As the world came to a halt in March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we watched our world turn upside down and we navigated with calmness and diligence into a brave new world of social distancing and learning from home.

With that, our Flash Forward Incubator Program met these challenges successfully. A large part of our program is an online community, where our educators, teachers, students and mentors speak to one another, give feedback and most of all give support. Our program incorporated this online community into place eight years ago, when we started this nationwide program. For us to be fully accessible and reach as many students as possible, being online was the only platform we could enable and execute. So here we are, COVID-19 and all, and our program, was able to finish, in tact, and for that we are thankful.

It goes without saying, we all need to take a step back and thank those who kept the program and teaching alive. At Magenta, we are forever grateful to our Lead Educator, Jenny-Anne McCowan and our online mentors Fehn Foss and Cassandra Ng, who spoke to everyone, nationwide, eased tensions and most of all, encouraged our students to cross the finish line.

For each and every teacher that is part of this program thank you. If you ask any parent, who had to teach their kids over the past few months, they would agree, each and every teacher is worth their weight in gold. Not all superheroes wear capes!
A NOTE FROM Jenny-Anne McCowan
NATIONAL EDUCATION AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR, FLASH FORWARD INCUBATOR PROGRAM

THE FLASH FORWARD INCUBATOR PROGRAM

Over the past eight years, the Incubator Program has expanded across the country and refined its curriculum to become a highly developed online education program. From a program that began in Toronto with a single school, the program has grown into one that includes over 350 participants who signed up across the country and 213 who crossed the finish line, and with Festival and Institutional partners, schools and community programs.

As an essential part of the incubator program, and the component that allows us to undertake our national outreach strategy, we have developed sophisticated online teaching and learning methods that allow us to support students, increase access to essential tools and organizations, develop an appreciation of the photographic arts and develop professional skills for students to build on.

During the 2020 year, an unthinkable pandemic hit. As a program that has always used online teaching as a core principle, we were able to keep our program moving forward.

Although our Gallery Shows were cancelled in BC and Ontario, and our in-person meetings were suspended, we were inspired by the new opportunities that unfolded out of our new constraints. “How-to” videos, conference call “Office Hours”, Instagram challenges, a virtual opening for the show and online auctions were all new components that we added in our effort to share our ongoing support of our youth. We see these developments as a way to continue our extensive outreach, to more widely and effectively share our program and to engage youth in rural and remote communities everywhere.
What does your social isolation look like?

@flashfwdincubator
#flashforwardincubator

“What does your social isolation look like?” As seen through the eyes of our students in the Flash Forward Incubator Program coast to coast.

During this unusual time as we all navigate our new realities, the team at Flash Forward Incubator Program cares and are curious about how our students across the country are doing. We have opened up our Instagram feed to them to share their voice through images and will be posting student work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic weekly.

“This photo is showing that even though we are all stuck in quarantine right now the outside world is still moving along and that spring has arrived.” — Lily Mercer

“This photo symbolizes an activity that my family and I have been doing a lot lately due to COVID-19: Since there are limited facilities open and not many activities to do, I have been biking with my brother every day. In some ways, it’s nice to slow down from my family’s busy schedule and spend some time outside in nature together.” — Hanna Asin

“The image is called ‘Daylight: First/Final Touch’ and it is about the struggle of being so close to the outside world that you can feel the sunlight on your skin but it is always through the glass of a window, and for added protection there are blinds and curtains so that only a small amount of the outside world is accessible.” — Ryan Ivanov

“Spending more time at home has given me the opportunity to take on more time-consuming projects and experiments I wouldn’t have tried otherwise - this was my first time making sourdough bread from scratch! This loaf was made from my sourdough starter after two weeks of feeding it.” — Elena Pan

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Since inception, The Flash Forward Incubator Program has been dedicated to fostering future practitioners in Canada, from coast to coast, by giving youth from diverse backgrounds the mentorship they need to create their work and a platform to amplify their voices. This year’s program included 3 participating schools in Alberta, 14 in BC, 9 in Ontario and over 350 youth. We are very proud to present this comprehensive catalogue that showcases their completed work as a national program.

“It’s a Plastic World” the theme for this year’s Flash Forward Incubator Program invited participants to create photography-based projects that contemplate it’s impact and meaning. How is plastic made? How is it used, and where does it go when we’re done with it? What does it say about the way we see ourselves, and how we present ourselves in public and on social media? Does a commodity based culture influence how we take care of one another, the environment, or how we find solutions and resolve conflict? Is everything disposable?

THE FLASH FORWARD INCUBATOR ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM

The Incubator Program’s unique and high level training program includes: research, proposal writing, critical reviews, artist statements, and a formal submission process that mirrors those for festivals, gallery shows and grants. Through our online learning platform, artists and educators work together to create dynamic learning experiences and resources that optimize student learning and set them on the path to success as they develop their projects.

While all participants follow the same program and a shared experience, the unique online component offers personalized mentorship for the duration of the program, promotes a place where collaboration happens across the country, and where diverse voices can be expressed and heard. The final goal of a professional gallery show and publication offers a tangible, real-life, professional experience to add to a resume, and functions as a great motivator for producing high quality work.

Through the online platform, the Incubator team works with youth in real time and supports them in the development of their project from start to finish.

METHODODOLOGY

To develop the different facets of the Incubator Program, we have worked diligently to integrate the aims of secondary school curriculums with cutting-edge research, from both Canada and abroad, that articulates the skills required for the 21st century, as well as what’s needed to cultivate responsible, ethical and global citizens in a digital world.

With the core belief that youth are unique in their desires and needs, mentors and educators create an environment that encourages students to meet their fullest potential, take risks, take responsibility, and share ideas. The scaffolded, inquiry-based, learner-centred, and open-ended educational approaches embedded in the activities create opportunities for individual discovery, the authentic construction of knowledge, and the practice of skills that relate directly to the professional world.

Motivation for learning is intrinsic in the Incubator Program, where the gallery show and publication serve as a real-life and practical experience that can be added to resumes.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The program is organized into four phases: research and preparation; development and collaborative feedback; critical analysis and finalization; and presentation in the form of a gallery show and catalogue. Each phase of the program consists of an activity that is reflective of a real-world experience in the arts, accompanied by opportunities to engage with mentors and educators, participate in critical feedback with industry professionals, submit their learning and thoughts in both words and images, and discuss their progress.

Participation is tracked, monitored and assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively through our online tracking sheets; via feedback and collaboration with the Google comment function; via email; and at in person events, including in-school and community meetings; and through surveys. Throughout the duration of the process, the Incubator team is available to follow up with questions, challenges, missing work, and to connect with youth who need support.
As part of our COVID-19 response, and once in-person classes and activities were no longer possible, we used every opportunity we could to engage with our students. Conference call “office hours” were offered to students and teachers on a weekly basis, short “how-to” videos were developed and disseminated, Instagram challenges where students could practice their skills while sharing their quarantine experiences with students across the country were all implemented with success.

THE FOUR PHASES

1/ RESEARCH
In this phase, we develop a Powerpoint presentation that is shared both in class and online. It remains available for students to access throughout the duration of the program. Sample artist statements are also provided for future reference.

The Powerpoint includes contemporary and historical artists and includes a wide range of artists for inspiration, as well as interviews and theory.

2/ DEVELOPMENT: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND PRELIMINARY IMAGES
Both online discussions and in-school meetings centre on the needs and desires of the participants to support them through each decision-making step as they develop their work. Google comment is a key tool in this process, and mentors work diligently to engage with all students to deliver relevant and timely feedback. All preliminary images are reviewed by the entire Incubator team as a group. Personalized, written feedback is given to each student, and avenues for ongoing and extended communication are opened up for additional support as youth finalize their projects.
Activity 1

Research

I am very inspired by Alexandra Kacha’s work, especially this photo for pheromone, soft just as much as it is loud and empowering by going out of their way to show their scars and wear their true identity quite literally on their skin. I think this helps connect to the theme a bit more, because this talks about some interesting intersections of oppression for trans folks of colour and their philosophy as an artist. I resonate with the phrase in their artist statement “I like to focus on touch and movement that is intimate but not erotic, and curate my work towards being emotional, reverent, and visceral.” I feel it is also important to do that compositionally if that makes sense?

Content

My first thought in terms of this theme is the concept of authenticity. It is associated with cheap fixes and harm to the natural world. Plastic is manmade, it is unnatural and moldable. The human body is moldable in its own way as well, and people as moldable. Interesting visuals going on here already.

Fehn Foss

I like the idea of plastic as moldable and people as moldable. Interesting visuals going on here already.

Jamie Rivera

I just read the second and third article! The second was very powerful and though I am very aware of intersectionality in transgender oppression and the issues that twoc face, I was not aware of pumping silicone. I think this helps connect to the theme a bit more, because this talks about some interesting intersections of oppression for trans folks of colour and their philosophy as an artist. I resonate with the phrase in their artist statement “I like to focus on touch and movement that is intimate but not erotic, and curate my work towards being emotional, reverent, and visceral.” I feel it is also important to do that compositionally if that makes sense?

Fehn Foss

Great descriptive words! You’ve done an excellent job communicating what it is about Kacha’s work that inspires you and affects you.

Research

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Fehn Foss

Here is an article about the trans gender body in art: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/nov/18/transgender-art-trans-history-in-99-objects

This is an interesting NPR podcast about pumping silicone. I think this helps connect to the theme a bit more, because this talks about a plastic product, specifically. It also talks about some interesting intersections of oppression for trans folks of colour and trans folks who may not have access to certain surgeries because of their financial situations. I think these are interesting intersections to think about and to continue to research: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/09/07/155628727/trans-women-silicone-pumping-can-be-a-blessing-and-a-curse

Important Canadian Trans Artists: https://www.cbc.ca/arts/10-of-the-many-trans-artists-you-should-be-more-than-aware-of-any-week-of-the-year-1.4905035

I hope this helps, Jamie! You’ve done a thoughtful and beautiful job on activity #1. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns moving forward. I’m here to help!
Deborah Cai
- Getting closer to the final image... these are all rough/ modelling practice, still trying to get used to Blender.

Deborah Cai
- Started working in Unity, these are some process screenshots from a game that I have been attempting to make. I think I might switch to Unity for my final image because you can import sky boxes, and terrains + I can import stuff from Blender.

Cassandra Ng
- Really great job on this, we love the progress. We like that you are going outside the box with your idea!

Cassandra Ng
- We love the direction that you're working in! As you move forward, we'd like to offer a couple of questions as food for thought: Is composition and form part of your message? Is chaos an underlying theme in your image?

Cassandra Ng
- Great work! We are so impressed that you've taken this opportunity to learn a new program and we think it really adds to your content.

Deborah Cai
- Thank you so much for the feedback! I don't usually take such a structured approach to making things but I've found that the support/feedback you are giving is super helpful, thank you.

Deborah Cai
- As I am currently still working to a final image I am starting to get a bit confused/unsure of what I want my idea/ concept to be. I think the visuals that I am working with allow for a lot of flexibility, the final product is kind of hard to predict as working with a new medium has opened me up to a ton of options. I've kind of shifted from developing a single piece to exploring the medium/working with Unity because I was really not expecting to have so much fun with it.
3/ FINALIZATION: ARTIST STATEMENT AND SUBMISSION OF FINAL IMAGE
Artist statements and the completion of the work required for presentation at the Gallery Shows and to be published in the Incubator Catalogue are the goals in this final stage. Special attention to writing and image editing are the focus.

4/ GALLERY SHOW AND PUBLICATION
This year, the Flash Forward Incubator Show and Silent Auction took place at The Little Gallery in Calgary and was presented by Exposure Photography Festival. An online exhibition and silent auction took place in BC and was presented by Capture Photography Festival. An online exhibition took place in Hamilton and was presented by the Art Gallery of Hamilton. In Toronto, the online exhibition was presented by The Magenta Foundation.

The gallery and online shows, as well as the development of a professional publication, give youth the experience of working professionally. Editors, designers and producers work together to create both the show and catalogue, work that includes the youth, giving them real-life, hands-on experience.

Experiential learning is one of the most difficult facets of the curriculum to offer within a classroom and/or community setting, but one of the most valuable in terms of preparing youth in their transition into the professional world. We feel that this is particularly relevant during this time as the world moves to one which requires an increasingly online presence and digital skills in both creation and communication.

The Incubator Program fosters a love of the arts that encourages participation in all aspects: as artists, arts workers, arts appreciators, and supporters. We are inspired by the resilience and creativity demonstrated by all of our students who continue to be at the heart of this program and grateful for the hard work dedicated by the teachers in supporting their students online and giving them the confidence they need to succeed.

We are thrilled to see the growth of the program across Canada and extend our sincere appreciation to our teachers and our partners for their extraordinary generosity and for supporting the success of this program and all of our youth involved.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Matt Föbel, SHERWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL, HAMILTON
Sydney Bocknek, ROSEDALE HEIGHTS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, TORONTO
Amy Ly, JOHN POLYANI COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, TORONTO
Sadhbh Doorley, ROSEDALE HEIGHTS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, TORONTO
Hanna Durst, ETOBICOKE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, TORONTO
A NOTE FROM Glenn Novak
CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY
ETOBICOKE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

I never would have thought that during what is typically the busiest time of our school year, I would be writing this piece from my living room, nine weeks since having seen my students. Our contemporary photography program is one that highly values and is built upon community, sharing and vulnerability. This, like most of us, has taken a “hit”. We are unable gather together and find comfort in the fluid bond that supports creative trust and has resulted in so much personal, group and even international success. Not all of us have access to the equipment and space that we have been accustomed to making work with. Even just the act of creating has felt nearly insurmountable with this worldwide pandemic looming outside of our walls.

Despite all of this new reality, the art still comes.

For the Etobicoke School of the Arts Contemporary Photography Program, this means that the work is being submitted as digital photos, videos, original songs, original scores, poetry, paintings, drawings, dance compositions and 25 page journal entries. Students are still creating. While not all are able to make work, this is where the community, empathy and supportive nature of our students comes into play. Those who can create are doing it for all of us.

With so many opportunities for our young artists to realize their potential being compromised right now, our hats must go off to MaryAnn, Jenny and their amazing Flash Forward Incubator team for not missing a beat. The team is still working and supporting students online and they are creatively pushing us all forward! After seven years of collaborating with this organization, there really was never any doubt that they would see this through for our future artists.
Passion and drama drive my creative vision and style. I am inspired by bright colours and subject matter that aspire to evoke positive feelings when viewed. My inspiration for this work was to find plastic objects within my home that represent self-expression along with consumerism. The objective of the items selected was to represent an eclectic range of items to show how extensive plastic's reach is in society. The process involved trial and error, with many arrangements of the items to create an aesthetically pleasing visual. My goal is to have people connect and relate to an item or item found within the photographs. I was exploring the extent of plastic use beyond what we routinely associate with wasteful consumerism, such as plastic water bottles, take-out containers, etc. While in today's disposable society, it is easy to default to a choice of plastic products due to their abundance, the impact of the form of expression can have dire consequences upon the environment. I hope that my image increases awareness of its prevalence in everyday life.

