

THE McGill Daily

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South Africa Sets a Precedent for the Palestinian Cause

As we enter 2024, Israel's indiscriminate bombing of Gaza persists and global calls demanding justice for Palestinians remain as loud as ever.

Since the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, Israel has launched an ongoing intensive military assault on Gaza, the West Bank, and surrounding nations such as Lebanon and Syria. Most world leaders have "expressed concerns" about the ongoing Israeli bombardment of Gaza, which has killed over 22,000 Palestinians at the time of writing, and called for an immediate ceasefire. However, South Africa has become the first country to take legal action against Israel. On December 29, South Africa filed a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). According to the ICJ, South Africa has accused Israel of violating its obligations to the Genocide Convention and attests that Israel's actions are genocidal with intent to ethnically cleanse Palestinians in Gaza. As of recently, Palestinians are fleeing to the southernmost parts of Gaza to escape Israel's incursions into the central Gaza strip.

The 1948 Genocide Convention was drafted in response to the Holocaust and criminalized the entire or partial destruction of a people. Article II defines genocide as actions committed with the "intent to destroy, either in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group." South Africa contends that Israel has violated the obligations made at the Convention, ratified by 153 states, and submitted an application to the ICJ to open a case against Israel. South Africa has requested for the court to commit to implementing provisional or short-term efforts to bring Israel's military campaign in Gaza to a halt and to protect the human rights of Palestinians. Since then, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry has endorsed South Africa's suit and echoed that the ICJ must "call on Israel, the occupying power, to halt its onslaught." Malaysia has also recently expressed its support for South Africa's case. South Africa's suit at the ICJ requires the UN to make a ruling concerning Israel's accountability in the plight of the Palestinian people. Given that both South Africa and Israel are members of the UN and honour-bound by the court, this is a significant development for the futures of Palestinians in Gaza. South African government lawyers will plead their case on January 11 and 12.

Israel, however, has responded to South Africa's suit with outrage. According to Eylon Levy, an Israeli government spokesman, Israel plans to fight the case "to dispel South Africa's absurd blood libel." Instead, Israel blames Hamas for using Palestinians as "human shields" and contends that Israel is doing all it can to limit harm to innocent civilians. However, over 22,000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are civilians and more than 40 percent of whom are children, have been killed in Israeli airstrikes. Israel's claim that it is preventing civilian

harm sharply conflicts with its claim that the war will not cease until Hamas is destroyed.

South Africa's decision to file a case of genocide against Israel is not exactly a surprise. South African leaders like Nelson Mandela and Cyril Ramaphosa have drawn parallels between the Palestinian struggle and the struggles faced by South Africa's Black population in the apartheid era. The nation has a decades-long history of supporting the Palestinian struggle for statehood in the face of Israeli occupation. Nelson Mandela had a warm relationship with Yasser Arafat, Palestinian political leader and former chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In conversations with the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Mandela stressed that in order to ensure peace in the Middle East, Israel must withdraw from Arab territories. In recent years, South Africa has continued to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. In November 2023, lawmakers voted to close down the Israeli embassy in Pretoria and recall all South African diplomats from Tel Aviv.

However, while South Africa continues to protest Israel's indiscriminate bombing in Palestine, countries like the US continue to support Israel's war effort. In December 2023, the Biden administration bypassed Congress for a second time that month to sell "emergency" weapons to Israel. It is deeply concerning to witness the US government's dismissal of civilian suffering in Palestine and its military support fuelling the indiscriminate killing of Palestinians.

As students, we must remain resilient in our activism to call out McGill, our own university, to end its investments in Israeli war crimes. We can recall the historic activism conducted by students in the 1980s, which led to McGill becoming the first Canadian university to divest from South African apartheid. Student activism has proven effective in enacting significant change, and despite our university's efforts to stifle student support for Palestine, we must continue to hold McGill accountable for its complicity in genocide.

South Africa's decision to initiate a legal battle against Israel's genocide in Gaza is an important and unprecedented development. We call upon all countries to fight for an end to civilian suffering in Palestine. We also encourage students to continue pressuring their governments and institutions to take action to stop the genocide through protesting, boycotting, writing to elected representatives, signing petitions, and generally staying informed on developments. For local updates, follow Montreal for Palestine, the Palestinian Struggle Mission, Independent Jewish Voices, and the Palestine Youth Movement on social media. Finally, the *Daily's* editorial board calls for an immediate ceasefire as a first step toward the liberation of Palestine.

