

Issue 404

Music

Film

TV

Books

Creative Writing

Art

Theatre

Fashion

Gaming



VENUE
Arts and Culture

Editorials

Lily Taylor Venue Co-Editor



Above: Lily (Credit: Maggie Reed)

I'm going to use this editorial to apologise to everyone who has had to be around me lately. With my course ramping up, alongside my immune system deciding to take a holiday, I have been stressed, irritated and generally not very fun to be around. Now that the November issue is here, you will probably see me around a bit more, as I emerge out of my Concrete cave.

However, I would not change it one bit. This issue has been tough, but with the support of my lovely Co-Editor Sankavi, and the amazing work of our section editors, we have created something brilliant. A big shout out to the Venue editors for putting up with me and Sankavi while we run our silly little experiments toying with design. A big thank you also to Co-EIC Fiona, who, with her INSANE InDesign skills, has helped us with the overall look of the paper this month.

Finally, a big thank you to Sarah Price, who is our interview star this month! I had such a lovely chat with her and I'm really proud of the interview we produced. I hope the article does our conversation justice, Sarah!

Here's to Issue 404, you lovely people! I hope you enjoy!

Sankavi Naresh Venue Co-Editor

Welcome to Issue 404! I hope summative season hasn't been too taxing and everyone's been squeezing in time to grab a warm drink at UNIO or for a cheeky night out!

I'd like to thank our lovely section editors for all their hard work this issue, even at such a busy time and one of the Co-EiCs of Concrete, Fiona Hill, for helping us design this issue of Venue! Last but not least, I'd like to thank my wonderful Co-Editor, Lily Taylor, who has soldiered on through whatever obstacle has come our way creating this issue, she's also been massively supportive when things have gotten stressful. We've worked really hard on this month's issue and we hope you enjoy reading it! :)



Above: Sankavi (Credit: Jamie Bryson)

What's On	3
Music	4
Film	6
TV	8
Books	10
Creative Writing	12
Interview	14
Art	16
Theatre	18
Fashion	20
Gaming	22



In Conversation: Sarah Price
(Page 14)



What's On

W/C 18th November



Tuesday 19th

The SU are holding a Barbie Pyjama Movie Night in Bookable Room 6. Taking place from 6pm to 8pm.

Wednesday 20th

Head over to the new LGBTQ+ Bar for Liquorice, UEA's weekly queer club night. Taking place from 10:30pm-1am.

Thursday 21st

Indie vs Emo club night is back at the LCR due to popular demand! Taking place from 10:30pm-2:30am.

Friday 22nd

UEA Pride are hosting a board games night in the New Science Building 0.01. Taking place from 6:30pm-9pm.

Saturday 23rd

Join Navigate Norfolk for a trip to Winterton-On-Sea. Tickets are available on the UEA SU website.

W/C 2nd December



Monday 2nd

Weekly quiz in the Blue Bar! Taking place from 8-10pm.

Tuesday 3rd

Weekly karaoke in the Blue Bar from 8pm-10pm. Bring your friends, grab a drink, and enjoy a night of good music and fun.

Wednesday 4th

Furry Friends Club: Campus Dog Walk. Meet at Security Lodge at 1pm! Don't miss out on this fun and relaxed outing with your fellow animal lovers!

Thursday 5th

Get into the festive spirit with the Ceramic Christmas Bauble Painting session at the Blue Bar! Taking place from 2-4pm

Friday 6th

ueashowchoir would like to invite you to their end of term xmas show! This event is FREE and open to all. Taking place from 6-9pm

W/C 25th November



Monday 25th

Weekly quiz in the Blue Bar! Taking place from 8pm-10pm.

Tuesday 26th

Gingerbread decorating in the Exhibiton Space. Taking place 2pm-4pm.

Wednesday 27th

Weekly Sports Night at the LCR! Taking place 10:30pm-2:30am.

Thursday 28th

UEA SU presents Luve in the Blue Bar, where you can catch some great local talent. Taking place from 7:30pm-10pm.

Saturday 30th

Your weekly A-List club night! Head over to the LCR from for the biggest chart, pop and dance anthems.

W/C 9th December



Monday 9th

Film Club in Bookable Room 6, Union House. This is not a society-run event but one led by UEA SU to bring together like-minded students and film buffs. From 8-10:30pm

Tuesday 10th

Weekly karaoke in the Blue Bar from 8pm-10pm.

Wednesday 11th

LGBTQ+ Club Night at the new LGBTQ+ bar! From 10:30pm-1am

Thursday 12th

Drag Race watch party in Bookable Room 6, Union House from 8-10:30pm.

Friday 13th

Christmas At The LCR! It's the most wonderful time of the year! Are you ready to jingle all the way to the LCR for the ultimate Christmas party?

Redefining the Drop Date: Why Artists are Moving Beyond Friday

By Adam Teschner

Halloween week was set to be busy for new music, with five major hip-hop albums and the return of The Cure incoming. However, by the time New Music Friday rolled around, the world had already listened to two of them: Tyler, The Creator's blockbuster 'Chromakopia' arrived on streaming services on Monday morning, shortly followed up by Dreamville-affiliated rap duo EarthGang's 'Perfect Fantasy' the next day.

Friday has been the industry standard release day ever since 2015, marking the first time a globally standardised music release day and charting week were set. Inspired by Beyoncé's surprise Friday release two years prior subverting the US' Tuesday norm, new music was pitched as an end-of-week celebration.

So why did Tyler and EarthGang go against the grain?

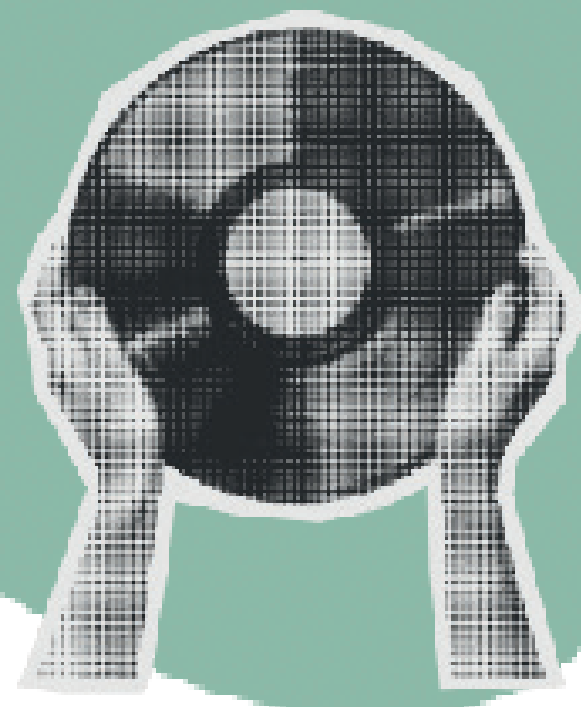
After all, a weekday release gives these releases a far smaller window to rack up their first-week sales, and therefore a far smaller chance of popping up on your radar screen. Well, it's clear Tyler isn't interested in the numbers; "if you put it out during the week, that commute to work or school, you really have that hour or thirty minutes to really 'dive in' and really listen".

He makes a point - the Friday midnight slot seems tailored to the sleep-deprived music nerd. EarthGang explained their Tuesday release in a tweet expressing a similar sentiment, having also previously released ten songs from the album in two EPs over the past year to further allow fans to "live with the music". Ultimately, these artists want to do all they can to streamline their fans' ability to bond with them, many of whom are bound by the same 9-to-5s

that Tyler and EarthGang are all too familiar with.

Despite only 4 days of chart tracking, 'Chromakopia' still went No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart and had Spotify's biggest rap debut of 2024. And Tyler has not been the only benefactor - his Californian compatriot Kendrick Lamar incited a similarly anti-industry moment this year with the Saturday release of 'Not Like Us', and by now you probably don't need that song's success explained.

This world where artistic movements like these, which seem nothing but counterproductive on paper can be carried out in the mainstream and - in Tyler's case - supported by a major label - is a welcome departure from the rigid industry culture of only a decade ago. Next time Friday comes around, try not to just listen to the music - live with it.



A New Kind of Tension: American Idiot at 20

By Daniel Garcia

It cannot be overstated how huge Green Day were in the 90s, breaking through with 'Dookie' in 1994. After 2000's 'Warning' undersold, the band were in a creative slump. The original plan was to make an album called Cigarettes and Valentines, but after the master tapes were stolen (or more likely, the band just weren't happy with the sound), they changed tack.

With encouragement from producer Rob Cavallo, the band set out to make their biggest record yet, the concept rock-opera 'American Idiot'. It has since gone on to sell 23 million records worldwide, being certified six times with a platinum status in the United States and Australia, diamond in Canada and 8 times platinum in the UK.

The album follows the self-proclaimed "son of rage and love" - the Jesus of Suburbia, a disillusioned young man who leaves his broken home for the promise of the city. There he meets the revolutionary Whatsername and awakens his dark alter-ego St. Jimmy. He finds himself torn between these two forces: the idealised revolution that Whatsername offers and the addictive self-destruction that Jimmy represents. These self-destructive habits lead to his relationship with Whatsername falling apart, and he realises that he has become what he always hated - the titular American Idiot. The album ends in a sombre contrast to its grandiose beginning - with Jesus returning home alone, forever changed by his time away.

Overshadowing the whole album is the disillusionment and disenfranchisement that many American youth felt in the fractured post 9/11 America. Whilst he is never

explicitly mentioned on the record, there is an incredibly strong anti-Bush sentiment and heavy criticism of the then recently launched war on terror and the Iraq War.

Overshadowing the whole album is the disillusionment and disenfranchisement that many American youth felt in the fractured post 9/11 America. Whilst he is never explicitly mentioned on the record, there is an incredibly strong anti-Bush sentiment and heavy criticism of the then recently launched war on terror and the Iraq War.

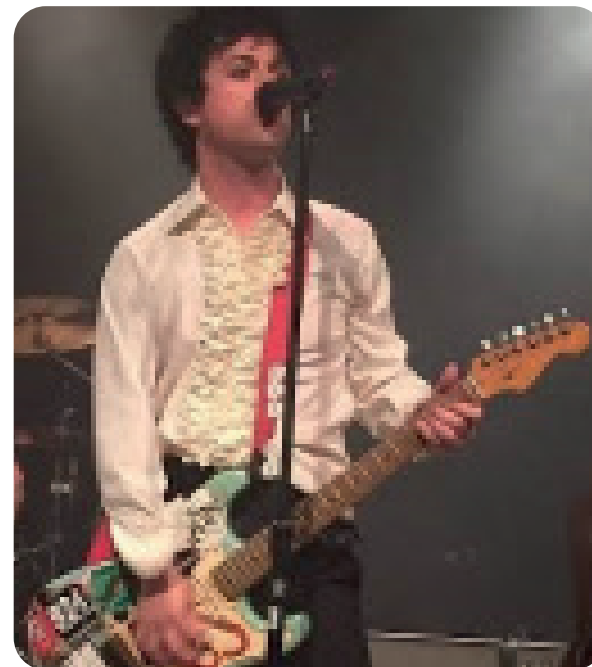
2004 marked the start of a turning point in public sentiment towards the war. 'American Idiot' came during the perfect time, capturing a nation's frustrations and articulating them into powerful protest. The titular track 'American Idiot' directly calls out the media's use of propaganda to sow paranoia among the people, whilst 'Holiday' is as angry a critique of Bush could be without mentioning him by name.

Whilst the album is inherently political, what makes it truly timeless is that the story also speaks to something both personal and universal. The incredibly personal 'Wake Me Up When September Ends', a song about the death of lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong's father when he was a child, has since become a universal song of mourning, especially in the context of 9/11. At its core, the album is about being lost in a world where everything is trying to influence you, and desperately trying to find where you belong.

Twenty years on and 'American Idiot' hits harder than ever. A deluxe version released earlier this year and the recent worldwide Saviors tour, in which the band play the album in full, has enjoyed sold-out arenas of fans screaming back every word. Armstrong regularly

changes certain words of the more politically charged songs, like 'Holiday' and 'American Idiot' to reflect current events.

The world is more heavily saturated with media than in 2004, with it now practically always at our fingertips. The fears of mass media control, xenophobia and propaganda that 'American Idiot' grapples with are fears that have unfortunately only grown stronger in contemporary society, so the album will undeniably continue to resonate more and more in the coming years. "For that's enough to argue".



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

The Westernisation of K-pop

By Isaac Arif

In the past year alone, we've seen a significant increase in the so-called westernisation of the K-pop industry. With the debut of Kalseye, an American group, and the onslaught of English tracks from word-famous names such as Twice, BTS and BlackPink, it is becoming clearer that selling albums is more important to the industry than their creative output.

Keeping in mind that K-pop isn't a genre but an industry whose main goal is to create profits, it's sad to see that conforming to the West comes at the cost of the quality of the music being released.

