

Use the myVisit App

Need some help from staff in Student Central and/or Academic & Career Services? Download the myVisit app today. The myVisit app enables students to add themselves to a virtual line for drop-in Zoom sessions at Student Central. The app can also be used to book appointments for a Zoom meeting with an academic or career advisor. Appointments with advisors can also be booked through the website: www.myvisit.com.



COLUMN

SEEING THE SPECTRUM

Hyperempathy is exhausting and beautiful

HANNAH PENNER | COLUMNIST | [TWITTER](#) SUBLIMESLUG

A few years ago, I was with my family watching the movie *Cast Away* for the first time. The main character's happy ending was crashing down around him, and I was inconsolable.

All I could feel was an overwhelming, suffocating sadness. I remember running to the bathroom, letting out a loud scream and hearing my parents and sisters expressing confusion and frustration at my outburst. Feelings of embarrassment and my own confusion began to permeate the sadness. "I don't know why this is happening," I thought. "What's wrong with me?"

Discovering I'm Autistic has recontextualized that experience. There's nothing wrong with me. My reaction was simply an expression of hyperempathy.

There's a common misconception that Autistic people lack empathy. We're often depicted as essentially selfish beings unable to understand that other people have feelings. The truth is that being Autistic does not make someone any less likely to be a kind and compassionate person, but because our expressions of empathy may not fit neurotypical expectations, we are assumed to be incapable of empathy at all.

This is especially frustrating because many Autistic people, including myself, experience the opposite: intense sensitivity to the emotions of others, which can include real people, fictional characters,

animals and even inanimate objects.

For me, hyperempathy can be exhausting. It's big and loud and drowns out everything else. I find myself wishing I could turn down the volume.

Instead, I've covered my ears and closed my eyes and sought sanctuary in so many bathrooms, away from it all. I watch the people around me carefully for any sign something is wrong and see signs where there are none. I want everyone to have a good time. I want everyone to feel comfortable. I want these things so badly I struggle to achieve them for myself.

At the same time, hyperempathy can be beautiful. I love how easily and deeply I can connect with fictional characters and stories. I love that it is one of the things that ignites my passion for justice and community care. It connects me to the world, to people who live across oceans and right next door, to people who lived long before me and who will live long after.

This is the central contradiction of so much of my Autistic experience: it is beautiful and exhausting, heartbreaking and life-giving all at once.

Hannah Penner is a criminal-justice student at the University of Winnipeg interested in prison abolition. She is a queer Autistic cat-lover who spends too much time on Twitter.



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK



COMMENTS

NEW YEAR, SAME SH*T

2021 wasn't all bad, but no one wants a repeat

KIM UDUMAN | VOLUNTEER | [INSTAGRAM](#) SHINGEKI_NO_KIM

When 2021 finally came, I was excited for the pandemic to be over.

After going through the toughest lockdowns, having both doses of the vaccine rolled out, seeing businesses start to open up and finally being able and to see people again made it feel like we were near the end!

I was excited to nicely tuck away the "pandemic part" of my life away and go back to "normal."

But, unfortunately, with people choosing to not get the vaccine and new variants continuing to pop up, COVID-19 doesn't look like it's going anywhere. The pandemic has become our new normal.

As bad as the pandemic is, I wouldn't check off everything that has happened during the past year as completely terrible.

During the course of the pandemic, I've become less afraid to voice my concerns about my and my coworkers' safety, rights and treatment at the workplace.

Pre-pandemic, I was afraid to speak up when I felt uncomfortable doing a task while at work, but now I can and will stand up for myself. Now, when a customer doesn't treat me with respect, I use my right to refuse to serve them, because I know how I deserve to be treated.

Another positive that came out of this new normal is that I want to take better

care of myself.

During the pandemic, I've started therapy, started eating better and started to take my physical health more seriously than ever before.

I used to never consider getting the flu shot, because I used to say to myself "I don't have time" or "I never get sick, so what's the point?" But now, I take the time to make the appointment with my doctor to ensure that my chances of getting sick are significantly reduced.

This year alone, I've felt closer to my physical and mental health goals than I ever have before.

And for my last positive note, I think many people have experienced a newfound appreciation for spending time with our loved ones.