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McGill Seeks to Appeal Court Judgement on Royal Victoria Hospital Site

Judge found McGill in breach of agreement with Mohawk Mothers

Emma Bainbridge
Coordinating News Editor

content warning: discussions of genocide, unmarked graves, dead bodies

On December 22, McGill Provost Christopher Manfredi announced that the university filed for leave to appeal a recent Superior court decision regarding archeological work on the grounds of the former Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH). The November 20 decision found that McGill and the *Société Québécoise des Infrastructures* (SQI) had breached the Settlement Agreement signed in April 2023 with the *kanien'kehá:ka kahnistensera* (Mohawk Mothers). The judge also called for the independent panel of archeologists dismissed in July 2023 to be reinstated.

In the announcement, Manfredi explained that the decision to appeal is “based on our view that the judgment made legal and palpable errors.” He also revealed that tuition fees would be used to fund the resulting legal fees, alongside other sources of revenue. McGill will present their case to the Court of Appeal on January 16.

“Participating responsibly in the resulting legal proceedings, including seeking leave to appeal, is in the best interests of the university, including McGill students,” Manfredi wrote.

At the centre of this dispute is the New Vic Project (NVP), described by Manfredi as “the most significant infrastructure project our university has undertaken since its inception.” The project aims to transform the RVH site into new teaching facilities for the university. Given that this project would require significant excavation, the Mohawk Mothers launched a case against the university and the SQI demanding a proper investigation of potential unmarked graves on the site. In particular, they were concerned about possible graves from the illegal MK-Ultra experiments conducted at the hospital in the 1950s and 60s.

According to Philippe Blouin, a McGill Anthropology PhD student working with the Mothers on this case, they are “appalled” by McGill’s announcement. They had hoped that the new Superior Court ruling would lead to what they would consider a thorough and



Emma Bainbridge | News Editor

culturally-appropriate investigation.

“For the Mohawk Mothers, the basic point of this Settlement Agreement was to confide decision making to this panel of impartial archeologists,” he explained.

The panel of archeologists was first created in April 2023 when McGill, the SQI, and the Mohawk Mothers signed the Settlement Agreement resulting from the Mothers’ successful appeal to halt construction on the site in October 2022. Upon creation, the panel was composed of three archeologists (Adrian Burke, Lisa Hodgetts, and Justine Bourguignon-Tetreault) chosen by the three parties involved. The panel’s mandate encompassed studying the history, topography, and built environment of the RVH site in order to identify appropriate techniques, with the aim of determining the presence of unmarked graves. Although the panel submitted a report with their recommendations on July 17, paragraph 17 of the Settlement Agreement stipulates that the parties must seek the advice of the panel if there is an “unexpected discovery.”

Blouin pointed out that what constitutes an unexpected discovery “is not defined within the Settlement Agreement.” For example, he believes that following the panel’s dismissal, the investigation made an unexpected discovery when a Historic Human Remains

Detection Dogs (HHRDD) team reported a second alert on the site on November 5. However, he said that at the time, the SQI claimed that paragraph 17 could only be triggered if a body or unnatural burial was found. Manfredi wrote that an investigation of the area of the second alert would take place in Spring 2024.

Furthermore, Manfredi argued that per the Settlement Agreement, the archeological investigation does not need to be Indigenous-led. The Settlement Agreement does not explicitly call for the investigation to be Indigenous-led, but states that “the parties wish to agree in the spirit of reconciliation on the parameters of an appropriate archeological plan.”

The initial injunction ruling on October 22, however, did emphasize Indigenous leadership in this investigation. In paragraph 13, the judge cited the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 76 which states that “The Aboriginal community most affected shall lead the development of such strategies.” Although this call to action refers to cemeteries of residential schools, the Mothers and Special Interlocutor Kimberly Murray demonstrated the parallels between these two cases. In paragraph 16, it is confirmed that at the time of the October

2022 ruling, McGill didn’t challenge the Mothers’ assertion that “any work to locate missing Indigenous children must be led by Indigenous communities.”

Given that the original injunction called for the investigation to be Indigenous-led, Blouin said that “it was already a big compromise from the part of the Mohawk Mothers, in signing the agreement to say it should be the archeologists, the experts, making decisions.”

Throughout this case, the Mohawk Mothers have made it clear that they don’t trust McGill and the SQI to carry out a proper investigation of the site. They have continuously raised concerns about possible mishandling of evidence, that McGill hasn’t shared raw data and archival records with them in a timely manner, and have even experienced harassment from a security guard while on the site. McGill’s Media Relations Office previously told the *Daily* that “information is shared between the parties as stipulated in the Settlement Agreement.” Likewise, Manfredi claims that McGill has “consistently and diligently” met the requirements of the Settlement Agreement.