A popular example of English tracks harming a K-pop group is BTS. Their recent English releases, 'Dynamite' and 'Permission to Dance' have been highly criticised for their poor lyricism and generic pop sound, and I couldn't agree more. Before these songs, BTS was adamant about keeping their music in Korean. This level of creative control can be traced through their lengthy discography, and it becomes apparent when going through the later releases that the decision to move towards English tracks has caused a decline in quality. BTS is known amongst die-hard fans for writing songs about mental health, self-love, and Korean society, but their English releases are shallow in comparison - they're filled with meaningless lyrics accompanied by

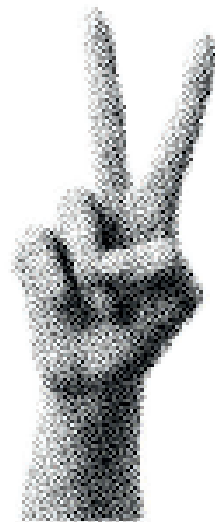
unmemorable music videos.

How does a group go from releasing 'Fake Love', an emotive song about hiding depression, to the empty dance track 'Permission to Dance'? Watching a group popularised for their fresh approach to pop music become caricatures of what they claimed they'd never become is baring. I now see this in many groups, who opt out of pushing against Western ideas and instead lean into them in full force.

The prioritisation of English-speaking audiences may lead to K-pop's downfall, as it reveals the companies' money-grabbing intentions. K-pop has always been tied to America, with the creators of first-generation pop crediting hip-hop for the industry's birth. However this is purely influence, which is not in itself negative. If anything, it displays how music can permeate across the globe, making way for new sounds. What is happening today appears more sinister and charged by greed. If you walk into an HMV today, you'll likely see four or more different versions of the same K-pop album. They aren't even trying to be subtle about the state of the industry being more about money than music.

K-pop appears to be less about the Korean aspect or audience and more about creating a certain type of upbeat sound

accompanied by high-concept music videos, constructing idol-like stars and selling photocards. This definition of K-pop leaves me unsure whether K-pop's "K" part matters anymore. I believe that companies and fans of the industry are a most equally liable for this shift. If fans stopped engaging with poorly made English tracks the industry might focus on creating high-quality music again. But I don't have much hope in fans, as the extreme support they provide to every single release means these companies will always get what they want more money.



Lin Manuel-Miranda and Eisa Davis Come Out to Play with New Concept Album

By Edie Davies



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

According to popular culture, Musical Theatre does not lend itself to hard-hitting subjects well. However, 'Warriors', a new musical theatre concept album created by Hamilton's Lin Manuel-Miranda and Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Eisa Davis, proves that theatre can uplift oppressed voices and tackle serious topics with ease when a creative team truly cares about its subjects. The album, inspired by the 1979 film of the same name, follows a New York gang called the Warriors. The Warriors are incorrectly blamed for the assassination of Cyrus, the infamous leader of the 'Gramercy Riffs', at a meeting. The Warriors must make their way from the Bronx back to their home of Coney Island, facing off against other gangs and the corrupt New York Police on their way. Despite this story being older than Lin Manuel-Miranda himself, Warriors has remained relevant. Gang violence is still a large issue across New York, and the recent Black Lives Matter movement in America has revealed the unacceptable levels of police brutality across the United States, especially towards women of colour. Miranda and

Davis have ensured that these issues are the centrepiece of the album, adapting the Warriors themselves from an all-male gang into an all-female one, with the actresses all being women of colour. Davis' writing expertly captures the powerful nature of sisterhood. Miranda's lyricism works perfectly alongside it through songs like 'A Light or Something', a duet between Warrior Swan (Jasmine Cephas-Jones) and new recruit Mercy (Julia Harriman), as they navigate their romantic feelings for each other. The music in 'Warriors' is just as diverse as its cast. The album includes huge names in theatre and mainstream music to back up its experimentation, including Nas, Busta Rhymes, and Ms Lauryn Hill. Lin Manuel-Miranda's willingness to experiment in his musical projects has been obvious since his Tony Award winning shows 'In the Heights' and 'Hamilton', and it has only become clearer in this new project. From Miranda's usual rap and RnB numbers to heavy metal and pop punk, the concept album is an exciting explosion of sound that calls back to the diversity of New York City.

A standout song in the album is 'Going Down', a track with heavy metal influences and an incredible vocal performance by Kim Dracula, who plays Luther, the main villain. However, Miranda's dip into pop punk through the song 'Orphan Town' is an experiment that does not pay off, mostly due to the casting of the titular Orphans. Star of Broadway's 'Back to the Future' Casey Likes and 'Pitch Perfect's Utkarsh Ambudkar sound more like whiny teenagers than rebellious gang members; compared to other gangs who seduce the Warriors with RnB or attack the gang with bombastic club anthems, the Orphans fade into the background.

Davis and Miranda clearly push the boundaries of what a musical can be with 'Warriors'. With a cast of musicians this stacked, it is almost impossible to predict how this album will be adapted for the stage, if it ever is. Even so, the album itself is an incredible listening experience with an engaging storyline, despite the lack of a visual aid. The album opens and closes with the line "this is the sound of something being born," a phrase that couldn't be more relevant for this expert musical adaptation of such an iconic story.

The Writers' Playlist

What have our writers been listening to this month?

'Prescription - Extended' by Remi Wolf

This 2023 single has been on repeat ever since a friend recently recommended this song and I instantly connected with it. The song is wholly hypnotic. As it begins, we're drawn in by the slow, enchanting synth as Remi pours her heart out. She shared that the song captures the feeling of "being in love and being really, really scared," a sentiment perfectly embodied by the swelling instrumentation that compliments her raw, unaffected vocals—a refreshing contrast to the distortion she used on Big Ideas.

It's easy to enjoy the rich synth sounds and intertextuality, with hints of the 'Minneapolis sound,' touches of synth-pop and nods to Prince's way of pastiching classic soul. The co-producer Knox Fortune's influence is too prominent in the bridge, mirroring his 2017 single '24 Hours'.

I highly recommend you commit to the seven-minute extended version and just letting it take you in. - Poppy Wyeth

Mom Jeans

Back in the swing of Autumn, I've gone back to bands who capture that end-of-summer feeling, a feeling of a warm embrace bringing you back home to reflect. No band encapsulates this emotion more than Mom Jeans, a popular Midwest-Emo group from California that combines sounds of indie-rock, classic emo & pop-punk, creating vulnerable & relatable songs talking of youth struggles, heartbreak & fading relationships.

Their hit debut album 'Best Buds' shows off a stripped-down and pure sound with moving melodies highlighting their lyrical brilliance in relating to common feelings of heartbreak & loss. The 2022 album 'Sweet Tooth' showcases their growth as musicians, with evolved and cleaner-sounding production.

My year-end rotation always contains Mom Jeans and so should yours. - Elliot LaCointe

'Cartoon Darkness' by Amyl and the Sniffers

Australian punk-rock band Amyl and the Sniffers have just released their long time coming third album, 'Cartoon Darkness', three years after Comfort to Me.

The album's title reflects the juxtaposition of childishness and innocence, and fear of the unknown that underpins the entire album. The album features a broad range of music from silly, crude, drunken anthems like 'Jerkin', classically punk rebellion that you can hear on 'Chewing Gum', and also more emotional, gentler moments such as 'Big Dreams', where frontwoman Amy Taylor expresses the feeling of wanting more out of life than you feel like you can get.

If you are like me and love the energy and punch that old-school rock music has, this album is a great listen to bring that retro energy into the 21st century. - Robyn Srikandan

Cinema Society

By Isaac Arif

I sat down with Leila Osman, president of UEA's cinema society to chat about the society's new approach with increased international films. This year there will be regular screenings, showing films from a wide range of global perspectives, genres and filmmakers. As you'll read below, it is the perfect place to discover new films and discuss them with fellow students.

What are you hoping to introduce to cinema society this year? Are there any particular types of films?

I wanted to introduce more international films to people because I feel it's important to hear more international, queer and sub-cultural voices. We'll be curating our monthly screenings by theme. These will be vague so each member of our committee can pick something so we show a wide range of films. However, one of my rules is that we'll show at least one non-English language film a month. I just want to show more international films because I'm tired of showing too many American films.

vague so each member of our committee can pick something so we show a wide range of films. However, one of my rules is that we'll show at least one non-English language film a month. I just want to show more international films because I'm tired of showing too many American films.

What do you love about sharing cinema with a wider community?

I love showing people films that they wouldn't necessarily watch by themselves and having conversations about them. I feel like I live in my own echo-chamber a lot and I really like having good discussions with people, so I'm focusing on the social aspect so we can have on-going discussions about throughlines in the films.

What's a favourite film of yours that you hope to screen this year?

I'd really like to show *The Handmaiden* (2016) this year. It's one of my all-time favourites and I love it because everyone has a slightly different perspective on it. Even though I love it, I think there are valid criticisms, so I'd like to hear what others have to say. I also think it's wonderful and gorgeous and people should watch it.

There's No Place Like Home

By Charlotte Ward

As the release of the new screen adaptation of *Wicked* draws near, the lingering nostalgia of our first trip to Oz tugs at the periphery of our memories. At 85, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, Victor Fleming) is still firmly ingrained into our culture.

Having not watched the film for a good few years prior to my revisitation of it, I can confidently assert that the technicolour land of Oz never dulls. From early memories of relentless re-watches of *The Wizard of Oz*, screened from a hot pink DVD player, even after all these years, I fondly remember the intricacies of the Scarecrow's (Ray Bolger) endearing support to Dorothy (Judy Garland), to the ever-changing colours of the horses of Oz. Just as Dorothy comes to recognise her ability to return home has been within her all along, the film is embedded into my formative memories, like a familiar routine uncovered from years ago.

And I know I am not the only one who regards *The Wizard of Oz* as a cultural touchstone. Many of the cherished characters and iconography are so embedded into our subconscious that it is almost as if the film has transcended the label of a classic film to something more profound – something of an ageless facet of folklore. As

Dorothy departs Kansas and opens the door into the fantasy world of Munchkinland, she simultaneously and metaphorically opens the door to the world of possibility. In 1939, we may recognise this as a testament to films possibility for further technological development. The shooting of a feature-length film in three-strip colour at a time when colour film was still a novelty and, of course, the complexity of set design that accompanied it proved to be monumental achievements.

But more than that, it is everything that the lure of Oz symbolises that suspends it in the eternal imagination of many. *The Wizard of Oz* presents an idealised journey through life from the black-and-white banality of Kansas into the enticing but daunting world of the rainbow-coloured dimensions of Oz. Dorothy fulfils a fantasy we can't. Her trials and tribulations through a land far from home introduce her to characters reminiscent of those she knew before, and she succeeds in becoming the hero of her narrative by the story's close. However, amongst all this newness and excitement, her main finding in the end is simple: 'There's no place like home.' As she taps her ruby slippers to return to the embrace of all she knew before and comes to realise

Upcoming Films



New Releases:

All We Imagine as Light (Payal Kapadia)
November 29th

Conclave (Edward Berger)
November 29th

Your Monster (Caroline Lindy)
November 29th

Nightbitch (Marielle Heller)
December 6th

Queer (Luca Guadagnino)
December 13th

Re-releases:

The Holdovers (Alexander Payne)

At Cinema City December 11th

Bridget Jones's Diary (Sharon Maguire)

At Cinema City December 12th

everything was a dream, superficially, this narrative resolution can be read as primitive in breaking the first rule of storytelling. Although, with a film so enchantingly evocative of a dreamscape, isn't wish fulfilment the point of fantasy? We may not be able to return to a past version of things exactly as they were, but we can live vicariously through Dorothy. *The Wizard of Oz* is sprinkled with nostalgia at every level - a warm hug with the resounding message that ultimately, "home is where the heart is."

Credit: Wikimedia Commons



Lady Bird: It'll Always Have a Place in My Heart

By Lily Taylor



Back in early 2018, I took a cinema trip with my sister to see Greta Gerwig's solo directorial debut, *Lady Bird*. I didn't know much about the film beforehand, but my twin sister, now a passionate film student, was desperate to see it. After nearly getting refused entry for forgetting our IDs, we managed to blab our way in and take our seats.

The film focuses on the life of Christine 'Lady Bird' McPherson (Saoirse Ronan), a headstrong 17-year-old desperate to flee the restraints of her hometown, Sacramento. Her fiery personality results in her experiencing a string of rocky relationships, something which is best reflected by her frequent clashes with her equally headstrong mother (Laurie Metcalf). We are introduced to their difficult relationship at the very start of the film, where they are arguing in a moving car and Lady Bird opens the door and throws herself out onto the road, breaking her arm. While it is an unprecedented and shocking moment, it is also ridiculous. From the beginning, Gerwig successfully captures that blend of exaggerated drama and hilariness that makes up the coming-of-age narrative.