Re: what
This image documents my experience with navigating digital spaces. As a response to isolation, web surfing has been a substitute for walks and trips on public transit. In making this image I attempted to situate files and digital objects from the web into a new synthetic world.

Re: how/where (filepath)
Thingiverse> Download .fbx > Import > Blender> Alter> Export> Desktop > Import> Unity > Arrange

Ainsley Buklis-Rydall
Assemblage

Deborah Cai
index.world

4

Etobicoke School of the Arts

5

Etobicoke School of the Arts
Plastic has become embedded in our lives in ways that we rarely notice, so mundane that we interact with it constantly without a second thought. This work interweaves the use of plastic and humanity’s state, showcasing the dangers of our present and future. In this work, two instances of plastic have been layered; one of a wall of black tires, placed on the side of a busy road, towering over lush greenery and the other a burnt car, remnants of melted plastic and glass, looking over a city like an omen of what is to come. Both are products of humanity’s mistakes and misuses, and when physically put together illustrate the truth of our “plastic world”. The act of taking apart and reconfiguring a photo transforms the connotations of that photo, and gives it a depth that it could not achieve on its own. Many fail to comprehend the extent of the damage we have caused, choosing to see it as black and white, but actually, there is much more colour and complications of this reality.

Hannah Durst
Untitled

Jaime Barr
Moulding the Age of Man

For my image, I researched the origin of the words “plastic” and “world”. When replacing each word with their origins, “Plastic World” became “Moulding the Age of Man”, or woman if you will. The Renaissance was a time of transition and change within European kingdoms, it shaped and solidified all modern arts and academics. Being a huge influence on our modern live, the Renaissance was a period I wanted to focus on in my work; it shows an event that I felt had a huge impact on how we live our lives today, an event that has—so to speak—moulded the age of man. This image is inspired by the marble sculptures crafted during the Renaissance. These statues primarily focused on the natural beauty of man and sought to recreate it in the greatest possible detail.
I use art-making as a means of understanding my identity. Through this piece, I was able to explore the feeling and embodiment of “blankness.” The process of making the piece allowed me to focus less on idea and concept, while expressing myself through images. White styrofoam is both empty and blank, for me it evokes the feeling of something hollow. By placing a girl within a mound of empty matter, I aimed to represent this feeling.

For these photos of my favourite childhood toys, my idea was to contrast the synthetic, pastel colours with the natural beach landscape where I used to spend many hours playing with them. Even though these were just plastic toys, they meant a great deal to me growing up. They all had names and I would bring them everywhere I went. I used to race them in the stream and give them tea parties. I always wanted a real horse growing up but plastic horses were as close as I could get.
Studying contemporary art at ESA has led me to experiment with a variety of mediums over the years, but I’ve always gravitated towards photography. I saw it as a way of freezing a moment in time so that you can share messages with people that you cannot connect with directly. The raw images of plastic floating in oceans or animals covered in plastic and though we recognize this as terrible and disturbing, we dissociate ourselves from them and are above them and therefore in less danger. The truth is that we are just as much in danger. Do we have to physically see humans suffering for us to start caring? I chose the title Preservation because of its ironic significance. The material used to wrap the models together is often used to protect things it preserves them. This is ironic because plastic is one of the most commonly polluted materials and doing the exact opposite to our environment. If I can help spread awareness by creating an artwork, then my goal for this project is achieved.

What Is To Come is concerned with the issue of fossil fuel extraction, in the context that once all finite resources are used up the world will experience an enormous collapse. It will affect not only the economy, but the environment as well because the consumption of finite resources puts extreme strain on the entire planet, in order to prevent this, other methods of generating power must become commonplace. Fossil fuels consist mostly of hydrocarbons, and are called fossil fuels because they contain the fossilized remains of animals and plants from millions of years ago. The tombstones above the digital sketches of dinosaur bones show that humans will eventually reach the same end as dinosaurs, the creatures from which we are currently sustained, however our oblivion will be caused by our own hand. This piece is a warning of what is to come if precautions are not taken immediately. Humans, especially those in power who control large operations such as fossil fuel extraction, do not know when to stop until it is too late.
INGLENOOK COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

INGLENook COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Inglennook Community High School sits just north of the historic Distillery District and is housed in a beautiful yellow brick building that was built in 1827. We are a school of about 80 students and 4 teachers. Visual Arts and photography are one focus within this school that places community, relational learning and student driven curriculum at the core.

All of the students at Inglennook chose to attend this Alternative school after disengaging somewhere else.

The Incubator Program started at Inglennook a few years ago and the seed was planted to grow a digital program that focused on making contemporary art. The number of students participating in the Incubator program grew from only a few in the first year to a full class and each year and the quality of the work and investment in the process soared.

Through this program students saw themselves as artists. The opportunity to see their framed work in an established gallery was something that hadn’t happened in the past. Families, friends and peers flock to the opening and auction each year and watching the faces of these young artists is priceless—they are proud and motivated. They are communicating personal ideas through open themes and are empowered.

Isn’t this really what learning and art education should be about?

Inglennook is a part of the Toronto District School Board and our funding model, based on enrollment, is very small. Without the funding that we earn through this program, our photography program would not continue.

And so now we are striving to make art during unprecedented times.

Many students have chosen the immediacy of a phone camera to record their lived experience during these times.

Despite that fact that they don’t have access to digital cameras, they are making work that is honest and compelling.

This opportunity was only made possible through Jenny, MaryAnn and the entire Incubator team who believe in the young artists of today as they continue to support them throughout some of the most trying circumstances.

We at Inglennook thank you from the bottom of our hearts!
From the day she was born, this Barbie knew she was different. Unlike all of the other Barbies she lacked an affection for shiny things. As the young age of four, Barbie was on a walk with her mother, she noticed a plastic bag billowing in the wind. To Barbie it was like a diamond fluttering in the sky, she let go of her mother’s hand and raced towards the plastic bag with a fire in her eyes. It was then that she found herself in the middle of a busy street with cars racing past on each side, her fingers finally grasped the plastic goodness she desired, and in that moment Barbie found true beauty and peace. That was the 1970’s for Barbie. Now, in 2020, the self-proclaimed “Trash Island Barbie” has only one goal. That is to collect all the plastics in the world, melt them down and fuse herself with them to create a gigantic version of herself so she may walk among the clean mountains and skies. Till this day happens she waits peacefully on a discarded pink plastic dressing table surrounded by her favourite trash.

My relationship with plastic is complicated. I love plastic things, like toys and plastic jewelry or accessories, but I only buy things that I really like to be environmentally friendly. My image is about the problem of wanting to do more for the environment but feeling powerless as to how to make a difference. Advertisements in magazines that use cluttered plastic imagery inspired my image’s appearance. I keep a drawer full of things that would have otherwise been thrown away and use them for art projects, many of which are plastic objects. To compose my photo, I pulled out my junk drawer, removed all the non-plastic items and photographed the plastic ones. The items surrounding the drawer are plastic things taken from my house’s recycling bin. This shows how small my drawer of stuff is compared to all the trash surrounding it and taking over the room.

Chloe Schmit
A New Perspective

Evan Sagman
Trash Island Barbie
This series represents my take on the materialistic world that we try to grow up and live in. With so many influences on young people to present themselves in a certain way there is an intolerable pressure to create a ‘fake’ persona through the ritual of applying makeup every single day.

Ines Gori
Make Up

We come out with generations of conditioning passed down by our ancestors, ingrained in us to be something that we are not. Years we fight our oppressors only to be shoved back into the box by what we are told is right. Morphing into a cocoon of European ideals not being able to break the layers that have been built to suppress us. Years we learn from our parents the subtle ways to blend into this idealistic view of the world and self, only to be taught later that different is beautiful, but only if it’s a certain kind of different. Years we sit inside the bubble of what we’ve been taught, only to one day realize that this system was not built for us but for the people that put us here. We learn this, we gain a sense of self only to realize that everything we’ve been conditioned to believe is fake, only to realize that in order to go on we must re-learn ourselves how to live for us.

Saba Blyden-Taylor
We are birthed into this plastic world

...
We like to think that by occupying a space or commissioning an object such things become forever ours, forever tethered to us. But that notion is false. The window depicted in my photograph is of a house for sale. Seemingly uninhabited it exists in limbo between owners. Our houses, our things, in their passivity have attained plasticity. Much like the non-degradable nature of plastic, these things that we assert ownership and superiority over will outlive us. Live on without us.

Red feather replica in my hair on the drive home
Your eyes burned from staring out the window too long
You grabbed my thigh to get my attention
I was cold but you weren’t
We were always dictated by stop lights
And I was already on my way out

-- Winnie Loveday
-- Nova Redwing

-- Sabrina Bentley-Jin
-- Our Things Will Outlive Us
A NOTE FROM Lisa McCalla
ASSISTANT CURRICULUM LEADER OF
VISUAL, DIGITAL & INDIGENOUS ART
JOHN POLANYI COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

John Polanyi Collegiate Institute (JPCI) is a diverse school with enthusiastic and highly motivated students who are offered a variety of programs in science biotechnology, computer-technology, arts, cosmetology, and athletics. The school has a specialized SMR (Science Math Robotics) program and SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major) offered in Business, Justice, Community Safety & Emergency Services, Transportation Technology, and Health & Wellness. John Polanyi Collegiate Institute has a strong and thriving art program with course offerings in visual art, photography, film, digital media, dance, drama, and music.

Students in JPCI’s grade 10 and 11 Digital Media class participated in the Flash Forward Incubator Program during the second semester of the 2019/2020 school year. The program was easily integrated into the curriculum as a course unit, upon student completion of their introductory graphic design and Photoshop assignments. This program provided the perfect opportunity for students to continue to learn how to work through the creative process; this time for photo-based art work, and this time with a slightly more challenging theme. Students enjoyed flipping through the previous years books and finding artwork created by fellow students at their own school, and from across Canada. It was empowering for them to see the quality of art that they are capable of creating, given the right tools and inspiration.

The support, feedback and guidance from educators and artists from the Incubator Program was invaluable, and it helped students rise to this challenge, especially when most of their work had to be completed remotely. Students were able to adapt to using the limited materials, subject matter, and technology that they had available, and many were able to complete the projects from home, creating beautiful and interesting works of art in spite of these limitations. When asked to comment on the feedback they received for their preliminary ideas, one student expressed how nice it was to hear such positive, encouraging words from the Incubator Team, especially during such a difficult and uncertain time.

A big thank you to all the students and to the Flash Forward Incubator Team for demonstrating great patience, flexibility, and creative problem solving during remote learning in order to see this project through to completion.
I am Alex Tran, 15, from Toronto, Canada and I made this piece of art for a digital art class in high school. My main inspiration for this art was the Korean movie Parasite. This movie shows how everyone is a parasite and is blind to the things that are right in front of them. My artwork shows this by blinding out everyone's eyes thus showing they are blind to the issues of society. The black figure in the middle of the picture embodies all of the problems in the world and no one can see it because everyone is so ignorant and unaware nowadays. After people look at my artwork, I want them to actually think and see what is wrong with the world and actually try to do something about it.

Alex Tran
Untitled

I believe that nature never betrays humans, only humans betray themselves. Mother nature provides living creatures diverse and precious natural resources, some of them are even renewable. However, humans don’t know how to respect nature’s gifts. People have abused and damaged nature heavily throughout times. In my work I display a transformation of water flows. The top areas represent humans’ impact on nature, the bottom represents nature, the ring in the centre represents human consumption of natural resources. People’s treatment of nature is getting worse and while the water still flows, it’s gradually turning black over time. As all of the materials I used in my work is plastic, I want to emphasize that plastic is also one of the immediate reasons which cause pollution.

Amy Ly
The flow
The art that I created is about how plastic can just sit in beside nature and seem harmless, but its actions do far worse. I used a Nikon camera, paint and plastic toothpicks. I made this piece because people think littering a small piece of plastic won’t do harm, but they can pile up quickly and add tremendous damage. My art is unique because even though I painted the toothpicks green to blend in with the surrounding, it still pops out, showing its significance to create harm.

Moving forward, the thing that influenced me was the environment because I like going on nature walks and to me, it’s obvious when I see plastic in a tree. It ruins the whole scenario. Nature is a beautiful sight and a single piece of trash can ruin the sight for kilometers.

Finally, my message through this photo is that plastic can release harmful chemicals into the surrounding soil, even though it camouflages. It may look the same but its effects on our environment are totally different.

For my project, my idea was to find objects that have plastic in them. I looked for items that I did not expect to have plastic in them. After I found these items, I did my best to make them look like they were made from 100 percent plastic. For example, I made the chewing gum look like it’s made entirely from plastic. I thought this would show how we as a society don’t sense how dangerous an item could be. I hope this project will show how plastic items are everywhere, and we need to lower the plastic production. The mass production of plastic items could lead to a lot of pollution, a lot of sick people and a lot of problems to deal with in the near future. If we don’t start finding alternatives now, it will be too late for the future because our oceans and seas are already full of plastic.
I made this artwork because I can relate to it and feel that it is something everyone can reflect on. I've decided to explore altered portraits by manipulating them to provide the viewer with a fictional image of our modern reality. I realized that a face can be deceiving and hide real emotions. This applies to the theme because we ourselves are being plastic—we act like everything is alright but in reality, it may not be.

I want the viewer to realize that we are indeed strong. It is natural to have insecurities, and it is up to every individual to accept it. Fighting our internal battles and appearing to be happy for other people is hard and requires strength. We carry a lot of pain and hold burdens that only we are aware of, but we manage to appear strong.

Jezreel Castillo
Untitled

Expressing myself through the works of photography and playing alto saxophone is breathtaking. The feeling I get when having a camera or an instrument in my hands is unbelievable. The opportunity to showcase how I'm feeling through photographs and music are two things I value most. For this project, I wanted to explore environmental issues through creative food photography. For some time now, sea creatures as well as other animals have been deeply affected by the toxicity of plastic in their habitats because of how irresponsible we are with our everyday products. Like us, animals are only trying to live their lives but we are making it harder for them to do so with things such as plastic and other toxic garbage. What would our lives look like if we switched places with animals? Would we care more if we were the one who were deceived into eating plastic?

Miriam Noor
Poison in Disguise
The artwork was inspired by the world around us, and how the nature around us was turning into a silver plastic fake that had little resemblance to the true nature that was once there. The type of art that interest me is art with shape and sharp thick outlines giving the art a type of ‘pop’ that rarely is seen in media. My hope was to find a hand drawn flower sitting in the foreground while a field of flowers are seen in the background; then Photoshop the first flower to resemble a silver almost plastic-like one, separating it from the bright beautiful ones in the background. Though because of my limited resources I was only able to make a shadow of my original vision for this project.