McGill and the SQI have previously admitted in court that delaying the NVP has significant financial consequences, as every

month of delay allegedly adds \$2 million to the total cost of the project. Additionally, President Deep Saini has warned that proposed tuition increases by the Quebec government could compromise their ability to fund infrastructure projects.

The parties will meet in the Court of Appeal on January 16 to determine if McGill will be able to proceed with their appeal.

Due to employee absences, neither McGill nor the SQI were able to respond to media requests before the date of publication.

“For the Mohawk Mothers, the basic point of this Settlement Agreement was to confide decision making to this panel of impartial archeologists.”

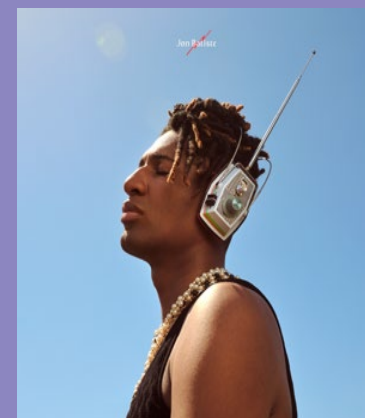
– Philippe Blouin

The Daily's Best of 2023

ALBUM – *World Music Radio* by Jon Batiste

As a five-time Grammy Award winner, Jon Batiste is no stranger to critical acclaim. His signature eclectic, jazz-inspired sound has garnered him a small but passionate fan base among experimental music lovers across the globe. Given all his success, I was a bit disappointed that Batiste's latest album, *World Music Radio*, seemed to fall under the radar last year. With a whopping 21 songs spanning a mish-mash of genres, instrumentation, and languages, *World Music Radio* will take you on quite the musical journey. Batiste has organized *World Music Radio* as a concept album following fictional space entity Billy Bob Bo, à la David Bowie's *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and Spiders from Mars*. Get ready to blast off into waves of percussive hip hop, booming reggaeton, and jazzy piano ballads. You'll never know which direction your ears will be pulled in next on this eccentric masterpiece of an album. I highly recommend "Calling Your Name" if you want to get lost in funky basslines, synthesizers, and Stevie Wonder-esque harmonica riffs.

— Eliana Freelund, Culture Editor



FILM – *Monster* by Hirokazu Kore-eda

The latest Cannes-winning feature from decorated director Hirokazu Kore-eda, *Monster* is a criminally underrated masterpiece of human drama. Conceived as a Rashomon-style triptych, the film's structure allows a fascinating look into three perspectives: Saori Mugino (Sakura Ando), single mother of our protagonist Minato (Soya Kurokawa); Hori-sensei (Eita Nagayama), an elementary school teacher who's been accused of mistreating his students; and finally Minato himself. I watched *Monster* having little to no knowledge of its plot, and I heartily recommend you to approach it the same way. Expect to find a deeply nuanced and humanistic examination of miscommunication, grief, and gender expectations. At the film's heart is the intimate bond between Minato and his closest friend Yori, whose friendship renders *Monster*'s final act both beautiful and haunting. Boasting masterfully-crafted tension and deeply moving performances, *Monster* is easily the most impressive film to have come out in 2023 – no less because of its understated soundtrack, composed by the late Ryuichi Sakamoto.

— Olivia Shan, Coordinating Editor

SHORT STORIES – *The New Yorker's* Summer Flash Fiction

Short stories are beautiful in their brevity. They are vignettes painted from words, snapshots that capture the wonderful and terrifying absurdities of our world. Nothing gets shorter or more reflective than *The New Yorker's* summer flash fiction series. From an older brother's romantic advice in Stuart Dybek's "Blue Island," to house-scouting next to a railroad in Haruki Murakami's "My Cheesecake-Shaped Poverty," *The New Yorker* has something to offer everyone searching for a quick but thoughtful read. Whether read on a sunny beach or during a chilly winter night, these stories teach us about the importance of these fleeting moments in the myriad dimensions of life.