As someone who was a fairly shy, compliant teenager, Lady Bird's

confidence is something I instantly admired. What makes her even more compelling is that she is beautifully flawed, as all teenagers are. There are several moments in the film where she makes poor decisions, particularly in her friendship with Julie (Beanie Feldstein). We also see her struggle with her confidence at times, particularly during her turbulent relationship with Kyle (Timothée Chalamet). Yet, she makes up for her flaws through her ability to recognise her mistakes and empathise with those she cares for, which makes her a truly lovable character.

After the film ended, my sister and I sat in silence for a moment watching the credits roll. As we left, I remember a feeling of confidence washing over me. In a confusing teenage world, Lady Bird had taught me that it was okay to mess up, and not really know what I want – I can still be my authentic self while working things out along the way.

Seven years later and we still come back to watch *Lady Bird* on a regular basis. My sister even has a tiny lady bird tattooed on her collarbone to reflect her love of the film.

Terrifier Slays Competition

By Steven Whitear

Terrifier (2016, Damien Leone) is generally considered an underdog in the world of horror cinema. The ultraviolent, excessive franchise has been a secret success since 2016, earning massive returns from miniscule budget. This year, *Terrifier 3* (2024, Damien Leone) hit the stage and has already passed \$50m – a huge success considering its budget was only \$2m. Indeed, it was a success after its Thursday previews.

Terrifier 3 was released at a very fortunate time, with its main competition being the freshly notorious *Joker Folie à Deux* (2024, Todd Phillips). The fact that both movies feature a clown as the main villain led to the so-called 'Box Office Battle of the Clowns.' Overwhelmingly negative reviews for *Joker* led to *Terrifier 3* becoming the number one movie in the United States. *Terrifier 3* was showing in cinemas weeks after *Joker* became dead and buried on streaming.

There was a time when we weren't sure if *Terrifier 3* would even come to Norwich. The first *Terrifier*'s theatrical run was minimal, yet successful. *Terrifier 2* (2022, Damien Leone) had a lot more screenings, but never really left America. This time around, Damien Leone was eager to give *Terrifier 3* a worldwide release in cinemas but there was some uncertainty as to whether it would only stay in larger cities in the UK. Despite the first two films screening for the first time across Norwich in September, the closest screening to UEA for *Terrifier 3* until just a few days before its release was at an independent cinema in Gorleston. However, tickets went up for cinemas like Vue and Odeon just three days before its release.

The Substance: Review

By L McKinnell Michael

Coralie Fargeat's *The Substance* (2024, Coralie Fargeat) follows a fading star, Elisabeth Sparkle (Demi Moore) as she is given the cold shoulder by show business. She decides to use a drug known as 'the substance' to create a younger version of herself (Margaret Qualley), who she must swap consciousness with every seven days. This younger substitute, Sue, finds fame of her own, but refuses to follow the rules of the substance. Although the dialogue was pulpy and unnatural at times, the lead actors delivered brilliant, emotive performances. Their joint desperation for fame and agency was striking.

The Substance is best viewed with a large group, with plenty of people to react to the grossest parts of the film. In fact, the film was an exploration of filth and gore, from eating with your mouth open to vomiting a dismembered breast; the practical effects certainly bolstered the impact of the more extreme moments. The visuals, score and costuming were unique and modern with an 80's twist; the over-the-top sound design only added to the - already strong - body horror elements of the film.

Smile 2: Review

By Heather Wallis

Time to smile! Parker Finn's *Smile 2* (2024) is out and has become the latest sensation in horror cinema. Packed with spine-chilling thrills and gut-wrenching tension, it is a must-watch for a movie night guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Smile 2 elevates the horror and suspense of the original, delivering a darker, bloodier sequel that's both terrifying and impossible to look away from, with heightened gore that makes each scene more disturbing than the last. The palpable tension is magnificently created through the sharp camerawork that transitions between lingering stillness to sudden, unsettling close-ups. The bold visual style of the film features tenebrous, shadowy tones, juxtaposed by saturated reds and eerie lighting, which perpetually amplifies the terror that makes up the chilling atmosphere.

The film's distinctiveness lies in its meticulous blend of horror and real-world pop culture, embodied through the character of Skye Riley, who was effortlessly brought to life by Naomi Scott's authentic and captivating performance. Scott's layered performance masterfully conveys Skye's psychological unravelling, capturing both vulnerability and resilience in a way that feels raw and relatable. This impassioned character portrayal allows viewers to empathise deeply with Skye, even as she confronts unimaginable horrors.

Isaac's Highlight

Vicky Krieps

Vicky Krieps is a name probably not known to many, but it should be. Krieps is a Luxembourgish-German actress who consistently delivers complex and witty performances in a range of different types of films. Sit to watch *Phantom Thread* (2017, Paul Thomas Anderson) and you'll find a wholly dissimilar Vicky Krieps from who you see in *Corsage* (2022, Marie Kreutzer) or *Bergman Island* (2021, Mia Hansen-Love).

I continue to be surprised by how she takes the material provided and moulds it into her own through performance, something that is often hard to achieve. For instance, in *The Dead Don't Hurt* (2023, Viggo Mortensen), Krieps is the central woman in a Western film. On paper her place there seems like a fish out of water, a European actress using her own accent in a Western? Even as a fan of hers, I went in hesitant, but in actuality she provides a much-needed balance and substance to the story. That dedication to morphing characters who appear out of place, into having sovereign is what keeps me coming back to her marvellous filmography.

Will It Always Be Sunny In Philadelphia?

By Guy Sutton

It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia is the best modern sitcom! A sentiment enthusiastically shared, as it's become, as of its fifteenth season, the longest running live-action sitcom in history. An accomplishment that's no easy feat considering it was born from a pilot shot on less than \$200 by three friends with a camcorder. With sixteen released seasons and a seventeenth currently being filmed, the show's longevity and continued relevance in the television industry is nothing short of remarkable. It's a testament to its unique blend of dark humour, satirical social commentary, and sharp character dynamics. The core group—Charlie (Charlie Day), Dennis (Glenn Howerton), Dee (Kaitlin Olson), Mac (Rob McElhenney), and Frank (Danny DeVito)—are all dysfunctional, but their collective failure to evolve has kept the show fresh. In an era where many sitcoms falter after a few seasons, It's Always Sunny has defied expectations, even going as far as to address topics like toxic masculinity, cancel culture, and political correctness, all while maintaining the crudeness and absurdity that has become its trademark.

Despite many fans being open and excited for a Seventeenth Season, there's an essence of discontentment stirring within the fandom. The fears of these fans are relatable, and I say this a cult-like fan myself. There's a nervousness that the lesser quality of these later seasons, while still being decent in their own rights, are representative of a gradual decline, akin to The Simpsons.

As with many long-running shows, especially sit-coms, fatigue eventually sets in after a while, leading to the writers becoming more strained to think of new ideas that continue to give the characters fresh material to chew on.

The risk of becoming a relic of its former self is ever-present. With each season, the show treads a thin line between nostalgia and relevance, between daring humour and outdated jokes. The fifteenth season saw the series implement a season wide arc that involved them travelling to Ireland. While I was a supporter of the season overall, it was hard to remain oblivious to other fan's well-reasoned objections. They considered the nature of the arc to be overly high concept in nature and doesn't provide the backbone to many good jokes, betraying the shows robust humour and character dynamics to create something uncharacteristically aimless.

Not only is there a risk of becoming a relic of its former self, but there's also the risk of losing the unique voice it possessed. The merits of the 4:4 aspect ratio it originally utilised will be debated, but it's undeniable that it provided the show with a unique visual style that complimented its uniquely nihilistic outlook and malicious humour. It juxtaposed other television sitcoms with its dark, grungy lighting, low-production values, and scrappy camera work. Since the show's switch after the fifth season to a more approachable 1.85:1, the show's lighting has become more washed out and saturated. The character that lurked within the shows shabbiness has been drowned out, making it feel simply like another sitcom. All shows must evolve to maintain the freshness that made it so exciting in the first place, but it's often a detriment to the original vision for the show. This voice gradually being lost due to its own longevity is heartbreaking for a fan of any show. Always Sunny seems to be stuck in a quandary where wants

to continually push the limits of its characters and its storylines, risking its humour in the meantime. But if it continually just plays to its strengths, it becomes routine, losing the energy that made it spark.

But even with all the fear surrounding the ambiguity as to the quality of the upcoming season, there is always hope. Many fans considered the sixteenth season an improvement over the previous three. Learning from the mistakes made regarding the increased reliance on outlandish, experimental concept episodes that substitute the shows signature humour for loopy parody. Season sixteen was more self-contained, bringing it back to the characters and relishing in their well-defined dynamics. But even then, in my opinion, it still lacked the anarchic spirit of the early seasons. The jokes, while funny, felt more standard and it never felt like it made the most of its concepts, losing that go-for-broke attitude that made the show so good originally.

The Seventeenth Season may well be exceptional, but I doubt many fans would lament if it was announced as the last season. It may be Sunny as usual, but I think it's about time the weather changed.



The Damn Kids Just Won't Grow Up

By Charlotte Davies

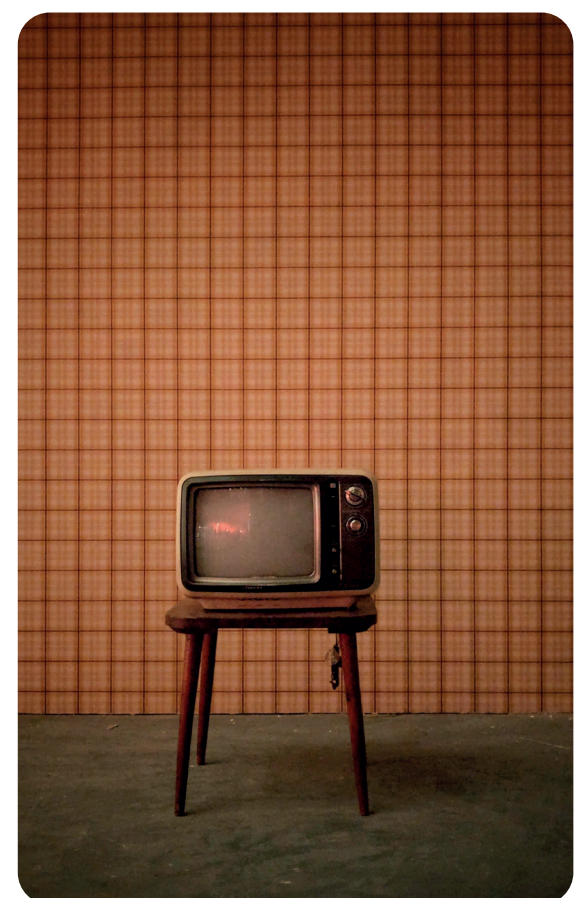
South Park, best known for its extremely controversial opinions within pop culture, is sticking around for a lot longer than first believed. The pop-cultural phenomenon, most known by its leading characters Eric Cartman, Kyle Broflovski, Stan Marsh and Kenny McCormick, has now broken headlines with its record-breaking deal of \$900 million for six new seasons alongside 14 movies set within the South Park universe. Despite only having one official film as of now, creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone previously stated some past episodes (that had been made into a longer format, such as the 'pandemic special') were made to 'scratch both itches. Providing both longer form content while making it more palatable to an audience with a short attention span.

The fan favourite show, which has been running for over 20 seasons, has had many scandals surrounding it. From the title of their first film being rejected for being too outwardly rude, having a public feud with Scientology, and of course countless run ins with being 'politically incorrect'. Despite all this and more, the cultural phenomenon has survived all this controversy and to this day the creators say they don't have to worry about cancel culture as they have 'f-k you money now'. While the two have never hidden their immense wealth, earned through both the success of South Park, and the Tony Winning musical 'The Book of Mormon', it was brought into the public eye after

the purchase of restaurant Casa Bonita (a famous Colorado restaurant, re-popularised by the show). It is the creators' ability to branch out into various business ventures that has enabled them to stay relevant in an ever-changing social climate.

Rather than running from the social beast that is cancel culture, Parker and Stone seemingly run towards it without fear as they deem it to be a 'legit cultural change' that can only truly understood and respected through comedy - demonstrated through many recent episodes of South Park. However, through playing into the restrictive nature of cancel culture alongside the guaranteed payout, it has been argued that the show has now lost its integrity, morphing into an apparent mockery of itself. Fans worry that due to the large financial risks that have been placed on the continued success, fewer risks will be taken within the writing of episodes, resulting in only a glossy shell of what it once was.

Aside from all the online debate surrounding South Parks future, it is clear that Parker and Stone intend on only ingraining it further within social culture, through bringing more features of the fictional town into reality. Luckily, it appears fan favourite location of Tegrity farms may become a reality. While the legalities have not been outlined yet, the co-creators have stated this will become the first of many new South Park themed ventures to come.