The months I spent unable to see my friends and family have taught me to appreciate the time that I do get to spend with them. And instead of going out for the sake of going out, I go out with the intention to listen to them, join in conversations and make new memories, because I don't know when I'll see them again next.

Now that it's 2022, I've made my new year's resolution to take it slow. Everything is constantly changing in the fight against COVID-19, so it's easy to get caught up



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE FUNK

in the stress and worry. By making it my goal to take it slow, I hope to at least lessen some of the stress caused by the ongoing pandemic and instead focus on the good that is happening around me.

Kim Uduman is finishing up her bachelor's degree in rhetoric, writing and communications at the University of Winnipeg. In her downtime, she loves caring for her plants, cuddling her orange tabby cat and attempting latte art.



HOROSCOPES

There is a moon in Gemini tonight.

Mercury retrograde begins on Friday, January 14, at 6:41 AM: Mercury retrogrades about three or four times a year, so it's not something to fear. When the planet of communication appears to turn backward in the sky, it can mark a time of frustrating delays, or simply reflection. When trains aren't running on time, we have the opportunity to take a small break.

SOURCE: ASTROLOGY.COM

♈ ARIES

The Gemini moon will put you in a talkative mood today, dear Ram, as Luna shines her light in the sector of your chart that rules communication. A helpful connection to the healing asteroid, Chiron, this afternoon can act as cosmic therapy for you, though you'll need to open up to a trusted friend about your feelings. Later in the evening, Mercury enters its retrograde motion, which is set to hit your social life the hardest. Watch out for miscommunications over the next several weeks, and be sure to double-check the time and place of any future hangout sessions, or you could end up missing a meetup or two.

♉ TAURUS

Don't be afraid to open up on a deep and psychological level this afternoon as the Gemini moon and Chiron form a supportive aspect, helping you unpack your psyche. Try your hardest to sort out your feelings before evening hits because Mercury enters its retrograde motion, where it will remain until Feb. 3. This planetary backspin is set to affect you on a professional level the most, so make sure you're being extra cautious when it comes to making errors at work. Spend some time this evening mapping out your schedule for the next week to avoid any career-related snafus.

♊ GEMINI

The moon is in your sign today, sweet Gemini, bringing extra support from the Universe your way. Try to get in a meditation or journaling session this morning to seek clarity toward your goals. Unfortunately, things could get choppy this afternoon when your ruling planet, Mercury, enters its retrograde motion. Your intuition could get a little haywire between now and Feb. 3, so you'll want to go the extra mile when it comes to embracing your preferred spiritual practice. Your belief system could shift a bit during this retrograde as well, so you'll want to be open to seeing things from a new perspective.

♋ CANCER

While you're not always the most open to change, today, you'll feel inspired to evolve and shift on a personal level, darling Crab. As the Gemini moon aspects both Mercury and Saturn, you'll be more open to seeing things from a fresh perspective. Allow yourself to let go of old behaviors or ways of thinking that are no longer serving you, even if it feels unnatural at first. Remember that sustainable change happens slowly over time, especially regarding personal habits or ingrained points of view. Be gentle and loving with yourself as you step into these uncharted territories, and remember to cheer yourself on!

♌ LEO

You'll be quite the busy bee this morning, sweet Lion, as the Gemini moon expands upon your already impressive popularity level and social life. Though your social media, text, and email accounts are sure to be brimming with new messages, try not to deviate too much from your responsibilities. Prioritize your work throughout the day, and don't feel pressured to answer everyone all at once. If you begin to feel overwhelmed by your phone, put it in a drawer or switch it to "do not disturb" for a few hours, especially if you notice your productivity levels taking a hit.

♍ VIRGO

It might be time for you to reorganize your workspace, dear Virgo, especially if you've been logging extra hours lately. Additionally, you'll want to make sure all of your affairs are in order and that there are no overdue tasks to complete since today's energy is perfect for playing catch-up around the office. Getting organized now will help you immensely in the coming weeks since Mercury heads retrograde later in the day. These vibes could throw you off your game between now and Feb. 3, so it'll be important that you give yourself extra time to get ready each morning and prioritize your health.