Due to the current situation, I’ve decided to take a picture of a plastic glove on the floor showing that it was littered and put it under a fake black light showing that if the gloves like this are not disposed properly it could spread the virus.
I usually start off by turning energy into something beautiful by using a unique aesthetic. Having a distinct mood and style is very important to me. I always approach every project with a fresh mindset; I don’t like to do the same thing over again. My style is very dreamy, moody, and as well as surreal and psychedelic. The visual characteristics of my work are definitely vibrant saturated colors, textures, shape and movement by using a blurry sway Photoshop technique. In the first photo, I wanted to give it a dreamy sort of feel to make it seem like I’m in a fantasy world. I also used my Photoshop skills to turn my face into a plastic texture and paint it in plastic because the theme is “It’s a Plastic World.”

I wanted to do something different instead of what everyone else is doing. My personal perspective to this theme and my photos is that a lot of things around us aren’t always what it seems to be, and referred to such as people we think we know, things on social media and how people portray a “good life” on the internet. Fake smiles as well as fake love. It can all be an illusion.
A NOTE FROM Karen Jendruska
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY/VISUAL ARTS TEACHER & Soula St Jean, VISUAL ARTS TEACHER
NEWTONBROOK SECONDARY SCHOOL

We are honoured and fortunate once again to be a part of this amazing organization, Magenta, Flash Forward Incubator program. As art teachers here at Newtonbrook, we also feel it is important to nourish a lifelong love of the arts. We want to thank The Magenta Foundation for giving us the support to run such an in-depth program as an extracurricular activity.

The Flash Forward program enhances the students creative process by challenging them to create a constructed image with a stronger understanding of what is involved in creating a powerful picture.

The theme “It’s a Plastic World” was presented to the students by Magenta, inspiring students to explore and experiment in different approaches. With feedback and reflection the result was not always what the student expected, but they developed the confidence and had tools to produce a meaningful work of digital art.

How we are currently working, creating and learning has changed drastically during COVID-19. A new challenge for many of us, but the team at Flash Forward Incubator was prepared to continue the program during this difficult time. The Flash Forward Incubator is an excellent model for DL education. They also utilize various social media, such as Instagram challenges, to engage and motivate the students to keep creating art.

They have done a great job pivoting into the virtual world with this year’s gallery show going virtual…. Saying that… We will greatly miss the annual Gallery Show, the show being one of the highlights of our school year!

We thank The Magenta Foundation for their passionate mission to inspire young artists to recognize the importance of the power of the photograph and art as we do. We would also like to thank all the sponsors who recognize the importance of the arts and arts education.
Packages in general have always bothered me because many items seem to be wrapped in plastic instead of more environmentally-friendly alternatives. After some research on plastic packaging, I learned of its slow and negative impact on our delicious food.

People across the world unwittingly consume plastic particles, known as microplastics, through the daily food that they ingest. The reason why these foods are contaminated with microplastics is due to the incorrect disposal of used plastics. This made me consider the plastic problems that revolve around consumable products.

Altogether, I want the audience to understand the negative impacts that come from plastic packaging and highlight the fact that the wrongful disposal of single-use plastics can ultimately lead to having our everyday food to be contaminated.
A NOTE FROM Matt Killen  
ACL, VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS  
INSTRUCTOR, GRADE 12 PORTFOLIO  
ROSEDALE HEIGHTS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Rosedale Heights School of the Arts (RHSA) is one of the four arts-focused secondary schools in the Toronto District School Board. RHSA differs from the others because we are not audition-based and do not force students to specialize in one particular arts discipline. This leads to a great deal of variety in our students’ skills and abilities, which we feel leads to much more creative work. The RHSA Visual and Media Arts program was structured to emphasize creative problem-solving as its principle focus. This is one of the many reasons why we greatly look forward to participating in the Flash Forward Incubator Program (FFIP).

Since 2014, the Incubator Program has been an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our creative problem-solving abilities in the execution of thematically-driven, photo-based, mixed media artworks. While in previous years, students were selected from our program to participate in the project, this is the second year that it has been integrated into the curriculum of our Grade 12 Portfolio course, a class which appeals to many of the most focused and dedicated students in our Visual and Media Arts program. These students have had the opportunity to significantly hone their research, planning, and writing skills under the FFIP team’s guidance.

The Flash Forward Incubator Program has enabled us, through its financial contribution, to greatly develop our program. Through the money raised, we have been able to purchase a great deal of photographic, lighting, and printing equipment, all of which have enabled students to produce more beautiful, professional-level work and for us to take on more ambitious projects. Our program would not be where it is today without the support of the Incubator Program.

This year, more than ever before, has required some real creativity in overcoming artistic challenges. Between myself and the FFIP team, we have had to push ourselves further to help students find creative solutions, as students’ initial ideas often had to change in the face of determining how to make artwork in a period of quarantine, especially in light of our inability to print images to facilitate mixed media approaches. This year’s batch of artworks, while dealing with the theme of “It’s a Plastic World”, demonstrates more than ever our students’ ability to overcome creative challenges and work with constraints.

We are thrilled, despite the circumstances of this difficult year, to be able to present work for FFIP. We are so thankful to all the team members for the hard work and involvement in helping students complete their work and presenting it during this challenging time.
My work is about plastic beauty. The subject matter of my work is similar to my previous works which portrays a somewhat dark theme. Fake Looks is about how we take plastic and make it into pretty things, but at the same time, we are killing the real beauty around us.

I take what I see from nature, politics, films, and music to use in my art. I find myself getting mad at the world sometimes, a lot of it comes from the Trump agenda. This anger always fuels my inspiration because it makes me feel like I need to speak up. In addition to politics, I love to watch films and listen to music to fuel my visual inspiration.

In this piece, I want the viewers to question how plastic manifests in their lives. I am exploring the tendency to be selfish and to want pretty things even if it comes at the cost of our planet.

I am interested in how single-use plastic and poor disposal of plastic waste leads to the destruction of life that existed long before humans ever came around. This widespread problem affects ocean life immensely, and it often gets overlooked and ignored because it is not a problem that affects our day to day lives. My artwork focuses specifically on sea turtles and the consumption of plastic bags.

Sea turtles, among many other marine creatures, often confuse plastic and other garbage with their source of food. Underwater, jellyfish and plastic bags look almost indistinguishable, and the plastic is often what gets eaten. Influenced by images by Mandy Barker, my artwork utilizes a dark background and a glow technique to show the focal point. In my artwork, I represented this by merging the images of a plastic bag and a jellyfish, and adding the outline of the two over top. The illustration creates even more of a sense of distortion to further represent the confusion from the turtles.
Using mixed media, I choose materials and processes that will connect most to the theme of my work and expand on the meaning. For this piece, physical photo manipulation and actual plastic echo ideas about self-expression and mass production. The need to stand out is often turned into fitting in, what with most clothes being mass produced. It's difficult to create or become something that has truly never been seen before, and the call to be different just makes everyone the same. Fitting into that packaged idea of uniqueness often ends in isolation. Surreal worlds and challenging social expectations are strong influences in my life and in my art. I instead the world to explore how packaged people with a common need to fit in can isolate themselves when they attempt to fulfill that need.

Emily Buchan

Untitled

The world of fast fashion is an incredibly large contributor to landfills. Tiny microplastics within the cheap fabrics, such as polyester, are slowly building up in our landfills with nowhere to go but into our environment. Do you know where your clothes come from? No, I'm not just talking about which mall you went to or which store you bought your new shirt from, I'm talking about the sweatshop it might've been made in or the harsh working conditions with young individuals being paid extremely low to compensate for the cost of fast fashion clothing.

As an artist I want my art to ask the audience a question without being "vocal" about it. I want the audience to try and make their own personal questions without an obvious answer. I want the audience to understand that despite me advocating the unethical background of fast fashion, I'm no saint. I have had my contribution to the fast fashion, which is why I modeled on myself, and that makes my ability to connect to the audience even stronger.

Cellina Vatour

The Plastic I Wear

Do you know where your clothes come from? No, I'm not just talking about which mall you went to or which store you bought your new shirt from; I'm talking about the sweatshop it might've been made in or the harsh working conditions with young individuals being paid extremely low to compensate for the cost of fast fashion clothing.

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Creating on a computer was a task that challenged myself as an artist to open my mind, and find new possibilities of how art can be made without using physical drawing materials.

For this year’s theme “It’s a Plastic World,” I felt interested in exploring the term ‘plastic’ by creating an artwork that depicts the meaning of beauty in society, through an artistic lens. Beauty is classified by the nature of society, for the way a person chooses to view another based on what is naturally seen or what we choose to believe it being seen. With there being so much beauty in life, it becomes problematic, in the sense where it gives individuals of this generation the want to hide imperfections in order to be deemed fit for society’s standards. Combining the element of photography with graphic design demonstrates a connection of storytelling through layering. Reality is a distorted concept, for which the things we surround ourselves with on a daily basis are not always what they seem.

Emma Mazomenos
What is Beauty?

From start to finish The Shirt is a series of images that highlight the full life span of a piece of fast fashion clothing. Watching a shirt going through its cycle of life starting at a sweatshop and ending up in the trash.

The Shirt is a comment on the detrimental environmental impacts of the fast fashion industry due to the lack of care for proper materials and safe work. The Shirt was documented at every major stage in its life cycle. By removing the background of each image, I emphasized the devastating role that plastic fibers play in the making of cheap trendy clothes. The removal of the background helps to shape the context in which the photo is viewed. Accentuating the fragility of the materials to reinforce quality. The intention of this piece was to mock the fast fashion industry’s lack of care for quality materials and construction by using single-use plastic bags as a material to construct a garment, documenting the process from construction to destruction.

Jenna Wilson
The Shirt
Much of my work consists of non-traditional sculptures, photography, along with mixed media artworks. I created this artwork in response to the prompt, “It’s a Plastic World”. In my approach to this, I was focused not only on creating a piece of work that represents the topic at hand but I also hoped to create work that I find aesthetically pleasing. I wanted to utilize materials and methods that aren’t traditionally used in creating my sculpture.

My work was created with aspects of different influences; the materiality of Mbongeni Buthelezi, the photographic style of Alejandro Duran, and the Canadian wilderness I have witnessed throughout my life. My personal style is what drew me to use a heat gun to melt plastic onto natural objects and photograph them back in their natural settings.

This work represents the conflict between our materialistic and highly wasteful lifestyles and the natural world we live in. I also hoped to highlight our impact on the natural world, along with the need to find a balance between these two extremes.

For this piece I looked at Gregg Segal’s photo series 7 days of Garbage, photographing people surrounded by the garbage they create in a week. His work made me look at the packaging of items, wrapped in plastic or cardboard to protect what is inside. But once that item is purchased, the packaging is worthless. I became interested in exploring the idea of people’s connection to the things they purchase and throw away. After purifying an item, I have found that it’s a waiting game until the packaging is thrown away. I created a waiting room with chairs that line the wall with magazines to replicate a waiting room which signifies the waiting period until an item is thrown away. Using garbage and already owned items, I placed the sculpture against a simple clean white background to bring attention to the details within the object created. This image may provoke people to consider the amount of plastic that goes to waste when purchasing an item and question how they can minimize it.
This piece is an observation of the nostalgia which we have for the plastic toys of our childhood. The flowers and plastic toys, placed in a specific order, symbolises the importance and care which a child will put towards these objects. The composition is mimicking the way a child sets up their own toys, with the “characters” as the main focus of the play.

In creating this piece, I was inspired by the animated film *Yellow Submarine*, the work of Hayao Miyazaki, family board games and children’s books like *Nausicaä*. This piece is meant to be a protest as well as an observation about our psychology. Western culture often denies that our childhood attachments are related to global issues, like climate change and human rights. Although it is not up to the child to make this distinction themselves, it’s important to be aware of how we tend to forgive many negative aspects of consumption in order to preserve our “innocent” clinging to cheaply produced, non-sustainable products.

For this project I initially wanted to work on a plastic installation but considering my subject matter and the photo based requirements, the result turned out to be a staged photo. The action in this photo is 100 feet of rolled plastic being pushed out of the window from a house. Household plastics are intertwined with our lives on a personal and mass scale. I was interested in showing a photo that represents how household plastics are ingrained into our lifestyle and how our overuse of these particular plastics might ultimately lead to the deterioration of life on our planet. The plastic in this photo symbolizes our lifestyle in an apocalyptic, explosive state. The plastic bursts from the house to characterize a moment where our plastic oriented lifestyles culminate into catastrophe.

Sophie Dixon

In Unison

Simon Backewich

Untitled
Normally, the work that I make is less direct and has hidden meanings. This project has been a different experience compared to how I usually work. When making this piece I decided to make the issue at hand the main focus.

My fear of the effects of plastic on our planet is expressed through this work. I chose tampons because they produce a lot of plastic waste. There are thousands of applicators in bodies of water, which can harm marine life. It concerns me that very few of us are aware of the effect the use of these sanitary menstruation products has. In the piece I took tampons, wrappers, and plastic; then placed them in a fish tank; they represent the fish in the water. What I would like the viewer to think about is this: “Karma moves in two directions. If we act virtuously, the seed we plant will result in happiness. If we act non-virtuously, suffering results.” (Sakyong Mipham) How can you reduce your waste or usage of plastic in your life?

My artwork Trash Fountain communicates the theme of an ill world. I think of the world of being ill and humans being the disease making it sick.

The majority of my artworks deal with themes of discomfort, decay, and distortion. I was inspired by monumental sculptural fountains to create this artwork. Up to 80% of the human adult body is water; therefore I believe representing the human race as a fountain was an ideal choice. Although, instead of filtering water, the fountain filters molten black microwaveable plastic, which can not be easily recycled and further pollutes the earth.
In September 2019 Bernie Custis Secondary School (BCSS) embarked on its maiden voyage. Amidst all the unfamiliarity, the trepidation, the discombobulation that comes with the opening of a new school, the excitement and pride felt by students, staff and community prevailed and the journey had begun. Students and their families, mainly from the former Sir John A. Macdonald (SJAM) and Delta Secondary Schools, were now part of a new community, under the BCSS Tigers banner. Further fuelling the excitement were various athletic accomplishments in the form of several city-wide championships. Not a bad way to ‘get the ball rolling’!

BCSS is also proud to inherit the rich tradition of the Visual Arts programs of its contributing schools, SJAM and Delta, enjoying the blending of resources, talent and passion from both teaching staffs and students. An important factor in unifying these two groups of young artists has been, none other than, the Incubator Program.

This program has always provided an invaluable and unique opportunity for students to extend their classroom learning in photography, digital & mixed media art with a tangible application, within their community and in collaboration with other students across the country. This year’s theme in particular “It’s a Plastic World” could not be more timely and relevant to these young artists, giving them a real means to process and navigate these abrupt and profound changes that are affecting us all, locally and globally.