Credit: Unsplash

The Downfall of American Horror Story

By India Yates

Credit: Unsplash

FX's anthology series American Horror Story (2011-) has been a household staple among horror fans for over a decade. Created by Ryan Murphy, the show has revolved around a plethora of themes, from a haunted hotel, to a witches coven, to an 80s summer camp. But with a drastic drop in ratings and viewership for recent seasons, the future of this once much-loved series is at stake. Are the increasingly falling numbers an unfair representation of the show's quality or is there a greater horror story lurking behind them?

With seasoned regulars and fan favourite actors by the likes of Sarah Paulson, Evan Peters and Jessica Lange ceasing to appear in recent seasons, it comes as no surprise that viewership of the show is now dwindling. As an anthology series, American Horror Story relied on these beloved actors to coax back viewers season after season. The actors' absences can notably be felt in later seasons which rely on an, although talented, brand-new cast to deliver the show. This cast constantly finds itself grappling to live up to the expectations of fans and fill the shoes of the series legends that came before them. Despite the efforts of the latest instalment, Delicate, bringing back old favourite Emma Roberts to play the role of Hollywood star Anna Alcott, the new season is still 'shockingly bad to the point it's almost comical', according to Outkick Magazine.

The once great writing in earlier seasons such as Murder House and Asylum is now a distant memory in the eyes of many fans of the show. American Horror Story, which characterised itself with catty, campy and queer dialogue and undertones, now fades into the abyss of

new shows which cater to the same audience in a newer, more captivating light. It is hard to tell if these new shows truly pull off this characterisation better than recent seasons of American Horror Story, or if fans have become bored of the show's predictability and over reliance on it. This does not begin to scratch the surface of the writing issues that plague American Horror Story.

With plot holes and incomplete storylines becoming ever more present in new seasons, audiences are becoming tired of finishing a show with more questions than answers. Arguably American Horror Story has slipped onto the back burner for creator Ryan Murphy, as his newer shows, such as Pose and Ratched still hit the mark with fans and critics alike.

The lack of fresh ideas and convoluted plots are more aspects of decline on the minds of many American Horror Story fans. Recent seasons of the show are packed with incohesive storylines, plot holes and repeated material. How many times can the show expect to use the 'you died and are stuck here forever as a ghost' trope before it becomes a bore? It comes as no surprise that audiences are choosing to give up on the series with an abundance of new shows to watch with fresh and original ideas.

Maybe American Horror Story has finally run its course, and fans have been left to watch the show slowly and inevitably fizzle into the archives of pop culture. Or will the anticipated season 13 finally bring a much-needed revitalisation to the show, with rumours of the original cast returning in hopes of 'getting the band back together'?



New School Year at Abbott Elementary

By Samuel Hallam

Quinta Brunson's hit mockumentary sitcom, Abbott Elementary, is back for a fourth season with its delightful cast of characters who've won viewers' hearts.

Season 4 of Abbott kicks off with one of the biggest twists since "I can see dead people...". A new white student at the black public school we have been following the previous three seasons. The new student acts as a harbinger of what seems to be this season's big bad... a new golf course. This golf course is funded by the city and only seems to land holes in the teachers' lesson plans. The construction causes a myriad of problems ranging from low water pressure due to a burst pipe to giving people trouble parking. The parking issue leads to 'concerned' deadbeat, Darnell, being late to the fight he challenged Tyler James Williams' Gregory Eddie to (because of Darnell's son admiring his 1st grade teacher, Eddie).

The introduction of the golf course within minutes of the first episode holds the theme at the beating heart of this show right in front of your face: The lack of funding and resources given to public schools and teachers. The city feeds money into this golf course to supposedly increase property value and build new houses, which the current citizens of West Philly "will never see the inside of," as noted by Darnell. All the while Lisa Ann Walter's Melissa Schemmenti has snot on her hands thanks to the low water pressure and Sheryl Lee Ralph's Barbara Howard is "still waiting on those paper towels," for her classroom. Abbott points the finger

Credit: Unsplash



at the governing bodies that choose to fund trivial pastimes for wealthy white people, for the sake of improving the city's aesthetic. All whilst underfunding public school districts and leaving the teachers, parents and students of Abbott out to dry.

Though Abbott remains focused on the American Education System I find many of the themes relevant here in Britain. Particularly, those regarding funding. We have seen our government sink money into the xenophobic 'Rwanda Scheme' and fund Israel's assault on Gaza rather than our education system and public services. Now tuition fees have been raised, making higher education more inaccessible, and the bus fare cap being raised to £3 pounds will make the simple act of travelling to school or university more expensive.

However, rather than giving into the doomerism around the state of education Abbott maintains a joyous optimism by detailing the relentless efforts of the staff to provide for their students. History teacher Jacob Hill (Chris Perfetti) locks himself in room full of students who have been exposed to

ringworm so that they still get an education that day whilst containing the spread. Gregory discovering connecting with his students is "the best part of the job." The Christian Barbara Howard lying through her back teeth so the district will service the school's computers. The same computers she, Jacob and Melissa obtained through blackmailing those in charge of the golf course. Eternally optimistic Janine Teagues, played Brunson herself, working with the district to get funding for extra-curriculars and coming out with class pets. Overseeing it all is Principal Ava Coleman, who across the four seasons has gone from not taking her role seriously to scheming and bending over backwards "to get [her] kid's computers," and other resources, despite action being her "least favourite thing to take."

The first half of season 4 is off to a fantastic start. Gregory and Janine's romance is still endearing even after they have gotten together, and the cast is a goldmine of one liners and exceptional comedic timing. Abbott's future looks very sunny indeed.

"The thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of. The mite which November contributes becomes equal in value to the bounty of July." - Henry David Thoreau

The First Chapter of the Norwich Book Festival

By Hannah Jones

With the nights drawing in and a greater chill in the air, there is no inspiration like the season of autumn for cosying up with a good book. This year, book lovers across the city and county were given the ultimate autumnal treat in the form of the Norwich Book Festival. Taking place over four days at the end of October, there were over 35 events, ranging from author talks to storytelling on a bus, at venues of literary significance in the city centre such as the Forum, Dragon Hall, and some of the major bookshops of Norfolk. Several of these events, particularly those for children and families, were free or held on a 'pay what you can' basis.

Many authors leading events had connections to the city and UEA, reinforcing UEA's reputation as "a powerhouse of producing these amazing talents", as the National Centre for Writing's Chief Executive, Peggy Hughes, put it. Several of the appearing authors were graduates of UEA's world-renowned MA Creative Writing courses. Among the impressive line-up were Emma Bamford, UEA MA Prose Fiction graduate, and Stephanie Bishop, UEA's own Professor of Creative Writing, who shared a captivating explo-



Credit: Unsplash

ration of the female gaze and the power of the protagonist in fiction. In the realm of 'Young Adult' fiction, Dr Ashley Hickson-Lovence, UEA Creative and Critical Writing graduate, and Joseph Coelho didn't disappoint with their discussion of their latest novels *The Boy Lost in the Maze* (by Hickson-Lovence) and *Wild East* (by Coelho and which is also set in Norwich). Natalie Lawrence also mesmerised an impressive audience with her eloquently delivered talk about her new non-fiction, *Enchanted Creatures*, analysing 15,000 years of imaginary beasts and the secrets of the human mind they divulge, as well as reflecting on our past and future relationship

with nature. The weekend brought families out for a range of crafting activities and stalls at the Imaginarium in the Forum, while storytelling sessions were held in the unique venue of the First Story Bus outside. With only 1 in 3 UK children and young people aged eight to eighteen saying that they enjoy reading in their free time, one of the lowest levels of reading enjoyment ever recorded, Norwich Book Festival has been born at a time when it has perhaps never been more important for this demographic.* The provision of free and 'pay what you can' activities was a commended move for greatly minimising the financial barrier preventing families' access to these opportunities for children's vital engagement with books. Norwich's evident significance in the literary world, as the City of Stories and the first UNESCO City of Literature, makes us wonder at how overdue a book festival seemed. But rooted in the buzz of readers and writers of all ages coming together was a definite sense of deep connection with an appreciation of the incredible host city. With the pilot having set the bar high, it is safe to say that we can expect more great things from Norwich Book Festivals to come!

*According to the Literacy Trust

The World in Words: Han Kang and the Importance of Translated Literature

By Polly Dye

Since serving as the Writer in Residence for the British Centre for Literary Translation here at UEA in 2015, Korean poet Han Kang will receive a Nobel Prize in Literature this December. The reason for her award being her "intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas" whilst exposing "the fragility of human life", according to the Nobel Prize website. Kang's work attests to the importance of literary translations: by converting texts into new languages, we experience the vividness and history of diverse cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive literary community.

When translating a work of literature, writers must balance linguistic precision and cultural sensitivity to guarantee the text replicates the original writer's unique voice and their own cultural context. In their desired target language, translators should capture the author's tone and style, including all metaphors and idioms they may use. As well as this, it is beneficial for translations to convey the deeper meanings of the text in order to honour the culture it came from. These characteristics of translation both promote an understanding of diverse cultures, ultimately fashioning a more educational reading experience. Though, the translation of literature comes with a beguiling question: should translators craft as literal a translation as possible, or focus on making the

translation accessible for readers unfamiliar with the original culture? It is safe to say a literal approach preserves the author's voice more intelligibly, as it aims to replicate their exact words, offering readers a more fulfilling understanding of how the text would actually appear in its original language. By breaking linguistic borders to protect the text's language, translation proves its value to not only casual readers, but to academics who may be intent on studying the literature's language. Thus, literal translation's integral role within academic fields enhances the original text's ingenuity, thereby affirming translation's importance in the literary community. However, as literal translations are focused on linguistic precision, they fail to capture the deeper meanings of their original text. A more interpretive translation intends to replicate the work's emotional impact, removing the possibility of alienating readers from the text for it may not translate the language-specific phrases of the original. Though this style of translation may overpower the original authorial voice, it is this that ensures texts are accessible to all cultures, guaranteeing the success of literature's cross-cultural adaptability.

Combining both translation styles seems impossible; a less literal approach wholly immerses readers into diverse cultural contexts but diminishes

Credit: Anita Staff



the author's voice, and vice versa. Though there appears to be no solution, it is important to acknowledge all types of translation have one goal in common: achieving universally accessible literature. It is this that makes translated literature a piece of art in its own right; by building cultural bridges through words, translations let us glimpse at lives different from our own, to grasp an understanding of them. This fosters a more empathetic readership and encourages connection to the people around us, a unique gift only literature can provide.

The Alarming Global Literacy Crisis

By Andi Gill

In the summer of 2023, I worked part time as a camp counselor at my old school. It was meant to be an easy summer job- take my assigned group of kids to the scheduled activities, and then do a half hour of group reading after lunch. I thought the kids in my group were just extraordinarily shy, since none of them ever volunteered to read, and I wasn't going to force them to do so. The first two weeks passed, and group reading had turned into story time. Only, I realized that my initial mental explanation of shyness couldn't possibly be true when so many of the kids were extroverted and whispering to their friends while I read to them. So, I started making reading mandatory, to an honestly unexpected degree of protest. I soon figured out why.

Nearly every child in my group couldn't read a full sentence out loud without stumbling. These were all kids from underprivileged areas of my city, and the whole point of the camp was for them to have better learning opportunities while school was out, but it still shocked me that 8-9-year-old kids wouldn't be able to read a full sentence out loud. I had to correct my course and use much simpler books for group reading until it was clear that everyone was on the same page. By the end of the summer, all of them had improved a bit, but they still weren't even remotely close to the 9-year-old reading level I had expected.

So, when the World Literacy Foundation revealed that global literacy rates were dropping by 5% every year in developed countries, it didn't surprise me. I had attributed my personal experience to COVID-19, since kids who were 9 then had

been in lockdown at as young as 6 years old and had missed the crucial first few years of schooling. And since they were from disadvantaged schools, online learning was inaccessible, due to how much money was involved- money for Wi-Fi, money for a computer, and enough financial security for their mothers or fathers to be able to take frequent breaks from their own work to monitor them and keep them on track. The pandemic had set those kids back two years, and more if they weren't actually caught up when they were thrust back into school. Teachers are required to follow the curriculum, but what happens when none of their students can keep up with it?

Things look even worse in underdeveloped countries. The World Literacy Foundation revealed its findings in the same article that 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read or understand simple text, continuing at a rise of 20% of that number a year. Before COVID, the number of children and adolescents lacking foundational literacy skills was 260 million- during COVID, that number jumped to 1.6 billion.

It's important to remember that this doesn't just apply to reading for fun, (although that is an invaluable part of a child's education). We're talking about 1.6 billion kids who may never hold a mid-level job, who may never make it into any form of higher education, and who won't be able to do things like file their own taxes. It's said that education is the great equalizer. All that illiteracy serves to do is keep the impoverished exactly where they are and kick the disadvantaged in developed countries down even further.

So, what do we do? We're in a digital Dark Age- with-

"70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries cannot read or understand simple text."