— Andrei Li, Sci+Tech Editor

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NOVEL – *The Neighbor Favor* by Kristina Forest

This bookish Black romance novel was one of my favourite reads in 2023. It features the love story of shy, New York-based book editor Lily and fantasy author Nick. After being intrigued by Nick's debut Lily reaches out to him through his author website under his pen name N.R. Strickland. From there, they start talking and their series of conversations slowly blossoms into a romance – until he ghosts her. So when Nick moves to New York and finds out that Lily is his neighbour, he can't bring himself to tell her his true identity. What drew me to this book was how both characters deal with relatable experiences. Lily struggles to find her voice in the world of publishing and just can't seem to get her love life right, while Nick struggles with his tendency to push people away due to childhood trauma. The two protagonists' shared love for literature only makes the romance between them even more heart-fluttering.

— Claudia Efemini, Culture Editor

PODCAST – *Prophecy Girls* by Kara Babcock and Stephanie Chow

Prophecy Girls is a podcast hosted by Kara Babcock and Stephanie Chow that revisits the classic '90s show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* from a modern lens. As they go through every episode, they artfully combine witty commentary with nuanced discussions of harmful tropes present both on and off screen. As a spoiler-free podcast, it's suited both for those new to watching *Buffy* and longtime fans looking for a critical analysis of the show.

— Emma Bainbridge, News Editor



What You Missed In *Saltburn*

A second look at *Saltburn*'s characters and imagery



Evelyn Logan
Staff Writer

content warning: spoiler alert

Emerald Fennell's 2023 film *Saltburn* was branded to us as the darker sequel to 2017's coming-of-age romantic drama *Call Me By Your Name* with a backdrop of even more exorbitant wealth. Yet as I watched *Saltburn* for the first time, I'd never felt more deceived in my life. From all of the trailers it seemed like it was going to be a romance for sure, maybe even a modern tragedy, but what *Saltburn* turned out to be is a modern thriller with more twists than you can imagine. This movie is riddled with so many different references and proves itself to be an amalgamation of all things literature, pop culture, and the recent past. Even after seeing countless confused TikTok reviews and hearing about many other people's stunned reactions, absolutely nothing could have prepared me for this movie. Yet, beyond the shock value, *Saltburn* is filled to the brim with substance and social commentary pointing out our current societal reality.

One of the highlights of *Saltburn* is its complex characters. Oliver (Barry Keoghan), the main character, is initially presented as an earnest university student that is very bright but has few friends. Every single character in the movie plays a supporting role in Oliver's story, and through his lens they are exposed for who they truly are. However, this lens also blinds us as to who Oliver truly is. The only character to see Oliver's true

self is his first friend at university, Michael (Ewan Mitchell). Michael's presence in the film is extremely fleeting, but his final word to Oliver, "boot-licker," is the first accurate characterization of Oliver that the audience receives. Through their brief friendship, the two seemingly bond over their status as social pariahs, and although it is later revealed that Michael's negative opinion of Oliver was correct, because the

audience sees everything through Oliver's point of view, Michael initially comes across as bitter and petty.

The first member of the wealthy Catton family that Oliver encounters is Farleigh (Archie Madekwe). Even his name seems like he's overcompensating for the grand lifestyle that he longs to be a part of. Farleigh enters the film late, unprepared, and with stray glitter on his cheeks to the

Genevieve Quinn | Visuals Editor

tutorial that he shares with Oliver. This scene sets up everything you need to know about his character: he has a flippant attitude towards life, parties regularly, and faces no consequences at school because of his mother's social status. The professor blatantly favors Farleigh solely because of who he is connected to, and not due to his actual work (which he fails to do). To put it bluntly, Farleigh's status does all the work for him so he doesn't have to.

Oliver's next Catton family interaction is with Felix (Jacob Elordi). Felix is also shown to be someone who doesn't care about academics, largely due to his obscene wealth. In one scene, Felix both literally and metaphorically uses Oliver to get to where he needs to go. He takes Oliver's bicycle, and assumes that Oliver will go the extra mile to help him further, even after Oliver has already offered his only means of transportation. Although Felix doesn't seem to take advantage of Oliver overtly, he does establish a hierarchy between the two of them. This introductory scene begs the question: does Felix know the effect that he has on

From all of the trailers it seemed like it was going to be a romance for sure, maybe even a modern tragedy, but what *Saltburn* turned out to be is a modern thriller with more twists than you can imagine. This movie is riddled with so many different references and proves itself to be an amalgamation of all things literature, pop culture, and the recent past.

Saltburn doesn't rely on characterization to tell its complex story. The film is riddled with symbolism that begins to reveal the nature of Oliver's plot long before the movie itself gives him away.

people?