Aside from the ‘hands-on’ learning of technical and practical aspects of creating and exhibiting their art, participating students are afforded a broader awareness through the connection with students in other schools, dealing with global issues important to us all.

The Incubator Program has been a key partner in providing our Visual Art students with a truly meaningful link between their inner world and the real world they are living in. This is also true in a practical sense, in that the funding generated by this unique program actually makes such a necessary and invaluable experience a real possibility in students’ lives. The lack of supplies and resources is a barrier that greatly limits a student’s ability to fully explore, create and communicate their discoveries and ideas. Adequate funding enables and encourages possibilities and nurtures potential.

As always, we are extremely grateful for the inspiration, support and commitment that is enthusiastically offered to our students by Jenny, Fehn, MaryAnn and the rest of the FFIP crew.
What I find interesting about this image is how the fences are like big nets that we trap sea turtles and other animals in by accident, but never let them go. A tissue got caught on a bottle of water and the fence, and to me, it shows how we are killing animals in the ocean.

I had a great idea before I took the photos. Because I'm not a great sculptor, but I do have an ok eye for art, I found and created these elements for the photo that I put together. I planned for it to represent animals being caught in nets.

What I would like viewers to think more about is how easy it is for something so small or big to get caught in things we throw away. We just never think about it.

I like to take portraits of people and I'm inspired by political movements, but this project made me look at the art I create in a different way.

I began to think about climate change and how trash and garbage are slowly changing everything for the worse. I thought about animals that live in the water and wondered what does it look like in their world?

I think back to when I was snorkeling in Costa Rica and Hawaii, and saw a lot of things that I didn't expect. I went back to those memories to form an idea of what aquatic life might see, and to bring attention to what we miss from our perspective on land.

One small bottle or plastic bag may seem harmless to a human but to a bird or a fish it can be the difference between life and death. Just because we can't see it, doesn't mean it doesn't exist.
“An empathetic culture of respect and learning through the lens of human rights.” This is the vision statement of our Dundas Valley Secondary School.

Dundas Valley Secondary School (DVSS) is surrounded by beautiful Dundas conversation area. DVSS is a part of Hamilton—Wentworth District School board and in my opinion fulfills HWDSB tag line—Curiosity, Creativity, Possibility—and offers its students many enrichment activities in Academics, Athletics and Arts.

The Incubator program with its topic “It’s a Plastic World” provided a valuable enrichment opportunity for our young artists. This topic gave them a chance to boost their curiosity about this issue in a global context. With the Incubator project our students were able to show their creativity in their photo-media art work while going through the full creative process. They started from generating ideas, continued from preliminary images to final image and finished with an artist statement. This creative process aligns exactly with the ARTS curriculum, so it was a great, meaningful assignment which was easy to incorporate into the classroom.

Even though participation and completion of projects was difficult with the COVID-19 pandemic lock down, I am very proud of how our students rose up to this challenge and succeeded. As history has proven, Arts are one of the disciplines that are somehow able to continue in difficult times and lift up the spirits of creators and the public. The success of this project was made possible by the amazing coaching from the Incubator artists.

Thank you Jenny, MaryAnn, Pehr! You are amazing! You went above and beyond to accommodate our student’s needs and help.

We are very proud to be able to participate for a second year in this inspiring Incubator Program. I know that our students will feel very accomplishment seeing their work online, along with many artists from all around Canada. Let that be a real inspiration for years to come.

Thank you to The Magenta Foundation for funding this invaluable program. This is the only program in Canada that gives money raised, back to schools for materials and supplies. We appreciate that you help us create more possibilities to support curiosity and the creativity of our students.
Look, I’m gonna be honest. I’m not good at creating meaningful messages in my art. I like creating stupid stuff that my friends all will laugh at. I leave the important things for the artists who have an actual message to pass long. So the challenge for me creating this image was to find my own message. I thought about the name, “It’s a Plastic World.” I thought about how much we use plastic on a daily basis. I want you to take a minute and think about how much plastic you use everyday. It’s a lot actually. Plastic is all around us, it basically consumes us. Hence the image. It is literally a plastic world. The world is made of a plastic water bottle. Like I said before, I’m not super talented at creating meaningful images. But I think I did pretty well on this one.

Due to the politics behind where our garbage and recycling really goes, I decided to make this image of a recycling truck. I think we should continue to do our part and recycle our waste by putting it in the appropriate bins, but also go beyond that to make sure we hold our governments accountable for their part, too. My inspiration came from a documentary aired on CBC News not too long ago, called “Tracking Your Plastic: Exposing Recycling Myths.” In the video, they show the damage that waste is doing to communities far from North America and how our waste affects them. I would encourage you to speak to your city councillor to make sure they are doing what they can to ensure our waste is reduced and disposed of properly.
No one is born insecure. As we grow we become more influenced by parents, peers and the media about what is beautiful.

When I heard the title ‘A Plastic World’ I thought of plastic surgery and everyone’s need for the perfect face and body. I’m interested in exploring the psychological and social impacts of celebrities on younger and older audiences; I want to express it through light and shape and colour to emphasize what we find beautiful.

I want the viewer to see how the ideals of beauty are unrealistic. How many celebrities have had plastic surgery and how unfair it is to compare yourself to them? I wanted to show some unrealistic expectations for young girls with plastic surgery, to create a ‘perfect’ plastic look, and to challenge the question of is this real?

Anastasiya Pasyeka
Plastic Faces

The world is a beautiful place, but sometimes you have to look past the beauty to see the bigger picture. Once you look further, what do you see? A pile of trash we created. Soon, the beautiful locations will also turn to landfills.

My work uses the empty bottles of drinks that we are constantly producing to create something interesting. I created this image out of a wall of bottles to also bring to our attention how much waste we create and how that amount of waste is so large, we can make actual structures out of it. Our world is slowly filling up with harmful plastics and soon we might truly be living in a plastic world.

Andy Young
In It

Dundas Valley Secondary School

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Dundas Valley Secondary School

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For my photo I tried to recreate the feeling of being “trapped in a plastic world.” Millions of animals around the
world are suffering due to human action: plastic pollution. Animals are getting trapped in our plastic waste and
are unable to help themselves; these animals are suffering because of us. With this photo I wrapped my arm
in a plastic wrap and tried to move my arm as much as I could, and found it hard to do. The reason I did this was
so I could feel and capture how it feels to be contained by plastic waste with no help.

Animals aren’t able to adapt to sudden changes in the world; they’ve been here for millions of years, way longer
than any of us. Then, suddenly in the span of a couple hundred years, or even less, their whole environment is
being tarnished by something they have no control of.

My entire piece was motivated by one thing—a desire to learn. I started this piece wanting to sew a jacket and
came out knowing that receipts are toxic to the environment and that they produce one billion pounds of waste
per year. I want the viewer to come out of looking at this piece with that same desire, to wonder why I made a
jacket made of receipts, and why it’s related to a burning forest. I’ve attempted to communicate the concept of
waste on the environment through clothing, and whether that is successful or not is up to the viewer.
I have always had a concern for the environment. I want to live on a clean planet where we have no waste. One of the biggest roadblocks of achieving that goal is our desire to consume. We as people have the desire to buy new flashy possessions in an attempt to have a short but strong rush of excitement. Very quickly do these possessions become outdated and obsolete. Our households build up with old pieces of plastic that was once the future and is now the past. The technology I used in my work has a recognizable feeling. This is because we were using them only a few years ago. In the blink of an eye these once-beloved technologies become ruins of the past. I want to show how fast this technology gets old by using familiar items and making them seem like old as ruins. We do not need to buy large amounts of technology just because they are new. This level of consumerism creates vast amounts of waste.

For my photo, I was inspired by Maria Svarbova. I enjoyed the way she used her models to look like cardboard cutouts of people and how some people can almost look plastic online. They can use social media to create a fantasy world. They create this fantasy world by always looking great and choosing themselves to do very extravagant things that they wouldn't normally do. On social media I constantly see people trying to show an unrealistic lifestyle that someone is living in the photo world to show off how easy it really is to live a lifestyle. The photo works in opposition to my real life as I do not dress formally very often and take more interest in streetwear. I also do not live a lifestyle where I am waking up fully clothed because of a crazy night.
Initially I was thinking, what's the first thing that comes to my mind when I hear, “It's a Plastic World”? And what came to mind was Barbie—especially the song lyric, “Life's fantastic when you're made of plastic.” I like how calm Barbie looks, it is kind of eerie. In my image, the Barbie doll is pretending everything is okay, pretending climate change doesn't exist, and she's choosing to ignore it. However, everything is not okay. I chose to do a mixture of cartoonish and real imagery. This shows how we pretend climate change isn't a problem and how some of us don't believe our planet is in trouble.
A NOTE FROM Grace Loney
VISUAL ARTIST AND EDUCATOR
ASSISTANT HEAD OF ARTS
SHERWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sherwood Secondary School is located on the escarpment in East Hamilton. It serves a diverse group of students from all walks of life. The mission of the school is to allow each student to develop and thrive in a safe and accepting environment, ensuring they are able to reach their highest potential.

The 2020 Incubator Program was a completely new experience for the senior art students involved, it being our first year participating. It provided a mature and developed approach to visual idea generation, and creative participation on the theme “It’s a Plastic World” with a wide array of interpretations.

This was an excellent segue into risk taking and idea ownership by Sherwood students exploring visual communication. Their efforts were encouraged actively by the FF Incubator team of artist educators through research, proposals, idea development and self-representation.

The knowledge, gratification and resulting body of work that students gained as they discovered the FF Incubator creative experience is unparalleled at this time. This life changing experience gives a profound boost of understanding and confidence to high school students as their work is seen, appreciated, celebrated and published. Profound as well is that their work will always link them to the strange time of COVID-19.

The curricular support as well as the generous sharing back of funds raised by the efforts of Flash Forward Incubator will directly affect the success and diversity of our programming for these and future Sherwood students. A huge thank you to the Flash Forward Incubator team including MaryAnn, Fehn, Cassandra and Jenny, for believing in this program and working so hard to provide this experience to our youth. Many thanks also for the care and consideration that the team generously extended to our students during their creative process.

A heartfelt thank you to the corporate benefactors who support The Magenta Foundation by funding this invaluable program. Without you, this could not happen. Together we strengthen and nurture education in visual arts, helping students step into their future with confidence.
I took this photo back in March break when my family went to Mexico. While I was there, I kept an eye out for some wildlife to take pictures of because it interests me, and I could potentially use one for this project. I was walking along the beach and saw a small crab walking through some washed-up seaweed. Almost right beside it was what looked like a coffee pod with barnacles stuck to it. Seeing nature and plastic blending together like that instantly made me think of the theme "plastic world." I took the picture with the only camera I have, my iPhone. Along with the photo I added some waves at the top because the photo was taken on a beach and I used a marker/paint tool to blend it in with the sand and near the bottom. The editing apps I used were Explain everything and Photoshop fix. I hope the viewer sees how our human influence of plastic in nature is found all around the world.

Callum Spencer
Nature Mixing

I have always been interested in the irrational nature of people. I like the little complications in life and what causes them. In my art, I reflect these minor things through colorful and dynamic pieces.

For the topic of "a plastic world," I wanted to take a closer look at the connection people have with plastic through toys and why people use plastic, even if they know its damaging effects on the environment. I used the idea of toys to explore the different reactions the world has towards plastic, both positive and negative. Growing up, I had a strong interest in toys and figures from my favorite series. I admired the characters and connected their personalities to the toys. I also learned of plastic’s part in climate change, hurting animals, and the ocean.

My artwork connects the idea of nostalgia and the issue of plastic pollution so people will understand how we can be distracted by the fun of plastic products.

Cyrus Sullivan-Cormier
Capable of Great Compassion and Great Violence

The irrational nature of people has always interested me. I like the little complications in life and what causes them. In my art, I reflect these minor things through colorful and dynamic pieces.

For the topic of "a plastic world," I wanted to take a closer look at the connection people have with plastic through toys and why people use plastic, even if they know its damaging effects on the environment. I used the idea of toys to explore the different reactions the world has towards plastic, both positive and negative. Growing up, I had a strong interest in toys and figures from my favorite series. I admired the characters and connected their personalities to the toys. I also learned of plastic’s part in climate change, hurting animals, and the ocean.

My artwork connects the idea of nostalgia and the issue of plastic pollution so people will understand how we can be distracted by the fun of plastic products.
In my project, I wanted to work with the themes of self expression, the media and plastic surgery.

A Plastic World is the idea that people can be plastic. We are fake people and we mould into the plastic person the world wants us to be. A lot of people feel pressured into looking perfect and will do anything, but once you apply the makeup and get the nose job you are still not good enough for the world. I want to show that there is a good and bad side to a plastic world. The side everyone wants you to see such as, flawless lip fillers or Botox or a breast implant that were successful. But then there is a side that the world doesn’t want you to see. The legal surgeries, botched surgery, procedures that are harmful chemical that leave people completely damaged.

Plastic surgery is self expression but I just want to show the dangers of a plastic world and how we feel we have to change ourselves to make the media happy.

When I first heard the term “It’s a Plastic World”, I instantly knew that I wanted to explore this idea of a “plastic person” or someone society views as flawless when the reality of it all is that all people are struggling with issues and insecurities of their own.

I was very inspired by the music videos “Dollhouse” and “Mrs. Potato Head” both written and directed by Melanie Martinez. I loved how she had created this character that had a so-called picture-perfect from an outside perspective but slowly revealed a darker side to this character.

As people with our own thoughts and feelings, it’s common that we critique others on their imperfections, but why? To protect ourselves from the fact we will never be perfect through the eyes of society.

In the photo, all you see is a person with plastic surgery marks. You don’t know who she is, what she wants or her story, no one does, not even me. All I know is this, she has issues just like you and me.
My work was inspired by art itself, and the importance of its presence in our world. Being an artist, art is something that’s always been in my life that I’ve appreciated. In my piece, I show how art creates the world we live in.

One idea I explored is that the world is plastic, like mouldable clay. The world is shapeable and we can make what we want of it. I also explored the metaphor of the earth being the clay which is molded by artists around the world. The hands and all the colours in my piece represent the diversity in art between the people that produce it, and art itself and its versatility.

Another idea I explored is that the world is fake like plastic. I show that art is what is organic and real in it. I present how art brings colour and genuineness to the world. Without art, our world is lifeless and mundane. It brings joy and living, and makes life interesting.