Credit: Unsplash



out access to the internet, it's difficult to get access to books in many of these countries. Bill Gates has suggested that AI chatbots could help kids learn how to read, but that requires stable internet access as well. Unless there were suddenly some way to give every child a functioning computer with inherent internet access, I can't see the internet being the best way to combat this. A more effective route would be a taught course, individualized to each country, which would take kids through the basics of reading from the very beginning. Kids who excelled could be excused from it in favor of designated "reading time," while kids who need it would have a teacher specially trained in teaching literacy skills. That would still be expensive, of course, and how it would be funded would need to be worked out through the UN and UNESCO, but a total solution is probably far off in the future. And these kids need help now if they're ever going to catch up.

Book Review - Walking Disaster: My Life Through Heaven and Hell by Deryck Whibley

By Daniel Garcia

Content warning: reference to sexual abuse and grooming, substance abuse, military conflict, STDs and PTSD

Deryck Whibley has led a storied life. Being the frontman of rock band Sum 41 since he was a teenager, he has been used to living a life in the public eye. His new autobiography Walking Disaster: My Life Through Heaven and Hell, is an incredibly revealing and moving account of his life thus far, delving deeper into him and the band than ever before.

There are stories of wild Los Angeles parties with rockstars and celebrities, with genuinely heartwarming stories like the early days of Whibley's marriage with fellow Canadian artist Avril Lavigne. It is fascinating to see Whibley's creative process, as well as how his life influenced the songs he was writing. It was particularly interesting to see how the first singles from the first three Sum 41 albums, "Fat Lip", "Still Waiting" and "We're All to Blame", were the last songs written for their respective records. Another single from Does This Look Infected?, "The Hell Song" was written about Whibley's childhood friend contracting HIV, and his fears about being infected himself.

But while the highs are high, the lows are incredibly low. The story of the 'Tokyo drug trip' is hard to sit through, and Whibley's near-death experiences

with alcoholism are incredibly difficult to experience vicariously.

The biggest revelation of the book is undoubtedly the allegations of sexual abuse and grooming that Whibley levels at Greig Nori, the band's former manager. These allegations, that Nori was inappropriately involved with Whibley since he was sixteen, cast a dark shadow over the darker parts of his life. It adds a much sadder backdrop to the band's issues throughout the years, as they were (allegedly) being turned against each other by Nori. They were barely adults.

"A song that they risked their lives to make."

What I have found most fascinating as a fan of the band is how the book adds so much context to their changing sound.

Chuck is a dark album, and arguably the band's 'magnum opus'. During the making of the album, the band traveled to the active warzone of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to film a documentary with War Child Canada - Rocked: Sum 41 in Congo. During the filming of this documentary, a fire broke out around the hotel that the band

were staying at, and they had to be evacuated by UN peacekeeper Chuck Pelletier, who the album was later named after. Whibley was certain that this would be his grave.

All killer, no filler.

He writes about the post-traumatic stress disorder that the band experienced as a result of escaping from the DRC. In a particularly harrowing episode, he talks about experiencing severe physical symptoms of his PTSD whilst boarding a plane in the following weeks. It makes the Chuck single "We're All to Blame", which was written after the trip, so hard hitting. It is both an album and a song that they risked their lives to make.

Despite their changing sound, one thing that has always remained the same is the level of emotion they put into all their music. And this comes across in the autobiography - Whibley talks incredibly candidly about his life, the breakdown of his relationships, everything.

The sun may have set on Sum 41 at their highest. The band is all they have ever known since they were fifteen, so it only makes sense that they want to start the next chapter of their lives. For many of them this is fatherhood. But for all of them, especially Whibley, the story is not over.

Creative Writing

Editor: Sasha Ouvry

The theme for this month's Creative Writing section was **Lotus Eaters**. If you're interested in submitting to us, you can join the Concrete Society through the UEA SU website to gain access to the Concrete Writers team, where the theme for December's online issue will be posted on 30 November. We look forward to reading your work!

Lotus Eaters

Lara Parsons

Your palms are cupping the lotus fruit. Each of us brings it to our lips. It's slightly sweet but knows its bounds. We are absorbing our route to reverie in perfect synchronisation. We're adding the seeds to our juices. Crafting the lotus fruit into a pudding. Anything can go into a cheesecake. Or baked into a warm pie, comforted by custard. We bathe together in warm water with floating flowers. The lotus self-pollinates in the water, growing inside us until we're submerged in a wondrous haze.

If I were to dance with you, it would be in a faraway land, under the light of Himalayan salt crystal caves. Our figures move in unity, aligned like swift swans. The skies are rosy, each dawn a dioxazine hue. You are a goddess and I, an angel, monarch of the skies. Overseers. You are my main observation, the subject of my allure. The white peplos you wear ends just before the floor begins.

Those figures sipping nectar are us, sitting idly upon two thrones. Sweet-sounding birds in courtship. Then we're waltzing in euphoria, the overseers. I'll twirl you into a home in my arms. Tuck your golden hair between your ears as we dance.

We're back under the crystal caves of my mind.

There comes a time when the petals of the lotus flower lose moisture and lose life. The lotus-eater grows hungry again.

Sleep was a simple narcotic I entrusted my mind to. It made me the greatest lotus-eater of them all. I did not want the world to invade, to come crashing through the surface. I am in the heavens, floating with you. Down below, my eyes are flickering at the cityscape through my window. Bills are stacking and our appliances are slowly breaking. I have beeping alarms and deadlines I can't meet. Downstairs, my mother is calling my name. The way it sounds is not magical like Althea or Juno. You are a creation of my head and I have work to do. Fractions. Probability. Adenine and thymine and cytosine and guanine or whatever was due this week. Read chapter one of the Confessions of the English Opium Eater. Survive. Hope.

If I were to dance with you, it would only be in a dream.



Morning Haze, 1888, Claude Monet



Forget Me

Hebe Purdy

How strange to watch the curdling of time,
The bud that forms.
Such cold rain and the leaves
That this time hold on.
Emerald and constant and soft,
Your eyes always did hold difference.
One a country. One a day.
Whispered, still, of the promise of spring.

Murmured blurred words now sting and cut
Clean in meaning.
Is it cruel of the leaves?



The Four Seasons, 1780s, Alexandre Bricau and Jean-Baptiste Huet



Venus, c. 1580/1590, Francesco Brambilla, the Younger

Fragments

Sankavi Naresh

I always get caught up between the times of 11 and 6 in the morning. There’s a sort of sadness in the transience of the people you meet. A gaping hole which cannot be filled. Concerts. Standing in the cold queuing for ages. Finally pouring into the stadium. A rush of hot air. Chatter growing steadily. Air pulsating with anticipation. Thin plumes of smoke ribbons in the night sky, I struggle to light the cigarette. I’m too drunk. The shoddy red lighter lent by a friend gets left behind. Nights I try to remember. Try as I might, the blurry pictures and videos are of no use. I forget.

I come back one night to find the house empty. Nothing but a green light fills the hallway. It’s not alive anymore, thrumming with laughter and anger and hurt. Not what it used to be. I try to cook dinner, and introduce some normalcy back in. What it should’ve been. But all I can taste is bitterness.

A bitterness. Asparagus isn’t in season for another three months. Why did he make this? It doesn’t go with the lemon and parmesan polenta either. It’s all too fucking bitter. My face scrunches up, displeased. He notices me swirling around the food on my plate, creating a strange-looking mash. A question hangs between us.

“It’s out of season,” I say out loud.

“What is?” His eyebrows raise and he mumbles, his mouth filled with food. When did he become so uncultured?

“The asparagus.” I push my plate away.

Venus in Furs

Anonymous

Like a woman
laughter
nightingale
Divinity
seated
drawing slight breath
for whom morning tenderly writes enchantment
and meadows sigh
delicate
nothings
Here shimmers Her rage
diabolically
Here Venus delivers an Odyssey
as is softness
before the laughing music
and us
green with adoration
full of red amazement.

“How much?”

“About 50 quid including the wine and dessert –”

“Only £50. It’s fine, I’ll pay you back.”

I put down my fork.

“Why didn’t you visit me last month?” I look at him pointedly.

“The train tickets were too expensive, besides you said there’s nothing to do,” he sighs.

“That was last year, you know I wasn’t myself. Exeter’s a lovely city. I might have a love-hate relationship with it, but there’s lots to do. You spent the money and made time for Holly. And James. Luke too. Do I have to go on?”

“Yeah, I’ll see,” he whispers back. Our voices are hushed, the lighting is dim. Who knows when the big light will be fixed? I can’t quite make out his facial expression.

“You’ll see?”

“What do you want me to say?” he slams down his cutlery, steak juice splashing onto him. It drips down his tie unpleasantly.

Someone slams the front door, shaking the pinboard on the wall. It’s crowded with pictures of my house-mates from nights out, rusty pins, receipts, letters, stupid inside jokes, recipes, useless things that we held onto for no reason. Something drops from it, I can’t see what it is. It falls flat, face down.



Still Life with Asparagus and Red Currants, 1696, Adriaen Coorte



Interview

Editor: Lily Taylor

Sarah Price, Manager and Founder of The Cat House Norwich

By Lily Taylor

I sat down with Sarah Price, manager and founder of the Cat House Norwich. We met in the Cat House itself, so while Sarah was talking to me, several furry visitors walked across the table and stood on my laptop, typing random strings of letters and numbers in the process.

As a huge cat fan myself, I had visited the Cat House on several occasions. In fact, I knew all the cats' names: Dave, Stanley and Lily met me at the door as Sarah let me in to the lounge.

Already having good knowledge of the cats, I wanted to find out more about the woman behind their care. We started off with the obvious topic: Sarah's passion for cats.

"I've always loved cats, always had cats. Grew up with cats and wanted more. But my dad was one of those dads that said no. His word was king. Lovely dad, but, you know, only two cats at a time really."

Now surrounded by 21 cats, it seems that Sarah's dream has come true. However, the journey to achieving this dream wasn't a straightforward one.

"Back in 2021, my mum had just passed away from cancer, very suddenly, bless her. So, I was very able to submerge myself in the world of cats, and eventually we managed to sell her flat, so I had a little bit of inheritance.

COVID had stopped my career because I worked in care homes doing musical workshops. So, I travelled around a lot to different care homes as a self-employed practitioner, but they didn't want to carry on with that sort of thing because of COVID, so I had to think of something else to do. And I love to be self-employed. Didn't want to go and get a job. So, it all just suddenly clicked."

Sarah and staff member Vicki went on a road trip, visiting 10 cat cafes in five days. Yet, Sarah felt something was missing.

"I didn't want to do what we had seen in the cat cafes, because they were just cafes with cats. I love cooking at home, but I didn't want to do it for my day job.



14 Credit: The Cat House Norwich

I run a circus with my husband. I help him. It's his circus. So, we're very much used to putting on events and dealing with bookings and people.

Because I'm an artist, I just suddenly had this vision of an art centre that was cat themed. But then, of course, there's the doubt going, oh, but is that too specific? But actually, no, it's been very well received.

I think the art side of this has given it its good reputation. It's kind of helped to lift it just above a cat café, yeah, it's given it that grounding."

The Cat House certainly offers a unique experience to your typical cat café. Currently, the art centre is hosting a wide range of arts and crafts events and introduces new events frequently.

"We do events and then we do workshops. We are working on our Christmas cat quiz at the moment. That's going to be a fab event. And we've just started doing cat bingo, which is fun. Obviously, there's cats climbing on everyone's laps. And all the prizes are cat gifts. So, it's really lovely.

We've got so many new workshops coming. We've got origami starting up. This chap called Russell Woods got in touch. He's the chairman of the UK Origami Society, and has written a book, which you can buy on Amazon. So, he's gonna be running that, starting the 22nd of November.

Another new one is macrame, where you're plaiting and weaving this cord. You have really long cord, and then you do these knots, and it ends up looking really twisted. It's beautiful. And it's quite straightforward. We've got a new tutor, Jerry, coming to do that, so that's gonna be interesting.

Then, we've got all our standards. We've got clay cats, which is once a month, where you make little cat head shapes, and you get some dry already that you can decorate and paint, and then the fresh ones that you make, you can stamp cats' names into that, or your friend's name, or whoever you want to give it to. So that's great.

We do cat life drawing once a month and cat painting once a month. That's fun. We also do cat tarot once a month, and that's so popular. Everyone gets a personal reading for 10 minutes, and there's a whole general chat about what tarot is and how to use it.

And then we have diamond art and various crafts like glass painting decoupage, stone painting and tote bag design. We have lots of UEA societies come down and book the tote bag painting, because they can sit there and draw cats on bags and just have a really chill social time.

We run cat yoga every Wednesday too, so we've got some wellness. Yeah, so lovely, so nice. We've got video footage of someone with Khamoon (a sphinx cat living at The Cat House) sat on their belly, trying to rise up and down. So funny. But people come



for that."

Credit: Lily Taylor

Something else that makes this venue stand out from your typical cat café is the general environment of the Cat House. As soon as you walk in, there is this sense of safety and coziness which makes it such a great place to come and escape from the stress of everyday life.