I think one of the most well-concealed parts of *Saltburn* is Felix and Farleigh's similarities. Throughout the film it is clear that they are set up to foil one another, as Farleigh wields his privilege as a weapon and Felix's belief that his wealth "didn't matter" ending up to be the greatest blunder of them all.

Felix desperately wanted to be a hero and save Oliver. For example, he never tells Oliver that he needs a suit for dinners at Saltburn, just so he can swoop in and help. Felix's dangling of the carrot of wealth in front of Oliver's face for the summer was just as selfish and

rude as Farleigh's treatment of Oliver. With all of his wealth and status, Felix could do something meaningful in the lives of the friends that he invites over to his sprawling mansion. Instead he gives them a taste, sends them on their way, and is able to feel better about his obscene wealth.

Even in his death, Felix is made out to be this beautiful, tragic martyr. Felix is masqueraded around the entire movie as a faultless victim, an angel in fact, while he does things like meddle with Oliver's life and condescendingly "help" him. In comparison, Farleigh does similarly meddling things, such

as snooping on Oliver and Venetia (Alison Oliver)'s rendezvous. But because he is depicted in the movie as a devious and petty guy he doesn't get the same benefit of the doubt that Felix does. What makes Farleigh's behavior so deplorable to the audience is that instead of embracing Oliver, as he understands what it's like not to fully belong with the family, he's the most rude to him. Unfortunately, his act does not get him anywhere with the family.

Saltburn doesn't only rely on characterization to tell its complex story. The film is riddled with symbolism that begins to reveal the nature of Oliver's plot long before the movie itself gives him away. In fact, the very first shot of the film suggests that Oliver is perpetrating something sinister at the Saltburn estate. The film opens on a shot of a family crest. The camera captures the crest on a cigarette holder then pans to Oliver's hand holding a cigarette. This is a glaring example of foreshadowing that I completely missed on my first watch.

Later in the film, it is revealed that in Felix's family, when someone dies they write their name on a stone and throw that stone into the water. As the boys get closer, Felix decides to do this for Oliver's dad.

Saltburn's story is one that is ridiculously complex; it can't even be fully understood with two watches.

However when thrown, the stone never hits the water. In fact, the camera reveals that it fell among a pile of trash and vomit. This is not only overt symbolism that Oliver is full of lies, but also that Oliver's dad is not actually dead.

In the very first scene inside the *Saltburn* estate, on the chandelier hangs a strip of fly paper riddled with dead bugs. This figuratively displays that behind such a rich and opulent facade, the family is

not so much better off than the rest of us. The fly paper serves to cheapen the scene, but also represents the presence of death. Once Felix dies, the shots in the movie are asymmetrical. It seems as though with his death, the family is placed into a disjointed state of overwhelming grief. While talking about his death is initially largely forbidden, all characters are extremely affected by it.

Saltburn's story is one that is ridiculously complex; it can't even be fully understood with even two watches. This film covers the intersection of the wealthy and privileged with the rest of the population. *Saltburn's* release seems to coincide with increasing discourse on the wealth gap as billionaires like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos seem to operate in a different stratosphere than the rest of us. In a sense, *Saltburn* is allowing all of us to exact our revenge on the people who are born into unfair advantages. Right before the final credits roll, as Oliver dances around the house, sans clothes and full of abandon, do we dance along with him for the successful toppling of the undeserving rich, or do we hum "Murder on the Dancefloor" to ourselves?

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Every Tuesday at 6pm in our office at
the SSMU building



Patterns and Plot Holes

A critique of *Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy*



Catey Fifield | Managing Editor

Catey Fifield
Managing Editor

The exhibition *Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy* has been on display at Montreal's McCord Stewart Museum since October 20, 2023, and will remain on display until March 10, 2024. It brings together more than 40 wampum belts from public and private collections in Quebec, wider Canada, and Europe. These belts were created from wampum: shell beads that were exchanged between Indigenous nations, and between Indigenous nations and Europeans, from the early seventeenth century until the early nineteenth century. The exhibition also features a substantial collection of medals, weapons, ornaments, and other "cultural belongings" as well as photographs and art installations.

Upon entering the exhibit, attendees will learn that *Wampum* was developed in collaboration with the Musée du quai Branly and that it was displayed in Paris and then New York before making its way to Montreal. The McCord website celebrates the "exceptional international collaboration" that went into this exhibit, but attentive visitors may find

greater cause for scrutiny than for celebration. For *Wampum* to be developed and first displayed in Paris, an ocean away from the lands on which these belts were created, raises certain ethical questions. How effective was the collaboration between the curators based in France and the Indigenous experts – on whose voices this exhibit clearly and correctly depends – based in Canada and the United States? Why should (non-Indigenous) Parisians and tourists have been the first to view this exhibit? By whom was this exhibit intended to be seen? Was it designed to satisfy or benefit a particular audience?