Jamie Rivera (they/them)
Radical Acceptance

Kayden Mote
Art’s Creation
For my image, Painting Plastic, I wanted to create something poetic. I used Adobe Paintcan to create the effect because it is meant to be poetic. Plastic use in our world is a scary thing—an overused solution to a mild world problem. So, using the tools I’ve been given, I chose to express plastic use in this manner. It is a scary world we live in; an overuse of a resource when you’re not needing to use it, ie. wrapping a single unpeeled orange in plastic packaging at the grocery store. Unnecessary, and very harmful to the environment.

Painting Plastic

For my image, Extinction, I wanted to capture the feeling of hopelessness. I thought about the impending doom that is quickly approaching and how fragile ecosystems are. Plastic is becoming part of our biology and severely impacting wildlife. Thousands of birds and aquatic life die every day due to the amount of plastic in our environment. I believe that when humans go extinct, nature will come back and thrive. My piece depicts a dog, two birds, and a baby—surrounded by a world created entirely of plastic. The innocence of the animals and the baby is sad and their entire existence is surrounded by the outcome of our species’ preventable wrongdoing. It demonstrates that even when humans are gone, our effects will last far beyond our own existence.

Extinction

Malori Clark

Matt Blair Föbel
As an artist, I feel it's important to release emotion through art so I can feel more connected to the world around me, and those who view it can as well. Though I'm young in age, I express realistic points of view and experiences for all ages.

The process I went through creating this was focusing on the two faced world we grow to adapt to. We tend to wear masks or veils placed on the true colors of this star we are living on. Plastic is something fake and mould-able, I feel our world is covered with sheets of plastic. Capturing this concept and placing it onto a page can not only inspire, but I believe it increases our open-mindedness as artists overall.

My creative process is based on what is going on around me. On days that I’m stressed, I come home from school, grab a pencil and paper and simply sketch ideas that have been rumbling inside my head until my mind clears. While sketching these ideas I focus on the sound of my pencil gliding against the paper, and the pressure I use to get deeper or lighter values.

This is how my idea for the Flash forward incubator was formed. My work is based on how contained my head is for most of the day, until I can finally open it up to some incredible ideas. The bottle represents restriction and containment but the falls represents natural flowing ideas. What I’d like people to come away with is to explore what makes your head clear up and relax, in order to focus on the one thing you’re trying to achieve.
I've always appreciated our environment. As I got older, I realized that not everyone felt the same way. My artwork demonstrated how our society is treating the environment and how the consequences of littering, specifically with plastic, are more severe than people realize. Through my artwork, I want to show everyone that by littering, we are harming our air, plants, and animals. I manipulated my image to achieve a gloomy and sickly mood in the atmosphere. By Photoshopping plastic wrap around a few trees, I wanted to show people that when we start to litter, the trees are suffocating and suffering. The blue deer symbolize how the animals in our environment are suffocating from the plastic. My goal is to help people understand through my artwork how we're harming the environment and that we all need to do our part to keep it clean.
A NOTE FROM Dona Schwartz
EXPOSURE PRESIDENT AND
BOARD CHAIR & Beth Kane
EXPOSURE COORDINATOR

The annual Exposure Photography Festival presents exhibitions that showcase photographic work by internationally renowned practitioners, alongside emerging and established talent from Alberta. Exposure provides an exciting, innovative meeting place for photographers and art lovers to connect with one another, along with curators and photography professionals from around the world. The festival brings together people of all ages to celebrate Alberta’s rich photography scene and creative communities.

Exposure 2020 explored photography’s past and present, as well as its future—what it might be. By engaging with photography’s current place in contemporary art we can begin to envision the future of the medium. Our partnership with The Incubator program allowed us to engage with the project’s participating photographers and share the vision of the creative young people taking part. Our joint exhibition of the students’ work showcased their experimental approaches to photography and fresh, innovative thinking, giving us a glimpse of the medium’s future. Exposure’s audiences enjoyed the opportunity to engage with the work created by Incubator Program participants, illuminated by the artist talks given by students at the exhibition’s opening party on February 16th, 2020.

The Incubator Program exhibition encourages a wider conversation about access to the arts in the Canadian education system, providing a forum for important discussions about the future of the arts, art practitioners and audiences. Exposure is honored to collaborate with The Magenta Foundation and bring this energizing exhibition and important dialogue to the festival.

Thank you to our partners, the University of Calgary and ABL Imaging, for supporting the Incubator Program exhibition at The Little Gallery, in the University’s Department of Art. Thanks also to the participating photographers, teachers, and schools: Westmount Charter School, École Secondaire Foothills Composite High School–Alberta High School of Fine Arts in Calgary, and Eastglen High School in Edmonton.
I've been attending Alberta High School of Fine Arts for two years now. As a future graduate from the school, I have been involved in graphic design for two years. One of my longstanding interests, astrophysics, has been integrated into many works I've created. The driving force behind this work comes from personal experiences in my past. As a kid, my family would make drastic moves, which shaped my value in internationalism and allowed me to readily imagine the impact of current issues throughout the world. Inspired by these experiences, I looked at the photos I've taken on my travels and wondered what the gorgeous photos would look like through a plastic filter. This idea led to some challenges. As I worked through the images, I found it difficult to create a work that satisfies me and my perspective but also communicates my message. For me, the result is somewhat infographic, reflecting both the larger picture of my experiences and the reality I experienced while living there.

Angeli Chan
Weirdiz in Plastica

ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE
FOOTHILLS
COMPOSITE
HIGH SCHOOL

ALBERTA
HIGH SCHOOL
OF FINE ARTS
The image I created is to raise awareness of plastic waste around the world and the unhealthy effects it has on our environment. The statement, “If it is out of sight, it is out of mind” is the driving reason behind the choices I made, because I believe that people should become more aware of how plastic impacts and changes the world we live in today. Through my research, I learned that many products produced today contain a large amount of plastic within them. While walking around town, I began to observe the abundance of plastic waste around us in places that I didn’t notice before, and this drove me to take action and show that just because you don’t see it doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. I want people to realize that plastic pollution is a major problem. It is already claiming wildlife, water sources, and our land, having a negative impact on the world we live in today and we need to take action.

For this project, I wanted to show the effects of trash in our environment and I wanted to communicate this idea in a format many would recognize. To do this, I chose to include a symbol everyone knows and a snowy forest, two things every Canadian has seen. These are two of the most recognizable things that I see during the winter months, and this is due to careless high school students throwing their garbage from lunch into the snow. I used the McDonald’s cup because it is a popular fast food lunch, and although many people don’t believe they litter when they throw something away, such as a McDonald’s cup, they stop and think that they might be littering and they need to be more careful.

On the project, I took the photo of the McDonald’s cup because it was fate. When I took the photo, I had just eaten McDonald’s and knew I had to take a photo, it was fate.

Cole Smethurst
I am Erik McDougall and I am a student at AHSFA, the Alberta High School of Fine Arts. The type of art I create is more realistic or worldly than others because unlike most other artists, I tend to look into the meaning of things beyond their emotional value. The driving force behind my photograph is the thesis that you can't hold people responsible for something they are forced to do such as using plastic materials or oil products. The message I would like someone to take away from my image is that just because something is labelled as evil doesn't mean that it has no positive associated with it. And as my Grandfather always said "Mow your lawn before you mow your neighbour."

My name is Jacob Heuver. I’m a student at the Foothills Composite High School in Okotoks. Every day at lunch, I sit at the same table with my friends and we eat the lunches we packed. Only during this project did I realize how much plastic we use every day. We use a ton of plastic bags, and all our food comes in plastic packaging. I made my project using images from one day’s worth of lunches. I combined photography alongside vector art to hopefully create a unique, colourful, and interesting composition. I really like the vibrant colours that I can use and experiment with when using vector, but I also like to take into account the things that actually exist in real life, like the plastic that I had in my bag. I hope that my project will help to make people more conscious of the sheer amount of plastic they use everyday, without even knowing it.
I am Josh Olson, a grade 11 student at the Foothills Composite High School/Alberta High School of Fine Arts. Most of the art that I create is vector and raster art, which is mostly digital drawing, so photography is not my primary art form—but it has been interesting to explore and integrate some vector touches by adding a filter to my image. The driving force behind the photograph was originally the desire to get a good grade at school, however as I began to explore the theme of “A Plastic World” the reality of this problem began to evoke a deeper understanding and desire to share this issue with those who are not aware of its importance. My only hope is that people who view this photograph experience the change that I did and understand that our time to act is now—a difference can be made with every bottle reused or properly recycled. Our Earth is running out of time before it truly becomes a plastic world.

For the creation of my photograph, I selected a style that relates to the one seen in National Geographic. They tend to focus on one object and change the object’s direct purpose in an abstract way. For my work, I focused on the bottle and its natural cold nature and how it helps it blend into the surrounding environment. I made certain alterations to this picture, such as the removal of the branding and slight brightness and contrast changes. These alterations help to create my vision of this bottle resembling an arctic glacier consisting of snow and blue ice.
Passion is something I don’t lack in the things I do and believe in, such as my writing and videography. If you look closer at my work, you might notice something you didn’t before; such as little details with big meaning. It’s evident in this project; there are things that will make you think. I feel this is how everything should be done with how you spend your time doing it for.

I think self-expression is important for me to show in my work. My interpretations, my perspectives, all the things that make my work unique to me. I decided to do this project this way because I thought it would be interesting to show off my own perspective of how people are affected by the world around us. The fast-rising environmental crisis could do internal and external damage to us and it already has to many other organisms.

To conclude, I have used my own style of expression to show the dangerous and potentially deadly side effects of plastic.

An artist I personally connect with is Gunnar Freyr an Icelandic Photographer that documents the effects of climate change in the north. He uses anything from landscape photography to portraiture to portray his meaning. Coming from the Alberta foothills, with my piece I would like to show the impact that plastic waste has on my environment. With my photograph, I’m looking to represent the new upcoming generation “suffocating” in the mess of a planet we have been challenged with. As someone just turning 18 and entering the world as a young adult, it makes me wonder, if in my lifetime will I have to suffer the consequences of the actions of mankind?

Kaden MacPhail
Fragile

Kyle Cznick
Suffocate

École Secondaire Foothills Composite High School
Alberta High School of Fine Arts
Louie Blankenstyn was born in Calgary, Alberta, and once lived in Los Angeles before moving back to Calgary for some reason. He now resides in Foothills County, where he collects kitschy souvenirs from various places around North America. He has lots of experience in Adobe Illustrator and is currently studying graphic design and film. Louie loves the writing and editing aspects of film, which will be very useful, hopefully. He’s also interested in making rhythmic background and landscape chase scenes through this project, he was attempting to create something like those. This one in particular is made of plastic bags from his favorite and least favorite grocery stores, reusing the plastic as a way to engage his audience and encourage them to think about our collective consumption of plastic bags. In the near future, he hopes to study animation and art. This statement is written in the third person, despite the fact that he wrote this himself. What’s my—his inspiration for making art, you ask? There are plenty of animators and artists and writers that have affected my life and impacted the people around me. I also enjoy trying new angles with my work in order to create a new and unique piece, that can challenge what I am capable of. The most prominent aspect of my artwork would be the intensity of the emotion being shown. The photographs I’ve produced reflect this by demonstrating how people will turn a blind eye to the world of plastic around them. Regardless of the problem being right in front of them.
I am a young artist that just wants to create art that people or myself would enjoy. When I got to take the photo of a fake plant, it made me feel that I could express my feelings about the theme. I would like people to see the detail I put into my work and how a lot of detail can go a long way.

For this project, I chose to explore how we replace real life with plastic look-alikes. Plastic plants and grass replica look so similar that you almost can’t tell the difference and feel that there is a deeper meaning in the world of plastic than we realize. Some people would believe that it is wrong to replicate something so natural and would call it disgusting, but I believe that you can preserve beauty in a plastic form.

I feel that I am showing the world of plastic in a positive light—showing the world what plastic can do to improve our world instead of hurting it.

I like to make art that resembles what is happening in my life—good or bad. During this assignment, I have been really interested in money and business and the effect that they have on the world. My art can vary from bright and vibrant works, to more down-to-earth and realistic projects. In my photo, I wanted to capture the leftovers of a family dinner and what is wasted—a mix of plastic and paper that is then thrown into the garbage. I would like people to look at my work and think of the effect that big companies have all over the world and how they contribute to the waste that is hurting the earth. I would like to bring new light on this subject so that people may think differently and begin to reconsider how they throw garbage out.
Tarek Alexander is an Alberta, Canada based graphic designer focusing on simple, yet powerful designs. With an interest in minimalism, an eye for detail, and a love for bringing people’s visions to life, Tarek started designing graphics from a young age. He works with a laid-back simplicity and is inspired by his love for video games. He uses artistic symbols to create a meaningful design without unnecessary clutter.

For this project, Tarek used his interest in graphic design to express the theme. His vision for the future is to push for a more simple world, filled with modern and meaningful designs, and when it comes to a plastic world, he hopes to shed light on what one person can do to make a difference on the growing issue of plastic usage in the future.

William Sutton
Bottle of Truthfulness

I began my journey in graphic design just two short years ago, but ever since then, I feel that I have greatly improved. I have taken the courses necessary, and gotten help from my top peers to broaden my understanding of online graphic design and my artistic eye. In my pieces, I like to capture the use of simplistic, modern designs but adding a feeling of complexity. The feeling that I would like to make with my work is a smooth flow and the idea that something so simple can bring so much thought and satisfaction. I like my compositions to create through, and leave the viewer wondering on a deeper level.

In this work, I looked to create a void like nothingness with the background and a direct connection to everyday consumerism as the focus of your attention. For me, this shows how the average person can become engulfed in a moral downfall without having the mental recognition of it themselves.
The work I have created reflects my own views on how we impact our world with what we create, and how that consequently impacts us. The reason I make the art that I make is to send a message and make an impact on the world. I was inspired by the work of Mária Švarbová in her unconventional look at the theme of “Plastic World.” I was very intrigued by her creativity and sought to reflect that in my work. In the piece that I created, I wanted to show my take on the effects of the things we neglect. Our production of plastic has been destroying ecosystems and suffocating certain animals, and if we follow the same track we are currently on, we too will follow suit.
I am a photographer. I like to create memories and moments that I can keep forever. Anyone can make art in photography in their own way. For me, every emotion or event with the click of a button is frozen in time. I don’t really like photographing things around because I don’t think of myself as a way to create something new and meaningful.

For this work, my inspiration was the world. It’s the way we act towards our problems and the ignorance of those who don’t have to “deal” with the problem on a daily basis. In the world of the picture, I wanted to show how the subject was surrounded with plastic and garbage, yet he sits there like there’s no problem, playing on his phone. I want people to observe the mess that we are in and take a closer look at technology and how it distracts us from problems such as plastic pollution. A lot of people from all generations need to wake up to realize not the world created on a screen.

Jonathan Scott
Garbage King
—

I am a photographer and an artist who likes to capture the world around me and send a message through my work. When I thought of the theme “A Plastic World,” I wanted to show the effect plastic and pollution have on the environment, especially animals, and create something that would immediately connect the viewer to this idea. It was challenging to find a creative way to show this idea, but I was inspired by a piece of art that took the theme literally. So, I decided to make animals out of plastic and other types of garbage.