"I try to keep the décor really calm, because the cats can run around and be zooming, and they are the stars, but the rest of it is really earthy and cozy. I like people to come and be cozy and warm, and I love to be cozy and warm with a cat on my lap. So I like to offer the same to other people."

Sarah's love of everything cozy is reflected in an exciting upcoming Christmas solstice event at the Cat House, 'Cats by Candlelight.'

"It's gonna be a nice evening where it's just fake candles and fairy lights, and we're gonna have lovely, atmospheric wintry music. We're gonna have mega hot chocolates with all the toppings, mulled wines, cozy cakes, and it'll all be darker, but really like a feast for the senses, to celebrate the longest night with our little candles and fairy lights."

It is clear from talking to Sarah that she cares about the welfare of her customers as much as she cares about the welfare of her cats.

"I think the Cat House gives people a focus. If they've lost a cat, they'll often come and have a little cry and stroke one of ours for a cuddle. If they're at uni and they're away from their family pet, a lot of them will come regularly because they just want some cat cuddles. Yeah, it's not like you can walk down the street and pick up a random cat and it will love you back. But these guys, they're really fab with new people, and they're not shy at all. Everyone gets a cuddle when they come.

We have quite a lot of foreign students from Amer-



Credit: The Cat House Norwich

ica that volunteer, and they come and help out because they really miss their cats. So, for them, it's a really important place.

We also have lots of older people who perhaps don't want to have the hassle of having their own cat anymore, or perhaps can't bend down because they're physically unable, or they may be partially blind and can't see, so they really can't have a pet. So it's lovely because family members or carers will bring them to see the cats.

We have quite a few bookings from care homes and charities bringing people down that are in that situation. We have mental health charities come down, and they have special private bookings, and then all their clients come, and then they've got the carers as well, just to keep an eye and make sure they're okay. But generally, they love it, and they'll come and interact with the cats and get a lot of joy out of that.

I love being able to give people those opportunities that they otherwise can't have."

Another way Sarah keeps the Cat House connected to the local community is through collaborations with local artists.

"We've got 30 to 40 local artists now that bring in either artwork to hang on the walls or gifts to sell that they make. We get lots of jewellery as well, and all sorts of really wonderful cat things that people make. Who knew there was so much? But there really is, and it's so nice to be able to incorporate them and help people to find a place to sell their wares."

As much as the people are important to Sarah's business, so are the cats themselves, which is why Mondays and Tuesdays at the Cat House are closed for cat care.

"On Mondays, we carry out a full health check on every cat. Each cat has got a folder, so we get everything ticked off - there's about 25 different points. They all get checked up and get weighed once a month.

Then on Tuesday, the café gets a deep clean, along with the gift shop and the patio. We do the laundry on a Tuesday and make sure the gift shop is stocked up."

At this point in the conversation, we are interrupted by Romeo, a large and extremely stunning European Maine Coon. He hops onto the table and looks at Sarah expectantly, until she picks him up and cuddles him like a baby.

With Romeo comfortable in Sarah's arms, we move on to talking about the Cat House's social media coverage. Their Instagram is already impressive, with daily updates on events and frequent reels showcasing the cats.

"We've got Jam on social media. He comes in for

30 hours a week, and we have a meeting on a Tuesday, and then we work out what's planned for the week ahead. Yeah, and then he gets on and does it and comes up with funny ideas for reels and things."

However, Sarah is hoping to take the coverage even further.

"In the New Year, we're going to move on to more educational things as well. Because people say, 'What do you feed them?' or 'What litter do you use?'"

We'll still keep the silly stuff, because that's really important. But grooming videos and nail clipping videos, eye wiping videos and how to look after a bald cat videos, that's all really important, because we see ourselves as very much as educational as well.

People come to check out the different breeds because they might be wanting a new cat. As much as we're not promoting breeders, it happens, and people breed. So, it's nice for people to be able to make an informed decision. Because the problem is, if people get an idea and they think they want, say, a bald cat, and they go to spend £800 on it, and then realise they can't quite cope with it, where does it go? A shelter. It's not good. So, our goal in everything is to help people make good decisions, and also to promote shelters that have cats that need homes."

Since starting out last year, the Cat House has helped rehome over 30 cats.

"It's really nice knowing that they have bypassed the shelters. And it helps the shelters not to be overfull either. I like that we don't charge for that service. It's just a nice thing to offer."

In terms of future projects at the Cat House, Sarah hopes to start an annual cat symposium.

"It would be like a cat masked ball in the evening, and then in the daytime, lots of events like book readings from local authors that have written about cats."

The event would incorporate other art venues throughout the city, so it would take a while to organise.

"Maybe next year, hey?" Sarah says.

Sarah's enthusiasm for her work, alongside her love for art, people and cats makes the Cat House such a special place to visit. Her personality is built into the Cat House, and so is her mother's.

"My mum is very much woven into every part of this. While I was building it, and had wobbles, I would her voice in my head going, 'You've got this, dear.' So yeah, she's very much here with me, and yeah, here we are."

You can find more information about events and workshops at the Cat House by heading over to <https://www.cathousenorwich.org/> or following their Instagram @cathousenorwich.



Credit: The Cat House Norwich

Unifying Power of Art: Local Talent on a National Scale

By Annabel Knill and Thomas Lewis

Fostering creativity, sparking meaningful dialogue, and celebrating the unifying power of art, the Norwich Art Fair at the Assembly House is an event not to be missed. Whether you're a budding artist, a seasoned collector, or simply a lover of beautiful things, the art fair offers a chance to highlight the local talent on a national scale.

This past weekend, the historic Assembly House in Norwich transformed into a vibrant hub of creativity and inspiration as it hosted the highly anticipated Norwich Art Fair. Drawing artists, collectors, students, and art lovers from across the region, this annual event offered a unique opportunity to explore and engage with a wide array of contemporary art. Boasting an impressive selection of works from both emerging and established artists, the fair showcased everything; from John Sparks' cinematic fine art, to the modern wuxstic trigonometry of Andy Walker's digital art, all the way to the abstract washes of colour and composition from Jade KD's inky pieces. Yet, what brought all these many creations together was their foundational connection to beauty and love of Norwich and Norfolk. No matter how impressionistic, like

Jane Wilson soft edged collages or direct pieces like Colin Revell's Parisian landscapes of Norwich, the Art Fair's collection highlights the multiple face identity of Norfolk.

Upon entering the fair, you are met with an immense range of colour and contrast from the many pieces. Feeling secluded and secretive within the windowless rooms of the Assembly houses, the pieces themselves produce pockets of little worlds in each of their stalls as they wind a path of expressive life and culture as you venture through. The fair featured vibrant abstracts, tranquil landscapes, evocative portraiture, and daring experimental pieces that pushed the boundaries of traditional media. Artists explored themes of environmentalism, identity, and mental health, among others, encouraging audiences to reflect on contemporary issues through an artistic lens.

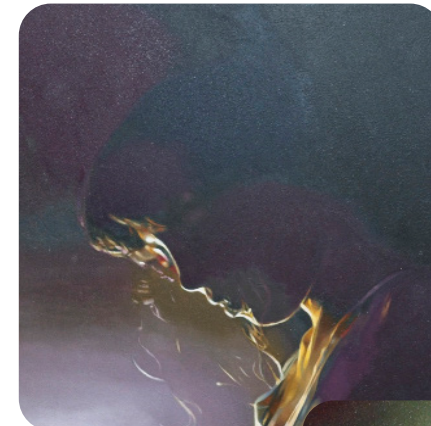
And yet, what can't go unsaid is the impact of the artists' presence alongside their works. Causing the Art Fair to stand out among many other exhibitions and galleries is the voice that the artist can give to their art; transforming the work from an objective piece into a productive activity of discovery

as the method of creating the work comes to focus more acutely, individualizing the artwork as a character of its own. This focus on the process of art was starkly seen through Simon Bailey's work, where the process of creation aided him in finding focus and relief from migraines. His pieces are interactive with the viewer, inviting you to cloud gaze and discover new shapes and colours that continue to emerge.

However, neither can it be denied that while the artist spoke of their paintings, so did the painting speak of the artists. An interesting meta-physical relationship between artist and artwork came into view, as wondering around the fair it became apparent of how each artist looked like their own work. In the way in which they dressed, spoke and even moved there was an interesting kinship of the art works becoming an external extension of the artist, revealing the nature of the artist's being. This became a unique and inspiring experience to the limitless nature of the medium of art, and an experience only found through the Art Fair.



Julia Tooley: Bringing a boldness to her still lifes, Tooley's woks create an vintage appeal capturing a compelling and warming essence of the towns.



John sparks- creates cinematic fine art, capturing not just reality but anomalies caught on a camrea, bring the chiaroscuro use of light of the old masters to a new light



Will Teather – Teather's magical realism brings together through a unique use of the chiaroscuro lighting of the old masters to the modernised fantasy of his compositions

Jade KD – founded on a love of water, KD's pieces took up to three months to create due to the process of layering ink upon each other, using only her fingers to move the ink around. Inspired by an nightmare, her pieces create an abstract dreaminess though their arguably hidden subjects from dragons to reflections in water



Remembering the Weaponisation of Art: The Baedeker Raids

By Valentina Vinciarelli

November is the month of remembrance, of poppies being gratefully worn over our hearts. During this time, it is our duty as dwellers of the now to think and act regardfully towards the history behind those bright paper pins.

One does not need to travel too far back in time or space to do so: our beloved Norwich, too, has a substantial history of suffering and loss that was imposed upon her during the Second World War. Indeed, together with other English cities such as Exeter, Bath, Canterbury, and York, Norwich had been selected as a main target in the "Baedeker Blitz", a bombing offensive by the German Luftwaffe that took place during the Spring of 1942. Many believe these planned raids to have been retaliatory attacks following the Royal Air Force's (RAF) earlier incendiary bombing of the city of Lübeck on the 28th of March 1942.

What correlated the two bombings together was the cultural and artistic importance of their targets, an aspect which was highly intentional in either case. Both Lübeck and Norwich were and still are cities famous for their art and beauty. To understand the extent of their importance, it might be helpful to note that both cities now boast the international accreditation of UNESCO. Intentionally adding the destruction of art to the already devastating consequences of bombings – casualties, homelessness, environmental damage, to name a few – was one of the most effective ways to weigh down civilian morale. Art had been totally and declaredly weaponised to hurt each other in one of our most human, most soft spots: our identification with and desire for aesthetic expression. The valuing and safeguarding of art as a cultural and aesthetic asset was something that Western

populations had been improving on since the early Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures, who saw art as mainly functional and as something that could be dismissed once that function was no longer being fulfilled. It can therefore be said that by the 1940s both the English and the Germans were extremely aware of the emotional relationship between nations and their artistic productions, whether those be decorated infrastructures, literary collections, paintings or sculptures. The damage suffered by Lübeck and Norwich was mainly of the infrastructure kind, however it inevitably extended to the ancient paintings and sculptures that decorated the interiors of the involved buildings. The buildings in Lübeck that suffered the most included St. Mary's Church (Marienkirche), the Lübeck Cathedral (Dom zu Lübeck), the Lübeck Rathaus (City Hall), the Holy Spirit Hospital (Heiligen-Geist-Hospital), St. Aegidien Church (St. Aegidien Kirche), as well as many historical Merchant Houses.

Similarly, the buildings in Norwich that most suffered included the Cathedral, the Castle, the Medieval and Georgian buildings in Elm Hill, Guildhall, the Assembly House, and the City Library. In a 1997 interview by Conrad Wood for the Imperial War Museums (IWM), civilian John Benjamin Fuller narrates his experience during the Norwich Blitz. He vividly recalls: "When we had the Blitz in 1942 that was terrible because next door where we lived and all-round, the area was just completely one mass of flames. [...] I remember my sister when she was rushing down to the shelter, her coat had caught on fire." This precious recording allows us just a small insight into those nightmarish days of destruction: the scorching flames, the loss of loved ones, the fear, the sense of perdition.



Original photos George Plunkett, courtesy of Jonathan Plunkett.

The works of repair and restoration started around the 1950s for both cities and took many years to complete.

It is thanks to these great efforts that we can still enjoy and appreciate their cultural and artistic qualities. Qualities which now shine even more enriched by the light of peace and respect. During this month, let us use the art of our shared city of Norwich – as well as art in general – as a means of memorial so that we may always illuminate ourselves and the world with gratitude and consciousness.

Meet the Art: Getting to Know the Big Personalities at the Sainsbury Centre

By Kate Wolstenholme

‘Art is whatever you can get away with’ - Dan Brown

Discover Leonora Carrington's "Old Maids," a whimsical blend of fertility, ageing, the occult, and culinary practices at the Sainsbury Centre. This painting features a tea party with ladies, a monkey, and magpies around a kitchen table, overseen by a mysterious haloed figure. Carrington humorously blurs the lines between humans, animals, and food, transforming the mundane into the magical.