These questions followed me through the exhibit, but I found no answers in either the objects on display or the captions beneath them. Neither did I discover what would happen to the wampum and other "cultural belongings" after the exhibit closed. One can reasonably assume that the 13 wampum from the McCord collection will be returned to the archives from which they were pulled, but the museum's website also raises the possibility of repatriation: an unnamed author notes that the wampum belt presented by the Kanehsàtà:ke community to Pope Gregory XVI "has not

been repatriated since 1831." The museum does not make it clear as to whether the belt is being repatriated to Canada, to Quebec, or to the Kanehsàtà:ke. Further, the assumption that repatriation can consist in simply transferring the wampum from one private collection to another, or from one museum to another, neglects the Indigenous views of repatriation expressed in the *Wampum* exhibit itself. In a video projected at the exit of the exhibit, Jean-Philippe Thivierge of the Huron-Wendat Nation remarks: "Wampum have never belonged to a single individual. They're communal objects. So, who should take care of them if they're repatriated?" For the wampum to disappear into drawers after March 10, 2024, inaccessible to the (Indigenous) public until enough time has elapsed that they might once more be displayed for profit, would be a shameful fate.

McCord's vagueness on the fate of the wampum belts is perhaps less embarrassing than its vagueness on how, exactly, so many of them ended up in private European collections after their production largely ceased in the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, many of the belts on display were given freely to

Europeans in their negotiations with Indigenous nations or even created by Europeans to give to Indigenous nations. At least one exhibit label, however, notes that Indigenous peoples sold wampum to collectors: "To deal with their problems" – by which is meant the problems that settlers created for Indigenous peoples – "some people sold their objects, including wampum." This is not untrue, but it is not the whole truth. No discussion of the transfer of "cultural belongings" from Indigenous peoples to Europeans and settlers should fail to mention that many such belongings were banned, notably under the Canadian government's Potlatch Ban. Wampum might have been

immune from bans enforced for the purpose of encouraging (or coercing) the assimilation of Indigenous peoples, but they are not the only objects on display in this exhibit. It is possible that any number of the Indigenous-made objects in the collections of the McCord Stewart Museum, especially those whose origins are unknown, were confiscated by settler authorities. Failing to acknowledge the violent nature of the dispossession of Indigenous-made objects is nothing short of irresponsible.

Wampum is not without its merits, however. The curators have, I think, done an excellent job at tracing the history of wampum and at extending this history into the present. They

How effective was the collaboration between the curators based in France and the Indigenous experts – on whose voices this exhibit clearly and correctly depends – based in Canada and the United States?

“Wampum have never belonged to a single individual. They’re communal objects. So, who should take care of them if they’re repatriated?” For the wampum to disappear into drawers after March 10, 2024, inaccessible to the (Indigenous) public until enough time has elapsed that they might once more be displayed for profit, would be a shameful fate.

acknowledge changes in the production and use of wampum in the period between the early seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. Moving from one room of the exhibit to the next, for instance, the attendee learns that the initial political and diplomatic purpose of wampum gradually gave way to a religious purpose as many Indigenous peoples adopted (or were forced to adopt) Christianity. McCord’s detailed, as-chronological-as-possible presentation of the history of wampum aids in the attendee’s understanding of a tradition that was constantly evolving to address new challenges. All of this helps to prepare the attendee for the second-to-last room of the exhibit, which features a series of artworks by contemporary Indigenous artists that either use wampum beads or that replicate or resemble wampum belts. My favourite of these artworks was Teharihulen Michel Savard’s *Reciprocity*. This mixed media sculpture shows a copy of the 1876 Indian Act punctured by a bullet wound out of which spills blood and wampum beads. It is a chilling piece that speaks to the failure of Canadian diplomacy – and provides a bit of respite from *Wampum*’s whitewashed labels.

Another point of success, in my view, is the “Keys to interpreting wampum belts” guide. Readers will learn that a square symbol on a wampum belt represents “a nation and its territory or a palisaded village” and that an axe is a symbol of war, among other things. Immediately, this guide reminded me of one I saw at the exhibit *The Secret Codes: African Nova Scotian Quilts*, presented at the Dalhousie Art Gallery this past summer. The Secret Codes guide was intended to help attendees decode messages on quilts whose designs borrowed from the motifs of Underground Railroad “secret code” quilts. As the *Wampum* guide does for wampum, it both affirmed the utility of “secret code” quilts – which might otherwise have been appreciated only for their aesthetic value – and allowed for a more engaging, interactive experience.