♎ LIBRA

Sometimes to hear the Universe, it's necessary to begin the conversation, dear Libra. As the moon travels through Gemini today, it'll be important that you're asking for any guidance you need and expressing yourself to the forces that lie beyond the veil. Keep your eyes peeled for angel numbers and synchronicities to help you unpack any messages that manifest from the other side. Spiritual discussions with your friends can also help you gain insight into your connection to the world around you, so don't hold back when it comes to sharing your philosophical point of view.

♏ SCORPIO

Getting conversationally intimate with your significant other can either make or break your relationship today, little Scorpion, as the Universe pushes you to discover whether you and your mate are truly compatible. Opening up should come easily right now. Though, if you end up feeling unsupported or judged, it might be time to look for love elsewhere. Just try to avoid super tense or triggering conversations since an argument could manifest quite quickly. Any miscommunications that form right now might be difficult to come back from later since Mercury enters its retrograde motion later on in the day.

♐ SAGITTARIUS

You're naturally charismatic and gifted at flirting, dear Archer, but today your sparkle will be a force to be reckoned with as the Gemini moon illuminates your seventh house. Your powers of persuasion will be strong right now as you charm your way through each conversation. Just try not to lead anyone on if you're not truly interested, or you could have a hard time pushing them away in the future. Set aside some time for self-care this evening. Since Mercury goes retrograde today, it'll be important that you're nurturing and pampering yourself before the upheaval of this cosmic climate reaches its peak.

♑ CAPRICORN

Look for ways to reinvest in your health today, dear Capricorn, as the Gemini moon travels through the sector of your chart that rules physical wellbeing. If you've been thinking of taking up a new form of exercise like pilates or yoga, now would be the time to lay down your deposit and sign up for classes. Additionally, any items that can help you stay organized or temper your stress levels would be worth the investment, especially since Mercury heads retrograde today. It'll be important to remain grounded and calm during this rocky period, or you could end up paying for it with physical tension.

♒ AQUARIUS

Look for ways to get out of the house and have fun today, sweet Aquarius, as the Gemini moon activates your fifth house. Make it a point to invite out your nearest and dearest for a good time, especially since things could get pretty tense at home, thanks to a harsh aspect between Mercury and Uranus. Getting in some laughs will be particularly important since Mercury does go retrograde in your sign today. These vibes could have you feeling like a hot mess between now and Feb. 3, so don't feel guilty about going the extra mile to blow off some steam in advance.

♓ PISCES

Look for ways to get out of the house and have fun today, sweet Aquarius, as the Gemini moon activates your fifth house. Make it a point to invite out your nearest and dearest for a good time, especially since things could get pretty tense at home, thanks to a harsh aspect between Mercury and Uranus. Getting in some laughs will be particularly important since Mercury does go retrograde in your sign today. These vibes could have you feeling like a hot mess between now and Feb. 3, so don't feel guilty about going the extra mile to blow off some steam in advance.

It's Capricorn season!



Capricorn, the tenth sign and mountain goat of the zodiac, is all about hard work. Those born under this sign are more than happy to put in a full day at the office, realizing that it will likely take a lot of those days to get to the top. That's no problem, since Capricorns are both ambitious and determined: they will get there. Life is one big project for these folks, and they adapt to this by adopting a businesslike approach to most everything they do.

Capricorns are practical as well, taking things one step at a time and being as realistic and pragmatic as possible. Those with a Capricorn zodiac sign are extremely dedicated to their goals, almost to the point of stubbornness. Those victories sure smell sweet, though, and that thought alone will keep Capricorns going.

Dates— December 21 – January 20	Ruling Planet— Saturn	Tarot Card— The Devil
Symbol— The Sea-Goat	House— Tenth	Colors— Brown & Khaki
Mode + Element— Cardinal Earth	Mantra— "I Use."	Body Part— The Knees

Those born with the Sea-Goat as their rising, sun, or moon sign have a discipline, masterful, and determined energy in the core of their personality; an echo of the resilience and resourcefulness needed to survive the cold season of their birth.

As a cardinal sign, Capricorn holds the qualities of being an achiever, a builder, and a climber, able to set and conquer the loftiest goals one step at a time. Those born with the sign of the Sea-Goat prominent in their charts are great at being determined, consistent, and reliable. They often over-deliver on their promises and take their honor and public reputation very seriously.



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