By celebrating spinsters and crones, Carrington rejects conventional beauty ideals and challenges the Surrealist muse. Explore "Old Maids" and its subversive, feminist storytelling. Come to the Sainsbury Centre art museum on campus to enjoy this masterpiece. Claim your FREE Student Membership today or 'pay if and what you can' for access into the museum.

Image caption: Leonora Carrington, Old Maids, 1947. Pictured on display at the Sainsbury Centre. Photo: Kate Wolstenholme



Theatre

Editor: Dillion Gurney

Minotaur Shorts 2024

By Sankavi Naresh

I went to see the second day of the Minotaur shorts on the 17th of October, the night consisted of 4 short plays, written, directed and produced by the Minotaur Theatre Company. The Minotaur Theatre Company consists exclusively of Drama students at UEA! There was a buzz as me and my friends waited in the queue to collect our tickets, the lobby of the Drama Studio was filled with friends, families and students alike – a strong sense of anticipation hung in the air as everyone took to their seats and the curtains opened. Without further ado, let's take a closer look at each short!

Knives In: Written and directed by Liz McKenna

Knives In (cleverly named after the film directed by Rian Johnson, Knives Out), is a who-dunnit style play featuring lots of twists and turns and stars a stellar cast with very well-timed comedic breaks. There were a lot of laughs, Inspector Spectre's character was very entertaining, and the plot kept us intrigued with lots of surprises peppered throughout!

Minotaur Theatre's description: "A fifteen-minute murder mystery that's jam packed with comedy and twists! When esteemed gentleman Winston Ashford's body is discovered in the drawing room of Grandview Manor, the eyes of suspicion naturally fall onto the mansion's inhabitants. But who could be responsible? Well, if anyone can answer that, it's Inspector Spectre."

Cast List:

Jenkins: Daniel Hall
Reginald: Theo MacGregor
Beatrice: Lizzie White
Inspector Spectre: Joshua Scales
Mabel: Katie Howell
Ashford's Body: Chloe Giess

Room: Written by Amira Hollis, directed by Amira Hollis and Annika Nolen

The set of Room was simple, with a countdown timer projected above our two protagonists Simon and Nic,

portrayed brilliantly by Finn Kennedy Macmillan and Amil Charles respectively. The pair are kidnapped by an unseen individual and are held in a room, watching the timer looming above their head. Whilst the premise seemed straightforward, as the performance went on, the short took on a more existential tone and our characters started questioning the meaning of life and how we spend our time living and exploring the relationships around us. It was quite reflective and makes you ponder! It ended quite poignantly too, with the characters embracing, fearful of what may be their last moments.

Minotaur Theatre's description: "Two unfortunate strangers, Nic and Simon, wake up in an empty room, a large timer on the wall counting down from 24 hours..."

Cast List:

Simon: Finn Kennedy Macmillan
Nic: Amil Charles

The Peace Agreement: Written and directed by Erin Muldoon

The Peace Agreement focuses on the Flinn family who have immigrated to Liverpool from Northern Ireland in the 90s amidst the Troubles. The Peace Agreement really immersed me and my friends into the story, both the acting and the writing was spectacular. The short traversed issues pertinent to society both when it was set and now, shedding an important light on an otherwise overlooked part of history.

Director and writer, Erin Muldoon, describes the play as a dark comedy that explores the complexities of Northern Irish family dynamics post-civil war. Erin states that "It's called the peace agreement because it's basically a mini 'peace agreement'. A Catholic mother, Lily (Eloise Sladden) and lesbian daughter, Orla (Martha Haslam-Cook) eliminate religion in the form of a priest, Father Michael (James Moxley)

because it only adds to their problems. Getting rid of religion improves their relationship. They went to an extreme to kill this priest if it gave them peace, much like the English government deciding to just draw a line under decades of war. It's borderline insane, but it's a desperation for peace."

Minotaur Theatre's description: "A dark comedy set in 1993 Liverpool, where the Flinn family has emigrated from Derry, Northern Ireland, only to find itself devoted to God, and devoted to Father Michael. But one night, a particularly tasteless, unlawful and comically tragic exorcism takes place."

Cast List:

Lily: Eloise Sladden
Orla: Martha Haslam-Cook
Father Michael: James Moxley
Colm: Joe McCloskey

Pony: Written by Harriet Pringle, directed by Harriet Pringle and Sadie Robinson

Pony starts us off during the Christmas period at a nursing home, which although starts off relatively calm, quickly picks up a different tone. This performance had us clutching our sides and featured a hilarious (mock) Magic Mike show which was met with raucous laughter from the crowd. Harriet's description of the play reads: "After the antics of last years 'exotic animal' handler at the Christmas party, the residents of Pelham place retirement home are beside themselves in excitement! (Well, at least one of the residents is excited) for the arrival of the much calmer 'Semi Tones' Christmas choir! But an unexpected mix up results in SEMI TONED the Magic Mike tribute act rocking up at the front door (he would be fully toned, but he only goes to the gym half the year) which descends the care home into absolute mayhem. A stripper and a bunch of geriatrics? What could possibly go wrong?!"

Cast List:

Magic Mitch: Tom Kampf
Lesley: Daisy Dolan
Peter: Finn Kennedy Macmillan
Anne: Betsy James
Emma: Martha Treston

Whilst all 4 plays had our eyes glued to the stage, my personal favourites had to be 'The Peace Agreement' and 'Pony'. Whwilst 'The Peace Agreement' took on a more serious tone, 'Pony' was a lot more light-hearted and had us chuckling- both shorts were standouts in my opinion!

The set, lighting and the cast for each play were nothing 'short' of amazing, all the actors performed excellently and were accompanied by incredible stagehands. **Keep your eyes peeled for The Minotaur Theatre Company's future performances on their Instagram @minotaurtheatre**



Credit: Harriet Pringle



Credit: Lizzie McKenna

From Page to Stage: The Theatrical Experiments of Bluets

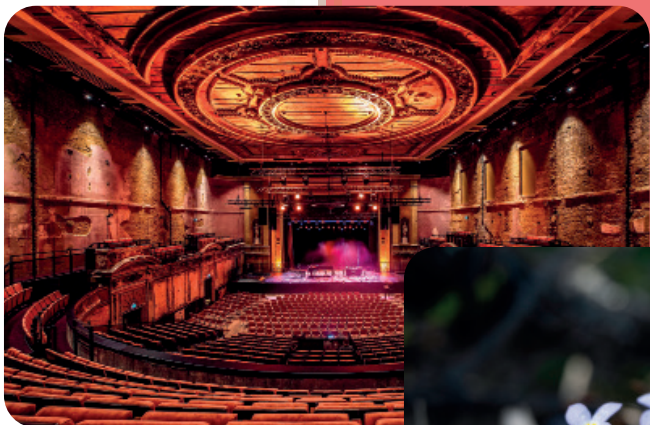
By Isaac Arif

I quickly read Maggie Nelson’s memoir *Bluets* two weeks before seeing its stage adaptation. Like many others, I was amazed by Nelson’s exploration of depression and love but found the idea of adapting this text puzzling. Composed of singular paragraphs, without an overarching narrative or discernible characters to cling to, *Bluets* is a musing on the colour blue more closely related to poetry than theatre. My apprehensions towards the play were both proven and disproven, leaving me months later unsure of how to feel about it.

From May 17th to June 29th at The Royal Court Theatre, *Bluets* starred Ben Whishaw, Emma D’Arcy and Kayla Meikle as the same narrator, performing paragraphs from the original text. Each actor had a segment of the stage with a television behind them. A camera focused on them individually, while a projector displayed their performances on a large screen above. The televisions served as a makeshift form of rear projection, a filmmaking technique where acting occurs in front of pre-filmed scenes. This technique was distancing and entrancing simultaneously. Its uniquely experimental form is something like no other, but that distinctiveness doesn’t necessarily mean it worked. It was a feat in combining the two mediums, but I don’t believe *Bluets* was the correct text for it.

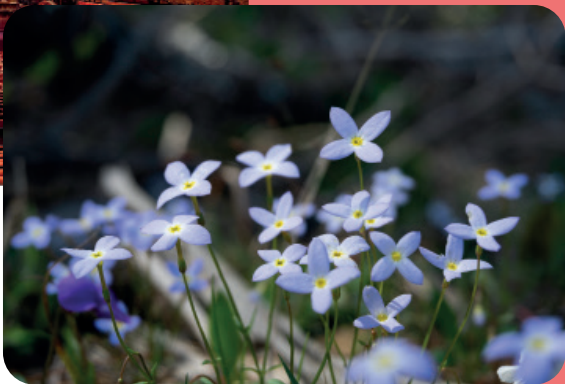
Even with the memoir fresh in my mind, it was difficult to digest what I was watching. This blockade between the audience and the stage appears from the aversion to narrative structure. It works brilliantly in the memoir, but it slumps on stage as the actors keep going, reading vague monologues with no end in sight. Without a story, the emotionality of the piece is lost, which is saddening to say, considering how much the book connected with me.

Bluets is a testament to the possibilities and limitations of adaptation. While the production captured the essence of Nelson’s prose, it struggled to maintain the intimate connection that makes the memoir so affecting. The combination of literature, theatre, and cinematic technology is ambitious and even admirable, but Nelson’s work resisted such a drastic transformation.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Credit: Wikimedia Commons



The Return of ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’

By Sankavi Naresh

The acclaimed production of ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’ returns to the West End for three weeks only in February 2025! The multi-Olivier award winning play is produced by Rebecca Frecknell. The production sold out last year during its run at the Almeida Theatre from December-February, the cast includes: Paul Mescal (*Normal People*, *Gladiator II*, Olivier Award winner for Best Actor) as Stanley, Anjana Vasan (*Black Mirror: Demon 79*, *Wicked Little Letters*, Olivier Award winner for Best Supporting Actress) as Stella and Patsy Ferran (*Summer and Smoke*, Critics Circle winner for Best Actress) as Blanche.

Critics wrote favourably about last year’s performances, Arifa Akbar from the Guardian stated that “For all its clever artifice and non-naturalism, it is the power of these performances that gives this production its fierce and dangerous energy.”

Highly coveted, there are now only a few premium priced tickets available for the short run of the production showing at the Noël Coward Theatre at the West End. The Almeida Theatre sold a limited amount of tickets at the door last year and allocated a set amount of tickets for Under 25’s too, Noël Coward Theatre offers a similar scheme which is a positive sign of the growing audience of younger theatre-goers.

Noël Coward Theatre’s official description reads: “On a street in New Orleans, in the blistering summer heat, a sister spirals. When Blanche unexpectedly visits her estranged sister Stella, she brings with her a past that will threaten their future. As Stella’s husband Stanley stalks closer to the truth, Blanche’s fragile world begins to fracture. Reality and illusion collide, and a violent conflict changes their lives forever.”

Performance Schedule:

Monday to Saturday: 7:30
Thursday and Saturday: 2pm

Show running time: 2 hours and 45 minutes

Credit: Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, YouTube, Wikimedia Commons



Credit: Unsplash

Heidiween 2024: Heidi Klum's Legendary Halloween Transformation Continues

By Heather Wallis

Halloween wouldn't be the same without Heidi – every year Heidi Klum surprises us with yet another striking Halloween costume for her annual Heidiween party in New York City. Klum's iconic looks never fail to disappoint, with a few special mentions to some favourites from the glamorous recreation of Jessica Rabbit (2015) to her more grotesque looks including an Old Woman (2013), an Alien Zombie (2019) and my personal favourite, a Worm (2022). Klum discusses these iconic looks with passion – in an interview with People, Klum reflects on the time she invited fans to come and watch the styling process through a window during the making of the Alien Zombie costume: "I wanted people to see the art behind it, I wanted people to see the magic in what they do". Indeed, art and magic are exactly what Klum brought to Halloween in 2024.

An entire year in the making, Klum decided to mix nostalgia with her fondest childhood memories in a journey back to the '80s, turning her favourite childhood movie character into a magnificent, jaw-dropping, larger-than-life form. This year's big reveal? None other than the iconic alien himself, E.T.! Klum's dedication to conceptualising this impressive, lifelike costume reflects her deep admiration for the beloved character, which she

fondly expressed in an interview with Entertainment Tonight. Klum reminisced on her memories as a nine-year-old when E.T. hit cinemas: "The movie came out, and I fell in love with the movie and I fell in love with E.T.", clearly still enchanted by the little alien's big heart and wide-eyed wonder, which fans have found oh so relatable.