In summary, McCord’s *Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy* exhibit suffers from a lack of context regarding the collaboration that went into the exhibit, the fate of the wampum and other objects on display, and the means by which the wampum and other objects were acquired. The exhibit itself might be beyond the point of alteration, but McCord would do well to address these ethical concerns on its website. At the same time, future attendees can look forward to a thoughtful presentation of the history of wampum belts and their continued relevance, complete with a helpful guide to these fascinating and multifaceted objects.



Catey Fifield | Managing Editor

Author’s note: I visited the Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy exhibit and wrote this review in November 2023. Since my visit, the McCord Stewart Museum has updated its Wampum webpage with a thorough Q&A section that

explains, among other things, how the wampum belts were acquired and where they will go after the exhibit closes. This Q&A section is helpful, but it certainly does not answer all of the questions I had while viewing this exhibit, and it should certainly not discourage

attendees from continuing to ask questions about wampum and other Indigenous-made objects on display at museums.



Catey Fifield | Managing Editor

A Step Forward in Tackling Rising “Period Poverty” in Canada

New government fund addresses this hidden toll of the cost of living crisis

Gemma Holland
Commentary Contributor

Rags, cardboard, mud, and toilet paper — these are just a few of the items many individuals are forced to use in place of safe and adequate menstrual products. As Canada grapples with the rising cost of living crisis, the critical problem of period poverty continues to be overlooked. Period poverty — referring to the lack of access to menstrual products, education, hygiene facilities, and waste management — disproportionately affects the most vulnerable in society. As of 2022, the World Bank estimates that over 500 million people worldwide experience period poverty. This issue is not confined to low-income countries; it is a growing problem in many high-income countries as well, including Canada.

In Canada, period poverty occurs at the intersection of rising living costs — exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian crises, and natural disasters — and the persisting taboos surrounding menstruation. Increasing inflation has also magnified levels of period poverty. According to Statistics Canada’s Consumer Price Index, the cost of personal items, including tampons and pads, increased by 6.2 per cent compared to last year. Additionally, the “pink tax,” a tax put on menstrual hygiene products, further exacerbates the cost of menstruation. A 2023 public opinion research survey conducted by Environics Research on behalf of Women and Gender Equality Canada reveals the current extent and prevalence of menstrual inequity existing in Canada. Reportedly, one in six Canadians who menstruate have been personally impacted by period

Reportedly, one in six Canadians who menstruate have personally experienced period poverty, and this number rises to one in four among households earning less than \$40,000 a year. Concerned about the current economic conditions in Canada, one in five Canadians who menstruate believe they may not be able to afford period products at some point in the next 12 months.

With Canada’s cost of living crisis, community organizations such as Food Banks Canada are seeing increased demands for menstrual products.

poverty, and this number rises to one in four among households earning less than \$40,000 a year. One in five Canadians who menstruate believe they may not be able to afford period products at some point in the next 12 months.

In response to this problem, the Canadian government has established Budget 2022, providing \$25 million for the establishment of a national pilot for the Menstrual Equity Fund (MEF). By allocating \$17.9 million of their funds to Food Banks Canada, the MEF aims to address the barriers related to affordability faced by Canadians. The plan is split into 3 phases, the first two comprising the ongoing research and surveying conducted by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) and the third phase being the funding project which will run until March 31, 2024. The pilot project aims to provide free menstrual products to Indigenous schools on reserves and in federal schools across Canada, as well as to ensure the provision of free



Eric Duivenvoorden | Visuals Editor

menstrual products in federally regulated workplaces.

With Canada’s cost of living crisis, community organizations such as Food Banks Canada are seeing increased demands for menstrual products. At the same time, they are having to handle the escalating costs of supplying other essential items. Many organizations have been unable to meet the needs of those coming in and asking for menstrual supplies. As the cost of living continues on an upward trajectory, many have been forced to choose between feeding their families and buying menstrual products. This burden is disproportionately felt by youth, single mothers, Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, gender-diverse individuals, people living with disabilities, and those in remote areas. These groups face not only economic challenges but also increased stigma surrounding menstruation.