Katelyn Lega
Garbage Animals
—

I am a photographer and an artist who likes to capture the world around me and send a message through my work. When I thought of the theme “A Plastic World,” I wanted to show the effect plastic and pollution have on the environment, especially animals, and create something that would immediately connect the viewer to this idea. It was challenging to find a creative way to show this idea, but I was inspired by a piece of art that took the theme literally. So, I decided to make animals out of plastic and other types of garbage.
My name is Mitchell Embleton. I'm a high school student at Eastglen and I've been making art for six years. The reason I make art is pretty simple. I love it. Art makes the world go round. Telling stories by using light to explain a point of view, or just to show something you can be proud of. We wouldn't be the same without art. Which is why I was ecstatic to be a part of this project because I got to do all three. My message? To show what our planet would look like from the outside. My point of view? This is how a high school student sees the world, inherently plastic. Something I'm proud of? Absolutely.
Art sends a message, a reflection of not only the artist, but the society in which they live, too. The largest narrative surrounding plastic pollution is that of consumers. However, the vast majority of pollution comes from corporations, not consumers. Criticizing consumers ignores the bigger picture, and places blame not on those responsible, but instead on the public. My artwork challenges that. My artwork depicts a worker, a 3D model from DAZ-3D, surrounded by burning oil and garbage, holding up a storm. This is inspired from the ancient Greek myth of Atlas, who was forced to hold up the sky. Likewise, the working class are forced to bear the weight of climate change, while corporations only contribute to it. The most common form of plastic pollution is fishing nets, despite common belief, hence their presence. Money is the fundamental core of capitalism, the root cause of all these problems, it appears ruthless. My art was made by overlaying a CGI environment I modeled, over a photograph.
I am a visual artist and I create to convey emotion and a message. I do not consider myself a photographer; however, I decided to push myself outside of my comfort zone. The inspiration for my piece came from my love of painting portraits. I wanted to create something that I would like to use as a reference image.

Plastic is everywhere and in almost everything. The effect that the production and disposal of plastics is having on our world is harmful and overwhelming. I selected an image where the subject does not look concerned as she is drowning in plastic. The subject is calm and not doing anything about the situation she has found herself in. She doesn't even seem to acknowledge that it is happening. For me, this is similar to how some large corporations and a lot of the population have responded to the plastic issue. Do you see any similarities between your response and that of the model? What can you do to stop yourself from drowning?

Something I wish to address regarding the topic is the rising conflict between consumerism and the environment as more people become aware of the latter while being unwilling to give up anything of the former. Too often, we focus on things like plastic water bottles and how we might decrease our consumption of those while we continue buying things like toys that are made of copious amounts of plastic. We use these plastic-based objects every day but like all other items, they will be discarded someday. Plastic toys are the subject of my photograph because I feel they represent the recurring presence of plastic in our lives. From an early age, plastic is a constant while we don’t learn its consequences until much later, causing a disconnection between the items we buy and their environmental impact in our minds. If we focus on the use of plastic in all aspects of our lives, I believe that we can move towards a better future in which the world isn’t made of so much plastic.
Our day-to-day lives are comprised of tendencies built upon social customs that we may not notice. Naturally, habits differ from person-to-person, but inherent in all are fundamental qualities that are a product of our social conditioning.

Through my work, I examine how plastic has been integrated into society due to our own decisions, yet it is something we wouldn’t question unless prompted otherwise. In a playful and abstract manner, I have omitted unneeded elements to emphasize the focal point, while encouraging viewers to take a closer look at the image before them. Lemons are commonplace and upon first glance, they may come across as normal. However, looking closely, their organic seeds have been replaced by miniature plastic dolls—representative of the younger generations who are growing up in an age that is more strongly associated with artificiality. My intention is to urge individuals to practice observing what shapes our lifestyles, as this subtle mindfulness will influence the choices we make and ideally lead to the preservation of the vast world around us.

Society is ever changing and great strides have been made throughout history; however, the ignorance towards the health of the Earth is alarming. With the deterioration of the Earth being pinned on plastic waste and its inability to decompose and return to nature, I have created a vision of the future if the world is to continue on its path. My work is an examination of Earth’s perception of the dangers of pollution, and was inspired by Pixar’s *Wall-E* which also depicts a post-apocalyptic Earth abandoned due to the amount of garbage. Plastics are a very versatile product and have been used over the past several decades without any examinations of the consequences. In my piece, a 360 camera was used to create the “little planet” effect which shows a world made out of garbage.
The purpose of this piece is to highlight the long-term impact we’ve made on our environment through the large-scale industrial pollution of our air, land, and sea habitats that are greatly affected by plastic pollution. My inspiration for this piece came from a great love for winter and a great melancholy that the snow melts. I then began to investigate the literal and figurative narratives that emerge—a reflection on the state our habitat can be taken from the melting of the ice and its literal parallels to shrinking icebergs and figurative resemblance to the existing conditions in which we live.

Everything we see is an accumulation of perspectives colliding and merging. The need to create unattainable futures has an impact on the natural world. This dichotomy is what intrigued me and is what I attempt to capture; some elements within this image are visually amplified to showcase what isn’t immediately registered normally. The distinction between modern society and the natural world is evident, especially with the current progression of humanity leaving behind physical marks on the world—most notably, the impact of waste on the environment. The abundance of plastic finding its way into nature creates an immediate visual disturbance and this collision drastically affects the composition of my image. These unnatural objects have been manipulated in my image to take on an abstract form in regards to the mentality as the saying goes, to “look at the world through a rosy tint.” This automatically creates a separation between the existing world and an idealized, oblivious interpretation of it. These established worlds integrate to form a collective whole, a mismatch of contrasting subjects and perspectives.
The tea industry recently introduced ‘fancy’ nylon tea bags. Advertised as being able to hold more tea, being biodegradable, and having a silk-like feel, it’s no wonder these tea bags are flying off the shelves. However, nylon tea bags release billions of microplastics when placed in hot water. Scientists are unsure how these plastics affect the human body, but given the impact of microplastics in the world’s oceans and freshwater sources, I am concerned about the potential health risks that these plastics may cause in my mug of tea. After several instances of ordering tea at local cafes, I discovered these ‘fancy’ tea bags are very popular. So to illustrate the danger, I decided to create an image that exaggerates how revolting the idea of plastic tea bags is. I filled a nylon tea bag with plastic household garbage and floated it in murky water. The resulting close-up photograph shows the reality of my views of nylon tea bags. I am left with the question: whatever happened to using loose leaf tea?

Plastic has become entrenched in almost all aspects of our lives, from healthcare to packaging, even in areas where we don’t typically think of us involving plastics. Its low cost, ease of production, flexibility, and durability have made it an almost magical creation. Its integration into our lives, however, is a double-edged sword and has the potential to destroy the world we call home, much like a laboratory experiment gone wrong. So far, we’ve embraced our creation and woven it into our lives, but as my piece illustrates, plastic is beginning to invade our environment, and its growth has spiralled out of control.

Elena Pan
Plastic City

Erik Linder
Care For a Cup of Tea?

The tea industry recently introduced ‘fancy’ nylon tea bags. Advertised as being able to hold more tea, being biodegradable, and having a silk-like feel, it’s no wonder these tea bags are flying off the shelves. However, nylon tea bags release billions of microplastics when placed in hot water. Scientists are unsure how these plastics affect the human body, but given the impact of microplastics in the world’s oceans and freshwater sources, I am concerned about the potential health risks that these plastics may cause in my mug of tea. After several instances of ordering tea at local cafes, I discovered these ‘fancy’ tea bags are very popular. So to illustrate the danger, I decided to create an image that exaggerates how revolting the idea of plastic tea bags is. I filled a nylon tea bag with plastic household garbage and floated it in murky water. The resulting close-up photograph shows the reality of my views of nylon tea bags. I am left with the question: whatever happened to using loose leaf tea?
My main objective of this piece is to illustrate the longevity of plastic and the durability of this material. Overall, plastic as a resource has its pros and cons; however, I find that many people focus only on the cons. Although single-use plastics have become a great detriment to the environment, plastic has been used in medicine for quite some time, as it is reliable, sterile, and non-deteriorating. A couple of examples of the use of this material are prosthetics, as well as joint replacements. I selected the board game Operation as the subject of my photograph because it relates back to the medical use of plastics and how this material has helped people to increase their mobility as well as the other benefits that this material provides.

In everyday life, we are constantly bombarded by the message to buy without considering the negative consequences that our choices may have. It is not uncommon for media and advertisements to suggest or encourage individuals to consume for personal or momentary satisfaction at the expense of the deterioration of the environment. Through my image, I hope to bring more attention to the integration of plastic use as well as how we have become heavily reliant on it, even labeling it as an ‘essential’ material. Though it is often easy to disregard our involvement in making poor consumer choices, I realized how susceptible we may actually be. As a result of my poor consumer choices, I had accumulated piles of waste in the form of plastic toys in my own household. The objects used in the image act as evidence of the forms of wasteful plastic in my life and the text reflects how retailers appeal to our individual interest to save money rather than to save the environment.
The goal for me with the project was to get something as realistic or "natural" as possible, something that you would encounter in your everyday life. While exploring the outdoor space near my house, I found a water bottle stuck in the snow and used it as a prop, composing the image with the highway as the background. I wanted to draw attention to the laziness put into the disposing of waste: how it’s become normal in society to have beach clean-ups and to throw other garbage away because they didn’t do it right the first time. In my image, I am showing the nihilistic irony I live despite how much we care about the Earth: how much a few of us are disposing of waste responsibly, it doesn’t matter because there will still be people who don’t. Some of these people have immense influence, like politicians who care nothing of climate change—a topic that I feel strongly about. It was the helplessness that I feel in regards to such a large-scale problem that led me to take this approach.

Jody Yeun
Disposable

The work is reflective of my personal past with plastic, and of what I see in Calgary’s society. Our use and improper disposal of plastics is a current and important problem. I often feel overwhelmed when I think of how ingrained plastics is in our society and the amount we need to change our lifestyle in order to solve it. In my image, our past is represented by the footprints filled with plastics; our present has alternatives to those plastics—though there is still a long way to go. I wanted to also acknowledge the changes that have been made and encourage hope through the continuation of improvements towards a cleaner planet. The word and past steps show a comparison that inspires hope for a better future and encouragement for the continuation of improving the footprints of what we leave behind.

Kathryn MacDonald
Our Path Through Time

2020 Alums

Flash Forward Incubator
2020 / Alberta
Westmount Charter School
When I look at an image, what I take in and see is the contrast within. Elements that are more prominent, and subjects that immediately catch your eye and hold your attention are my focal point in an image.

The environment and the things around me influence the way I think and see the world. I see potential in everything—we objects are immortal and can be used either to improve or take away from the world around us.

The elegant globe sticks out over the rest. Symbolically, I see this image as it relates to the way we are treating our earth. The world that we stand on, as mighty as it is, it’s merely a larger environment holding its own potential. As inhabitants of earth, it is our responsibility as to what we do with that potential, be it something beautiful or to cast it away.

My purpose in this photograph was to capture a much less talked about aspect of plastic pollution: the effect of massive barge and how they are a leading cause of plastic waste building up in the Atlantic Ocean. I have used a colour image in order for the ships to stand out and communicate the vastness of this problem. Our world may go to a dull and dreary place as a result of our inaction and lack of consideration for the environment. The grey sky reflects the dreariness of this potential future if we do not change our habit. The water rippling peacefully reflects the innate and ignored beauty of our natural environment. My image subtly portrays the influence of plastic because the ships subtly spread plastic across the ocean without our active awareness.
Capture is pleased to partner with The Magenta Foundation to present the third edition of the Flash Forward Incubator in British Columbia. This year, Capture asked practicing artists to participate in the program to engage meaningfully with students to mentor them through the artistic process.

The theme for 2019–2020, “It’s a Plastic World”, has inspired a diverse range of responses from students. They created both literal and conceptual interpretations of how plastic may affect us personally, including our behaviours, values, and sense of self in conjunction with the intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of our times.

Capture Photography Festival was established in 2013 and presents the most compelling lens-based art annually in April at dozens of galleries and public art spaces throughout Metro Vancouver. The Festival includes an Exhibition Program alongside an extensive Public Art Program, a Youth Program, and an Events Program that spans tours, films, artist talks, and community events. Launched in 2013, Capture is Western Canada’s largest lens-based festival. Incubator students in BC are given the special opportunity to feature their work alongside many other emerging as well as established artists during this citywide festival.

In response to the current call to stay safe at home, Capture transitioned much of its programming online including creating a virtual exhibition to feature the work of the students in the Incubator program as well as an online auction to benefit the schools involved. We would like to extend huge congratulations to all the students involved!
I enjoy creating random images that have symmetry but relate to an idea or subject in some way. I believe that when someone looks at a photo, the image should have enjoyable features. My intention is to create work that encourages the viewer to spend time investigating a few different spots that capture their attention. Whether it is a portrait or a still image of a landscape, I hope to include features that will keep the viewer interested. I like to think about the subject and the broader idea. In regard to my image for the Incubator Program, my goal is to encourage the viewer to contemplate what is happening. However, I don’t want to draw any conclusions, but I want the viewer to understand that by not recycling, you are harming the environment.
Did you know that every day roughly eight million pieces of plastic find their way into our oceans? According to Surfers Against Sewage, every year the world produces 381 million tonnes of plastic waste and this is supposed to double by 2024. These are very shocking statistics. We are conscious of how much plastic pollution there is, yet most of us just ignore it. By showing these articles about plastic pollution in my work, I believe it will encourage people to see the reality of the problem. The articles I’ve chosen are not just about plastic’s effect on animals but also its effects on us. I used to think that plastic pollution mainly impacted animals but after doing research, I am inspired to show in my work that it also has a huge influence on humans as well. My name is Jade Martell, and it’s time to take action against plastic pollution.

Plastic is a wide topic to represent in one image as it has many different meanings. Every second, we hear of animals who are injured by plastic waste or are eating plastic and dying. The paper crane symbolizes peace, love, and hope. I think our peace, love, and hope for Earth and animals are gone. The bag over the paper crane expresses how animals have difficulty living with all the plastics around the world; the animals have to survive within oceans polluted with garbage. I hope my work encourages people to think about the risks of this material and use plastic more carefully.
Photography is an excellent medium to create an image that tells a story or to influence one’s emotions. My work visualizes the idea that plastic affects our environment as water and plastic are always connected. By using a plastic water bottle with a hole, I capture the inside to show the water flowing through it. There is more plastic than water and their merging appearances represents the regularity that humanity pollutes the ocean with immense amounts of plastic. The goal of my work is to motivate people to care more about the situation we have as a society with plastic waste by taking action and making small, or even large, changes in their day-to-day lives.