Many young people have experienced this stigma: feeling the need to hide their tampon or pad up their sleeve when going to the washroom at school, or the dread that comes when they forget to bring one, only to find their school does not have tampon dispensers or has run out of supply. According to Environics Research’s survey, one in four Canadians still consider periods dirty and unclean, while one in five believe it is a topic that should not be publicly discussed. These beliefs have turned menstruation into a taboo, resulting

in the current lack of knowledge and support around period poverty. Due to the stigma surrounding menstruation, many people are reluctant to talk about their periods or to ask for help, instead choosing to stay home from school or work. A report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization found that one of every ten menstruating adolescents miss school during their menstrual cycle due to insufficient access to menstrual products and resources. The lack of education around menstruation is one of the primary factors that lead to negative attitudes toward this natural bodily function. Today, 78 per cent of people who menstruate between the ages of 18 and 24 feel the need to hide their periods at school or work, while 54 per cent have felt embarrassed to talk about their experience with menstruation.

While Budget 2022 is a step in the right direction by the Canadian government, further importance needs to be given to education and awareness initiatives to reduce the stigma surrounding the issue. Comprehensive and open dialogue on period poverty and menstrual equity needs to occur. Addressing period poverty is about more than just the economic challenges; the societal barriers that perpetuate the silence and shame surrounding menstruation need to be recognized and dismantled for true and lasting change to occur. It is only through a collective effort that we

Addressing period poverty is about more than just the economic challenges: the societal barriers that perpetuate the silence and shame surrounding menstruation need to be recognized and dismantled for true and lasting change to occur.

can hope to create a future where menstrual products are accessible to all, regardless of economic status or identity, and where no one faces the choice between menstrual hygiene and food on the table.

THE MCGILL DAILY IS HIRING!

DESIGN & PRODUCTION (1)

The Design & Production Editor is responsible for the design, format, and layout of our print newspaper. Experience in InDesign and Photoshop recommended.

COPY (1)

The Copy Editor proofreads *Daily* articles for proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and prose. They also update our style guide.

NEWS (3)

News Editors are at the forefront of campus coverage. Always on the lookout for stories, they write and edit about breaking news at McGill, in Montreal, and in Quebec.

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The Commentary section is where we publish opinions and letters. Editors are also responsible for the Compendium! section, in which we publish horoscopes, crosswords, and other fun things.

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The Video Editor will assist our Social Media Editor in generating video content and other promotional material for social media.

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Do you like radio and podcasts? The *Daily* is seeking to revive our CKUT segment and launch our own podcast. Sound editing skills recommended.

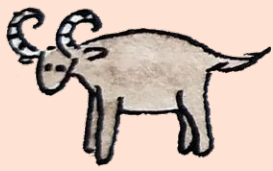
APPLICATIONS DUE AT 11:59 PM ON
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We are also hiring staff writers for all sections!

Any questions? Visit our website at mcgilldaily.com or attend one of our weekly pitch meetings on **Tuesdays at 6:00 PM.**



2024 HOROSCOPES



ARIES
(MAR 21 -
APR 19)

IN: ASKING FOR EXTENSIONS

OUT: IN-PERSON EXAMS



TAURUS
(APR 20 -
MAY 20)

IN: LITTLE TREATS

OUT: PAYING TAXES



GEMINI
(MAY 21 -
JUN 20)

IN: ORANGE JULEP

OUT: NOTRE-DAME BASILICA



CANCER
(JUN 21 -
JUL 22)

IN: KARAOKE

OUT: FRENCH MUSIC



LEO
(JUL 23 -
AUG 22)

IN: STRATEGIC NON-VIOLENT
SABOTAGE

OUT: CALCULUS



VIRGO
(AUG 23 -
SEPT 22)

IN: NURTURING YOUR INNER
CHILD

OUT: HAVING A PLANNER



LIBRA
(SEPT 23 -
OCT 22)

IN: SUPPORTING LOCAL
BOOKSTORES

OUT: BUYING FROM INDIGO



SCORPIO
(OCT 23 -
NOV 21)

IN: THE REVOLUTION

OUT: JOE BIDEN



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV 22 -
DEC 21)

IN: LEASE TRANSFERS

OUT: LANDLORDS/LANGLADIES/
LANDPEOPLE



CAPRICORN
(DEC 22 -
JAN 19)

IN: CATS

OUT: DOGS



AQUARIUS
(JAN 20 -
FEB 18)

IN: LENTILS AND TOFU

OUT: FAKE MEAT



PISCES
(FEB 19 -
MAR 20)

IN: TOUCHING GRASS

OUT: TAYLOR SWIFT