I was inspired by the beauty standard that we as the youth hold. Nowadays, with the influence of social media, we are constantly looking at an almost unreachable standard of perfection. The men and women that inspire us from the screens on our phones, computers, and televisions seem almost fake and “plastic.” This is exactly what I wanted to portray. By placing a plastic bag over my friend’s head to hide her facial features behind the “perfection” of a beautiful model, I portray the feeling of unobtainable standards. The Renaissance-inspired background references one of the world’s most famous paintings—the Mona Lisa. An artist as talented as Leonardo da Vinci painted her, which means she was special enough to be painted. It is the same as the character in my photo as she desperately wishes to be pretty enough to be photographed.
Flash Forward Incubator
2020 / British Columbia

For this project, I use floss and Q-tips. These are items that we use every day, yet people do not think they make a significant impact. The theme, “It’s a Plastic World,” relates to me as I like to look at things from a different perspective and through different colours while addressing the social problems within. I believe that as a community, we can work together to make the world a safe and clean environment for everyone. Every day we waste plastic and don’t think about it. I was inspired by Alejandro Durán’s work with his image of the toothbrushes lined in the ground. I like the perspective he has on the environment and how his work shows that small things can impact the world. When people see my work, I want them to leave with the message that we can all make a difference a little bit at a time.

Madison Monahan
The Different Perspective of Plastic

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Karla Carmona
LEGO

For most me and many others, LEGO’s were a huge part of our childhoods. Despite this, once we grow up most of us tend to throw out LEGO’s away as we no longer have a need for them. Rather than being properly recycled they tend to end up in landfills. LEGO’s are made out of a plastic type called ABS which can take over 1000 years to decompose. The photo shows the damage that thrown out LEGO’s can cause and that we should try to find a new home for them rather than just throwing them out.

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Our earth is in danger now, more than ever. The environment is failing and climate change is on the rise. However, are those the only things that are affected? Our society has a tendency to view only what is right in front of what is clearly visible and ignores other ways our world is suffering. Plastic doesn’t just affect the natural environment; it also affects the people who live in it. Humans beings who are capable of showing their misery are suffering too. My photograph reveals this painful reality by capturing what it feels like to live in a world suffocated by trash. By exposing the emotions and expressions of a person in my work, the viewer is able to recognize that harmful waste can affect people too. My name is Valerie Durova, and I focus on photographing the raw and untold aspects of life.

Nathan Birkett
Plastic vs. Nature

I want to convey something to do with the environment and climate change because I see too much garbage on the forest floor while I am walking through it. I made garbage look natural in the environment to try and change people’s minds about picking up garbage that’s not necessarily yours.
The driving force behind my project is to show what we are doing to the world in a relatable way to encourage people to understand the seriousness of climate change. The human population is represented by the human figure, and the plastic bag over their head symbolizes that society is suffocating. For me, it shows what the earth is feeling every time we use a plastic bag. If we continue to burn fossil fuels, use disposable plastics, and cause carbon emissions, the earth is going to suffocate due to our behavior. We need to start making a change now. If not, it is going to be too late.
Earth’s inhabitants are on the verge of extinction due to the excessive amount of plastic which takes years to decompose. The image I created visualizes my emotions about the impact of plastic pollution on the environment. It seems infeasible to return this planet to the pristine condition it was once in. In my opinion, the only reasonable solution is to restart. I found inspiration for this image through the movie, Dr. Strange. The film is about a superhero who can open a portal to almost anywhere. This gave me an idea about traveling to a new planet—one that is untouched and unpolluted. The portal leads to another planet in my work: an escape or a new beginning where Earth is taken care of. We, as humans, will have learned through our previous experiences. Humanity would be given the chance to restart civilization in a healthy and unpolluted environment. As one can see, the delay in change is what will cost us, and we must take action now.

Plastic is ubiquitous to daily life—it envelopes our bodies in our synthetic clothing, wraps our food, and even holds our drinking water. By chucking a plastic bag into a body of water, it eventually turns into millions of micro-plastics that fish eat and become a part of our food chain. Plastics are also known to release toxic chemicals into the surrounding soils and harm ecosystems by contaminating groundwater and other nearby water sources. The image I created shows what Vancouver may have looked like prior to urbanization. Currently, Vancouver is a large bustling city that is still growing. To find nature that is untouched by civilization is becoming rare. We need to protect nature at all costs by disposing of plastics properly and by being conscious consumers by not purchasing unnecessary products. If we do not act now, nature will be no more.
Have you ever walked down the street and seen a plastic bottle? Chances are you have. Have you picked up a plastic bottle off the street? Maybe, maybe not. My work illustrates a major problem that we’re currently facing: plastic will affect our future and will possibly be the downfall of the planet. I was inspired by artist Alejandro Durán work—his images are impactfully blunt as he always shows the plastic itself instead of something that can be interpreted as plastic. By featuring a single bottle in my work, I show how every single piece contributes to the masses of plastic littered around our planet. I hope to encourage my viewers to feel upset and angry that we let this happen. I want them to leave with a new sense of responsibility for the planet.

Our society is full of standards—on beauty, acceptable behaviour, or academic achievement. The list goes on and on. Standards like these are especially prominent online which create unhealthy relationships between teenagers and social media. To see a certain body type or style of clothing repeatedly advertised online normalizes unconventional appearances or behaviour to the viewer. This can cause one to think of it as “the standard” they should strive for. Teenagers attempt to emulate certain images and become untruthful to not only others, but to themselves as well. This leads to what I call a plastic persona. Plastic is defined as fake or unreal, and persona is understood as an alternate identity. Many of us assume our very own plastic personas online. We end up omitting our shortcomings by showcasing the unrealistic and fall further from our true selves. In my work, I portray the plastic persona by masking my character with images of her “persona” until we are only able to see a portion of her true self.
Many people love the beach. It’s a beautiful piece of nature that we are lucky to have so close to home. A quick walk to the beach can brighten up any dark day. Unfortunately, Earth’s pristine beaches are often polluted with debris. From local garbage to garbage that has traveled across the ocean, the debris obstructs and intrudes upon our beautiful beaches. The way the wood turns towards the distant sun on the horizon provokes questions like “where did the wood come from?” and “why did it break off its original placement?” In a way, it connects the ocean to humanity. The ocean is a grand place, but humanity needs to understand just how quickly we can harm it. Through pollution and other acts, the damage to our oceans and our beaches could soon be irreversible. My image shows that our oceans are larger than life, yet we can affect them in alarming ways through the placement of garbage in the background of the image.

In my photo, I capture the essence of the human spirit. When I heard the prompt, “It’s a Plastic World,” I immediately recalled a conversation with a friend about the plastic personas and facades we often adopt during our day-to-day lives. I knew I had to draw attention to this issue. The words, “SMILING ON THE OUTSIDE,” represent societal standards to be happy even when you’re not. The plastic bag is a metaphor for the suffocating reality when someone attempts to become something they are not. I deliberately projected the phrase on the bag to symbolize the outward projection of fake feelings. My main goal with this work is to bring this often neglected issue to light. I hope to compel people to understand the importance of being themselves by removing these harmful masks.
Climate change is a significant problem facing us today, and it will only continue to get worse. Often, our attention is focused on issues that have immediate consequences rather than long term problems and solutions. We focus our attention on things that seem more pressing and more personal. But, if we wait for climate change to become pressing and personal, it will be too late. Living things and the environment are harmed because of our inaction, so what will it take for us to make a change now to reverse the damage that we have caused?

In my work, the drifting plastic creates a feeling of helplessness as it moves along by the currents in the water, much like we are moved along by currents of opinion. If we don’t make conscious choices to change, we will be dragged down by our inaction.
Plastic is everywhere, even on our plates. I pose important questions within my work: How does our food grow? How is it imported or exported? And lastly, how much plastic do these processes contain? By putting together iconic doll heads with the pepper plant, I encourage the viewer to think twice. This idea was inspired by Alejandro Duran, as he uses the combination of industrialized objects and organic features in his artwork. I wanted to play around with this technique to show a message that I've never seen before: plastic in the food chain. Plastic is involved in the whole production—from the harvesting to the importation of the products. The doll heads represent the microplastics acquired by all of us on a day-to-day basis, whereas the pepper plant exemplifies the millions of products consumed by society every day. My purpose is to encourage people to consider the process that food goes through before it comes to their plates.

The goal of my art is to create curiosity and encourage deeper thoughts by showing the bigger picture in life. With this image, I express how the world is suffocating with plastic. I cry as we keep adding more plastic to it. I use symbols, such as the tears, to represent the sadness the earth feels from all the plastic. In addition to the model floating in the water, together these features create a sense of suffocation. The process of creating and warping images in Photoshop allows so much creative freedom as it allows me to add aspects to my work that would be impossible to do in real life. My work evokes calmness while unsettling the viewer at the same time as, at first, the image may seem normal. Yet, when you look closer, you notice all the small details included.
I cannot breathe. It is a film over my mouth, my nostrils.
I cannot see. It is a cluster of dull, soggy colours in front of my eyes.
I cannot hear. It is the deafening silence of the people we were supposed to rely on.
There is no air left. There is no sky. There is no sound.

Photography is an important way for me to capture my unique family and our life events. This work helps support my brother, who is First Nations, in telling a story of the forever changing environments which affects all Indigenous Peoples as they continue to suffer from colonization. My driving force is to honour my brother and the Homalco Nation from which he was born. In my image, he wears a native headband from the Homalco Nation. I am projecting a story of commitment, preservation, and love for the land by bringing awareness to the global plastic crisis—a literal and figurative suffocation. We are suffocating from all the plastic that continues to be dumped globally through land, sea, and air.
Girls, especially, are exposed to the image of the ‘ideal’ woman. This is toxic for their self-esteem and their views of others. I was inspired by the climate crisis, as well as how society and commercialism influences young minds. We are showing our children what they should look like, and even though some adults are able to pick out that these people of advertising are prisoners, most cannot. The photograph shows not only the environmental side of the theme, but also the psychological side. The girls are portrayed as dolls that have been thrown away. Something new came along and they were no longer good enough. I wish for my photograph to draw attention to the negative way in which commercialism and consumerism affects us all, including our environment and our minds.

Chantal Morfitt
Broken Dolls
Nowadays, plastic is everywhere in the world. It is not only in places we can see, like in our homes or on the ground in the streets, but some plastics are so small they are almost invisible—they can exist in places we don’t see. Microplastics are penetrating our ecosystems. If plastic pollution continues to become more serious, our food will be filled with microplastics. To create my work, I used objects in our daily lives that I enhanced with several Photoshop techniques. I am encouraging people to consider microplastic debris that accumulates in small sea creatures. When predators eat the small creatures, these debris accumulate in their bodies and then are passed on to us when we eat them. It’s a plastic world.

In my image, there is a multi-use product and a disposable one. They simply look like a comparison, but it can also be interpreted as a person drinking liquid inside a plastic cup or even leaning on the straw. The latter is formed by the viewer’s imagination, however, the fact that gravity works from the higher part to lower part easily pops up. A parallel line drawn by the shadow conveys the effects of the straw and its meaning: a shadow is the result of a light. Geometrical balance is created by using the straw, even though it became an attractive feature. I hope people will think about the relationship of single-use and multi-use items.

Jessica Gui
Untitled

Yejin Lee
Slide
My art is centered on people and what is underneath their personas and appearances. The image I've created exposes the superficial expectations of beauty and the pressure that is put on young girls to meet that standard. There is the idea of conventional attractiveness, and that you are either born with it, or not. Conventional attractiveness intertwines with Eurocentric features such as light hair, blue eyes, and thinner body types. For people of different ethnicities, it is impossible to meet those standards. I display my internalized resentment towards western beauty standards through contrast—the inauthenticity of my drawing and the real images of myself in photography. I expose a toxic mindset through my work and can be an outlet for my frustrations. I hope that whoever views my image can empathize with myself and many others who feel this way.
I love to tell stories while also displaying different emotions using photography. I enjoy going out for shoots with my friends and experimenting more with portraiture and editorial styles. But along with that, I love to capture beautiful scenes that can remind one of many cherished memories. I think photography is also an effective way to show people what we’re really losing to plastic pollution and climate change. I want to make a statement about our usage of single-use plastics and how it affects our planet. It’s hard to imagine life without plastic, as we use it practically every day. This image symbolizes the need to overcome our “tunnel of plastic” to restore our environments. The landscape is hidden behind the plastic and we can’t fully imagine the beautiful scenery as the plastic is taking over. I hope people can contemplate this image further—as it can be interpreted in many ways—and think about how we use plastic.
Climate change is at the forefront of global issues and I often wonder what I can do to make an impact. When given the opportunity to raise awareness about climate change through my passion for photography and art, I was excited to participate. I was also inspired by the work of Fabrice Monteiro, a photographer who demonstrates the stark reality of real world problems. In my work, I knew the photo needed to be bold and striking—it needed to be something memorable that would really stick with viewers. The model looks gory and sick which is a reflection of the reality of our trajectory. It represents humanity’s fate, a wasteland overtaken by plastic, if we continue using plastic items. We need to realize the harsh reality of our future and be the change we want to see in the world. For me, this is one way I could try to make a difference.

My goal is to create something impactful that provokes viewers to consider how they can also affect change.

Elly Gillmore
Wasteland

Climate change is at the forefront of global issues and I often wonder what I can do to make an impact. When given the opportunity to raise awareness about climate change through my passion for photography and art, I was excited to participate. I was also inspired by the work of Fabrice Monteiro, a photographer who demonstrates the stark reality of real world problems. In my work, I knew the photo needed to be bold and striking—it needed to be something memorable that would really stick with viewers. The model looks gory and sick which is a reflection of the reality of our trajectory. It represents humanity’s fate, a wasteland overtaken by plastic, if we continue using plastic items. We need to realize the harsh reality of our future and be the change we want to see in the world. For me, this is one way I could try to make a difference.

My goal is to create something impactful that provokes viewers to consider how they can also affect change.
Our society has become desensitized to many of the bigger environmental problems that exist in our world. We are blatantly choking ourselves due to air pollution and deforestation as a result of our habits of consumerism. In my photograph, I convey a post-apocalyptic view of the world if we keep overusing plastics. Our children will suffocate due to our negligence and ignorance toward the alarming effects of plastics on the environment. Highlight the importance of trees to our survival—they breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. Without them, we will struggle to survive. I am an advocate towards making changes to reduce climate change. I wish to help make our world a healthier place for us and for future generations to live.

Gracie McRae
The Face of Lost Hope

In the past few years, I’ve found a love for photography, especially for light photography, Photoshop, and video making. I loved working on this project as it sheds a light on the issue that is our plastic world. My inspiration focuses on young climate change activists. From my friends in my community, to young activists around the world, I admire their ability to stand up for what they believe in and make a difference. Some understand what young activists say, but unfortunately, people are taking little to no action against climate change. In essence, there are those who deny that it exists in my world. I show gloved hands with words on them of people who don’t fully realize the effects of climate change. The words look like they can create silence, but the model’s eyes are defiant. The tape also tries to suppress. As future caretakers of the earth, we will not be consumed by the plastic world we are living in. We will be heard and we will take action.

Jenna Gill
Silenced
My photo is a representation of our avaricious human nature. Our world has unquestionably advertised and promoted the belief that we require keeping up with the newest trends; however, in the near future, our consumption could lead to a mortifying world. Our unsophisticated consuming ways are already affecting our daily lives. According to Australian researchers, “People across the world unwittingly consume roughly 5 grams of plastic each week in the course of daily life, or about the weight of a credit card.” This is horrendous news! When we think about plastic consumption, we generally realize that we are literally consuming it. My objective in the making of the photo was to provoke an eagerness to abandon our style of living in this plastic world, and engage in making a difference in our lives, and in the lives of others. The use of earbuds was to show with an action as simple as putting something in our pocket without properly organizing it first; much like not taking time to organize our plastic recycling, can ultimately result in a catastrophic, tangled mess.

Plastic has many practical properties: it is light, cheap, and robust. However, if we use it as wastefully as we do now, it will become our fate. Because it takes centuries for plastic to decompose and only a small amount is recycled, most plastic waste ends up in the ocean and eventually in our bodies—be it in our drinking water or in our food. If we don’t change our handling of plastic now, the problem will become unsolvable and we will be drinking plastic instead of water one day.
The issue my image portrays is extremely important to me as being environmentally conscious has always been one of my top priorities. As soon as I heard the theme, “It’s a Plastic World,” I had a very specific idea in mind and decided it was worth stepping out of my artistic comfort zone to successfully portray it. I convey the idea that so many of us are unaware of the true impact of our lifestyle. It is fitting, given the theme, that this woman is sunbathing on a dark and stormy day, surrounded not by idyllic white sand, but by the plastic detritus created by her choices. I want this image to encourage viewers to second guess if they are doing enough for the environment. Do they simply call it a day after buying one reusable straw or are they going to further their efforts to help this worldwide epidemic?
The juxtaposition of pollution and nature is a sight we often encounter in our everyday lives. We have slowly conditioned ourselves to disregard small pieces of trash that we see, whether that be on a sidewalk or a forest. In my work, the plastic emerges as an organic form amongst the trees. The two forms, natural and unnatural, become almost indistinguishable. Through the use of colour and inversion, the articles of plastic and nature become one, demonstrating how there is a delicate balance of human impact on the environment.

Pollution and climate change affects the whole world and everyone living on it. After decades of us putting harmful gases into the atmosphere and leaving plastics and trash in the streets, the environment is finally wearing down and the negative effects are starting to show. Some are still choosing to ignore the signs, whereas others are fighting to stop it. In my photo, I capture a glimpse of what some may see or feel regarding the issue of climate change. Large pieces of garbage litter the otherwise dark composition. The garbage covers and frames the subject—a teenager—leaving him isolated, tired, and looking outward for something better.

The clarity of the garbage reflects our understanding of the consequences of climate change, with the pieces most apparent closest to the center. Toward the edge of the composition, the pieces become warped and distorted, representing the unknown scale and culmination of our neglect on the planet. With so much unclear about the issue, who knows how long we have before the damage is irreversible.

Emma Gibb
New Natural

Graham Maude
LOST
My work is inspired by the Cantonese term gaau, which not only translates to the word plastic, but is also a slang term used to describe people as idiots. Even though it’s often vulgar, it is widely used by teenagers to tease each other. Gaau can also modify many other nouns, such as questions, performances, and actions. To respond to the theme, “It’s a Plastic World,” I decided to take my photo in a bathroom as they imply privacy, just as people sing while showering. My subject bathes with plastic in a bathtub as she enjoys her own world; she is a teenager stupidly playing with a plastic cup. My image is an exploration of how gaau is used by combining its literal and slang meanings. To emphasize these two sides, I layered gaau on top of my photograph to help viewers comprehend this term’s duality.

Jammi Sze

gau

My work is inspired by the Cantonese term gaau, which not only translates to the word plastic, but is also a slang term used to describe people as idiots. Even though it’s often vulgar, it is widely used by teenagers to tease each other. Gaau can also modify many other nouns, such as questions, performances, and actions. To respond to the theme, “It’s a Plastic World,” I decided to take my photo in a bathroom as they imply privacy, just as people sing while showering. My subject bathes with plastic in a bathtub as she enjoys her own world; she is a teenager stupidly playing with a plastic cup. My image is an exploration of how gaau is used by combining its literal and slang meanings. To emphasize these two sides, I layered gaau on top of my photograph to help viewers comprehend this term’s duality.

Jammi Sze

gau

I’m a street photographer who likes to document the interesting details of life. I was walking around Chinatown and saw a huge shelf of mannequins in a barbershop. Mannequins are often displayed as ideal human bodies—models for clothing and jewelry. However, with no emotions showing, those same pale mannequins have creepy, sinister, unnerving, and an artificial air surrounding them. My eyes were attracted to the mannequins’ beautiful color saturation of their hair and lips under the golden hour of sunlight. But, such beauty ultimately belongs to two plastic heads without souls. By photographing their faces and hair without their eyes, it reveals their emotionless and insubstantial nature. The attractive plastic lips and artificial hair represent a superficial perfection, but they are still fakes, indifferent, and cold.

Jason C. Guan

Top Notch
I am inspired most by faces and people. Through my lens, I enjoy capturing people in their raw and natural state. In my work, my model is trapped in a fake and artificial world where people are plastic. She is an elegant angel—a sign of perfection and strength in our society. The stereotypes that surround her allow the darkness to invade her perfection. She is trapped under a manufactured material; she feels that she is failing to live up to societal expectations. Once filled by her own light, the dark space in her hips, a force overshadowed with unreasonable expectations and self-doubt.

The main theme and driving force behind my work is food and the waste that it creates. In the last two years, the leading source of waste on our planet was the packaging and wrappers that our food comes in. Food is an item that is sold, used, and thrown away every day by millions of people from all over our world. When people look at my image, I want them to not only think of plastic and the waste it creates, but also manufacturing processes as the packaging itself isn’t the only issue. The process to create the wrapping for food also adds on to the destruction plastic is having on the planet.
I want to capture the moment in the most simplistic way, such as when nature and humans interact. I can find moments in time like this as I live in a city where nature is at our doorstep. In my work, I show how some people are blind to the effects of consumerism such as the overconsumption of products and the pollution that comes with it. By showing a person throwing a bottle over their shoulder with no consideration of their surroundings, I capture the inconspicuous impact that humans can make. Even though the action may be small, its impact can be large and may pollute the water, the air, and destroy the habitats of plants and animals. The trail of garbage shows the footprint humanity makes on the environment. Our society’s changing attitude towards lifestyle encourages me to help spread the message about caring for the environment. I want people to realize their true effects on nature, including exposing the size of their ecological footprints.
In my photo, I show how ugly the truth can be. It is often covered up by the media and replaced with half truths and undertakings, especially surrounding the issues of plastic in landfills and oceans. I created my work by using garbage—various pieces of plastics that I found in garbage cans or on the street. I deviated from the norm of what makes images beautiful. Beauty in images generally pertains to their compositions of where things physically are in the photo. But in my work, by lowering the contrast, using asymmetry, bland colours, and props made out of plastics, I broke from the norm and created a photo that stands out for all the wrong reasons.

That’s the hidden beauty behind my image—the use of unconventional props, unpopular filters and settings. I make the image seem plain and unattractive. It brings the audience here, to the hidden meaning behind my work focusing on the ugly truth and how the media influences our perspectives everyday.
Plastic is taking over the world and the oceans at an alarming rate and I believe that it could eventually suffocate underlayers of it. My photograph is reminiscent of the sky and the ocean on a horizon. The plastic bottles I have chosen organically mimic the fluid motion of a body of water with cresting waves. The moody sky is dark and represents the impending pollution from the production of plastic that fills our air. We are living in a world that over-produces and over-consumes plastic. With this continued usage of plastic products, we will eventually cover the natural world in a thick layer of pollution.
The theme, “It’s a Plastic World” can be interpreted in many different ways, but I connect it to the beauty industry. Plastic surgery is growing in popularity as our world progresses in many ways, such as with gender reassignment surgeries. Yet, there are also negative sides to it: constant expectations of beauty standards that push away the appreciation of natural beauty. I capture the expressions of what it feels like when beauty turns into an emotionless disaster that is hidden under the masks of happiness and perfection. Plastic is going to be implanted within us and all around us, slowly it is turning us plastic, so much so that natural beauty is rare to see. It affects how we see ourselves and others. It rots our views.

After learning about how our environment is extremely affected by pollution, I wanted to create a work for this project that has a powerful message. My inspiration is how plastic affects human lives. In my photo, I surround the model with plastic bottles to show that she is suffocating in plastic. I specifically chose plastic bottles because they are the third most commonly found plastic items in the environment. We use them every day—each year, 22 billion water bottles are thrown away and most of it ends up in our oceans. Asia, the Yangtze River is the longest and one of the worlds most ecologically important rivers. However, it is also the biggest carrier of plastic pollution to the ocean. Plastic is overpowering our planet and affects us negatively. My hope is that from this photo, the viewers will be inspired to make the small changes needed to make a difference.
I encourage you to take a step back. Ignore all the noise around and see the world through a child’s eyes. For the next five minutes Barbie is just a toy. Her life is pink and glittery—nothing else. Her next adventure is at your fingertips. She may be plastic, but she comes alive in the stories created through play. I created Recalling a Pink Flashback, to emphasize the fact that we as humans get caught up on issues that just shouldn’t be there, and because of social media, the issues become more glaringly apparent. Some individuals may focus too much on their insecurities brought on by a preconceived idea of “perfection” that is exposed in mainstream media. However, I want my viewers to feel happiness when they see this image. I want the viewer to feel like a child again and I hope that this photo brings back positive memories for those who played with Barbies as a child.

In my work, the model is bound by plastic because I believe it’s what most people are subjected to—whether they know it or not. Acknowledging the fact to our incessant need to use plastic isn’t something people usually want to imagine doing, yet, by acknowledging the extent of our use, we can begin to deconstruct the base as to why. I use a mixture of colour and contrast to portray an underlying relationship with plastic and how I believe we feel about it. My project is a bittersweet perspective.
To be both ethical and in style is a struggle for students and adults alike. As plastic makes up most of the fast fashion world, trying to blend in with the attractive trend comes at the cost of the climate crisis. Unethical brands can be a cheap and easy solution to keep up with fashion so teenagers turn a blind eye on the global repercussions. As people buy into trends that last only a month, garbage accumulates around us. Materials are usually made with plastic, which is an economically smart choice for large corporations, but a fatal one for our planet. The garment on the model in my image, slowly chokes and envelops her body. It becomes clear that the look of a beautiful fashion choice goes hand in hand with a garbage garment. Falling into the pit of wasteful clothes clogs the gutters of nature, as well as the conscience of young people’s minds.
My work is solely inspired by the fear of plastics overwhelming Earth. The best way to draw attention to this fear is to let people glimpse what could be. I connect drastically different futures with one plastic bottle in my work. Two close, yet vastly different paths for the world are shown. The thin surface of the bottle shows how the future of the world can be quickly and easily altered as just one plastic bottle in the ocean can make a big difference. Likewise, as it surrounds the dystopian city within, the plastic bottle conveys how the material can be used for good, yet, it will become harmful once it’s reached its prime. There are severe consequences if we don’t take care of our home.
I am someone who is just a shadow—always unnoticed but always present. Portrait photography has become my main medium of self-expression. My best works often result from split second decisions made with little hesitation. I find that many social media platforms invite people to place forward the best version of themselves, even if it's not their true self. Due to societal norms, we've become obsessed with achieving the self-imposed and unrealistic expectations of who we are not. Our distortion creates a world that encourages hiding behind a filter of "plastic," which further perpetuates the notion of internet perfection. In my image, the chromatic aberration directly represents distorted societal standards and the Polaroid frame refers to the recent resurgence of 90's pop culture. My work is a reminder to avoid getting wrapped up in framing ourselves in a certain light to fit in or stand out.

Morris Ling

Suffocating SMILE

My photo plays with the idea that plastic is all around us but we just don’t notice it. For example, when you look at a photo of a building, it is common that you will not be able to see all of it. In my work, I chose to feature the Vancouver Art Gallery because of its complexity. However, it is easy to Photoshop due to the mirror effect or symmetry that the art gallery has. Photoshop was the only way to go to make this image. I am also thinking about how we often consider plastic to be a hard material. Yet, plastic is more like a chameleon, as it can change its looks based on what it needs. Thus, plastic can come in any shape and size.

Simon Muller

The Plastic Gallery
Body image and how people perceive themselves is thought-provoking. It is important to initiate conversations about how the media fosters romanticized expectations about bodies and self-worth. I purposely used a Barbie because of her history of being the “perfect woman” to children. I also incorporated a mirror to show the fake self-security that even the ideal human has. My photo challenges and inspires people to question identity and social norms. It encourages the viewer to reflect on the way they were taught to think about themselves and to question beauty and lifestyle brands. Often, we don’t second-guess these subliminal messages.
The prevalence and overuse of plastic in our daily lives have become a pressing issue throughout our communities, cities, and country. Plastic is used in almost everything we buy which makes it hard to take a step back and realize the impact it has on our planet. In my image, I focus on the intimate role plastic plays in our lives—from the packaging on our food to a tablecloth at a family picnic. I juxtapose a dinner table amidst a large field to show how plastic has hidden so easily into our surroundings. Close-up shots of the plastic flower in the plastic water bottle show the prevalence of plastic in everyday objects. The contrast of wilted flowers against a single plastic one represents the harm plastic has on the environment. The effects are damaging, yet, unnoticed. My hope is that through this image, people will take more time to recognize the hidden plastic in their lives.

Hannah Wicki
Untitled

Plastic is a contradiction. It is something that is very simple, yet at the same time, is highly complex. We use plastic on a daily basis—it’s in our clothes, on our screens, and has made its way up the food chain. It’s everywhere. We are so unaware of plastic prevalence that it might even be in the food we consume everyday. From afar, the sushi in my image looks ordinary. Yet, if you pay close attention to the details, you will notice that the innocent-looking food is actually harmful. The colour orange is vital to my work as it promotes striking emotions concerned with change—excitement, anxiousness, and even despair. Orange is also commonly associated with warmth, yet, in my work, it also represents superficiality. We consume so much plastic that the plastic itself starts to consume us.

Koyan Suazo
Consumed
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