Klum is renowned for these larger-than-life transformations; however, she will be the first to admit to the restrictive and often uncomfortable experience of wearing the dazzling costumes, along with the many hours that her creative team tirelessly work to make every October a success. Klum loudly praises the work of the FX artists who are responsible for the clever crafting of her looks; this year requiring a team of thirty creatives to build the alien magic. The mind-blowing artistry is flawlessly presented in the intricate detailing of E.T.'s wrinkled skin to the impressive, characterful eyes that perfectly imitate those from the movie. Undoubtedly, the discomfort paid off for the astounding look that had fans mesmerised, followed by a flood of comments praising the costume across social media – an X user commented: "Heidi Klum kills it every year !!!!", and I'd say that's something we can all agree on. Every October, Klum brings a world of magic and

a fresh sense of theatrical creativity that fans excitedly anticipate in the run-up to each spooky season. This year's Halloween look is more than just a cool costume; it's a nod to Klum's own childhood memories and to a character that's kept audiences spellbound for decades. Klum didn't just recreate E.T. – she brought a piece of movie magic to life, proving once again that Halloween isn't just about costumes; it's about going all out, Klum-style.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

The Return of the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show

By Charlotte Ward

After having been on a hiatus since 2018, the Angels returned in last month. From Kate Moss to Bella Hadid, the show brought all the big names to the runway.

Alongside them were the famous wings and pink, diamond-studded lingerie. Highlights included Gigi Hadid's pink plunge silk teddy complete with a set of wide electronic feathered wings to match, and Lila Moss' Victoria's Secret debut in blush undergarments, complete with the shine of stars and body jewellery detail, with a blush fringe coat to match.

Meanwhile, the runway also boasted more modest looks, incorporating pyjama bottoms, robes and leggings. Slip dresses also featured – one styled by Mika Schneider included a light pink dress paired with sparkling silver shoes, teasing a matching silver bra.

With an all-female ensemble of musical entertainment from Tyla to Cher, a key part of the fashion retailers "rebrand" was in placing the message of female empowerment and inclusivity forefront. This came in the wake of intense backlash 6 years prior (at the time of the show's demise) over its infamous placing of a certain male-gazed body type on a pedestal, which was divergent from societal attitudes following the #MeToo movement. Thus, in the show's return, we can see plus-sized models, multiple models over the age of

40 walking the runway and trans inclusivity with fashion and social media icon Alex Consani.

But despite the show's return, it is still evident that with the fashion retailer's much-reduced budget since its decline in popularity, the 2024 Victoria's Secret show is merely a shell of what it once was. Whilst the iconography remained consistent, the quality did not. No fantasy diamond bras made an appearance and whilst nearly all the models got wings, they were nowhere near matching the grandeur of what they used to be. Perhaps it was the model Doutzen Kroes getting her heel stuck in the runway or perhaps it was just down to the passage of time, but there was something about the show that made it seem "tacky" – a costume party imitating the real thing.

Even in the supposedly positive move towards more diverse models, it is not all acclaim. Many of their plus-sized and older models seem not to be motivated by a shift in the company's values. Rather, many seem to be there because the fame attached to their name carries more value than their body type.

With all of the show's clothing available to buy online, one wonders whether this was more of a desperate attempt at false virtue-signalling to secure sales. Perhaps once great, but now past its sell-by, the Victoria's Secret fashion show belongs to the past – a relic of attitudes from past decades.



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

The Best Celebrity Halloween Costumes of 2024

By Jade Drever

I think it's fair to say that this year's batch of celebrity Halloween costumes have been a little underwhelming. I expected more pop culture costumes in relation to this year's movie releases like Beetlejuice and Deadpool. Instead, we got celebrities dressing as each other and lots of y2k references with the likes of Kendall Jenner and Hailey Bieber dressing as Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie from the Simple Life, and Paris herself dressing as Britney Spears. I have scoured Hollywood for the very best celebrities had to offer for this year's Halloween so here are some of my favourites.

Sabrina Carpenter - Lizzie McGuire

Pop princess Sabrina Carpenter channelled early 2000s icon Hilary Duff with her igloo dress from The Lizzie McGuire Movie. This white, ice block patterned gown is complete with puffy hood, sleeves, and archway detailing on the front of the dress. She actually tweeted in 2018 'anyone sellin this on Etsy, ya girl needs a Halloween costume' - call it manifesting.

Lupita Nyong'o - Storm

I loved seeing Lupita Nyong'o bringing yet another iconic Marvel character brought to life, even if it was just for Halloween. She paired a black velvet blazer with a silk crop top and gold jewellery. But the star of the show was of course the electrifying white wig and contact lenses, giving the full Storm effect.

Madelaine Petsch and Camila Mendes - Kim Possible and Shego

In previous years the core Riverdale actresses, Lili Reinhart, Petsch, and Mendes, come together to dress as some pretty iconic trios, including the Power Puff Girls, Sanderson Sisters, and DC Villains. However, without Reinhart, they had to continue the tradition as the Disney Channel duo Kim Possible and Shego. Petch wore a latex crop top, khaki cargos, and combat boots, while Mendes donned the famous green and black catsuit.

Ice Spice - Leeloo

Rapper Ice Spice dressed as The Fifth Element, Leeloo. She paired gold leggings with a white crop top and orange overall straps to replicate this 90s action-comedy character. This was the perfect costume for her famous ginger locks.

Amelia Dimoldenberg - Roz

The Chicken Shop Date star went viral for her Halloween costume this year as she dressed as Roz, Monster's Inc's office administrator. She wore green prosthetics and a purple wig, paired with a burgundy cardigan and beige skirt. Of course, the look was not complete without Roz's nemesis, a Mike Wazowski plush.

Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco - Alice and the Mad Hatter

Sporting blonde locks and blue tulle dress, Selena Gomez stunned as the titular Alice in Wonderland. Her beau Blanco wore a tan suit jacket and tails with a polka dot neck scarf, topped off with the Mad Hatters' top hat and red hair.

Alyson Hannigan and Alexis Denisof - Football and Aristotle (Taylor Swift 'So High School')

While to the untrained eye, this is a rather unusual couples costume, however, to a Swiftie, it's absolutely perfect. In reference to the Taylor Swift song 'So High School' lyric "you know how to ball, I know Aristotle," Hannigan wore an American football costume while husband Denisof dressed as Aristotle, complete with toga and long white beard.

Megan Fox and Machine Gun Kelly - Padme and Anakin

This year saw a very tame addition to their series of couple's costumes with Padme and Anakin. Fox donned the very elaborate red throne room gown, complete with fur trim and bejewelled headpiece, while MGK wore long, brown Jedi robes, with Anakin's famous Revenge of the Sith wig and lightsabre.

Justin, Hailey, and Jack Bieber - Ron Stoppable, Kim Possible, and Rufus

Kim and Ron are a very popular couple's costume, however, it's the addition of the baby Bieber that makes this costume stand out. I have to say, I laughed more than I should have when I saw little baby Jack as their pet naked mole rat, but its just too cute and arguably hilarious!

Kourtney Kardashian and Travis Barker - Morticia and Gomez Addams

This goth pair decided to channel the king and queen of Halloween with the iconic Addams parents. Kardashian shone in a floor length black dress and sleek, long black hair, accompanied by Barker in a pinstriped, tailored suit and slicked back hair.

The Met Gala 2025: Superfine

By Andi Gill

To say that the Met has made a very interesting choice of exhibition for this upcoming year would be the understatement of the decade. A couple of weeks ago, they announced that their Spring 2025 exhibition would be "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style," which will focus on the fashion of black dandyism. Not only is it the first Met Gala to focus primarily on menswear since 2003, but it will also be the very first Met Gala chaired entirely by men of colour, and the first exhibition of the Costume Institute to focus solely on the work of designers of colour.

The exhibition will be curated based on Monica L. Miller's book Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity, which raises the question: what is dandyism? Historically, a dandy was a man who took fashion seriously and approached it as a discipline. Initially, black dandyism began with the popularization of dressing slaves in clothing which displayed the wealth and station of their owner. These dandified servants were only meant to be a visible marker of status, but over time, the practice of dandyism would become a powerful tool of self-expression and defiance for black men. A clear example is where the title of the exhibition, "superfine," comes from; the memoir of a formerly enslaved man who bought his freedom. He wrote that he planned to celebrate

by wearing "a suit of superfine clothes." The exhibition is going to be curated to show how black dandyism reflected the issues of race, power, and culture within the African diaspora.

I'll be honest, I am very excited. Not only is this set to be a refreshing break from the typical fashion choices of male celebs (how many plain black suits have we seen on that carpet before?), but thanks to a truly unique exhibit, it should also be different from any other Met Gala we've seen so far. The dress code hasn't been announced yet, which is the actual theme of the outfits we'll see at the Gala, but typically the theme is strongly linked to the exhibit, so we can expect that it will be centered on formal black menswear. Which would be in line with the choices of hosts, as fashion-forward black celebrities Pharrell Williams, Colman Domingo, Lewis Hamilton, A\$AP Rocky, and LeBron James are chairing the event.

However, it seems just slightly too coincidental that after intense criticism last year for the blatant white elitism that the Met represents, it would choose its first ever exhibition focusing on the work of people of colour. Given the issues it has faced for its history of excluding people of colour, it would seem that this is the Met's attempt at a rebrand from its reputation as an institute of white privilege.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons



Gaming

Editor: Abby Eastwick

Stardew Valley: The Indie Masterpiece That Harvested a New Era of Gaming Changed My Life

By Evelyn Oakes

As the winter months hit, days get colder, and nights grow longer, it's the perfect time to get cosy with a cuppa and start a new indie game. For me, that game was Stardew Valley. I had heard of the game before, having such a big name in the gaming industry, but I had never played it. Although it has become more mainstream, with a review score of 9.5/10 from IGN (an American video game and entertainment media website), it is still an indie game at heart.

Stardew Valley (currently £10.99 on Steam) is a farming simulation game primarily inspired by Story of Seasons, a series by the Japanese video game developer Marvelous. It was solely developed by American indie game designer Eric Barone, known professionally as ConcernedApe for over four and a half years. He graduated from university with a computer science degree and used this base knowledge to help teach himself the skills he needed to create the game, including programming, art, music, and design. Barone was also inspired by other games such as Animal Crossing, Rune Factory, Terraria and my personal favourite, Minecraft – adding features such as crafting, quests and combat. At the Golden Joystick Awards, it was nominated for 'Best Indie Game' and won the 'Breakthrough Award' in its release year.

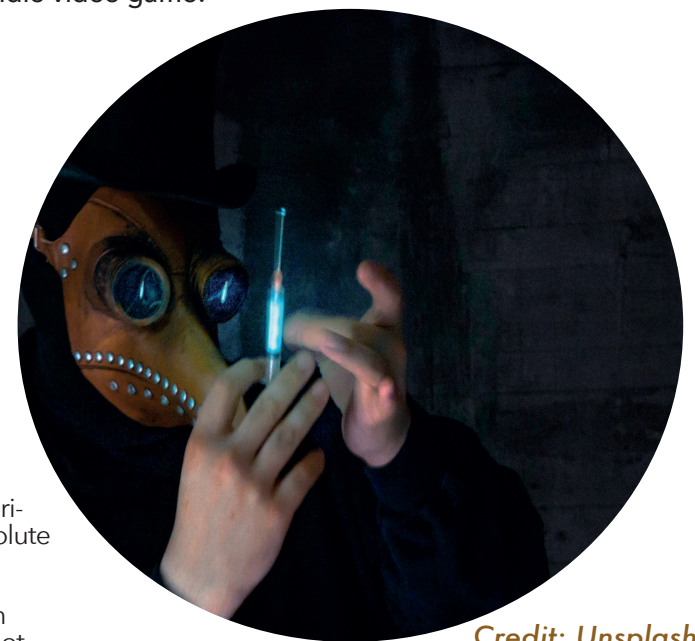
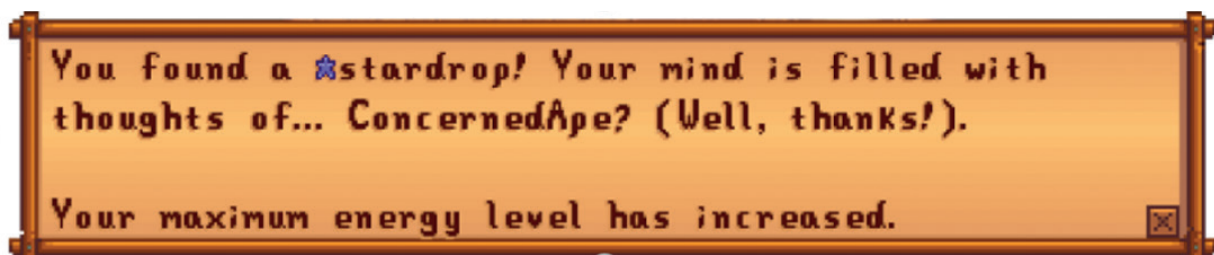
The game starts with the option of creating your character, where there are endless options of hairstyles, clothes and the choice of your "favourite thing." This comes into play when the player eats a stardrop, and this icon appears:

This comes into play when the player eats a stardrop, and this icon appears: Depending on the favourite thing you choose, it will appear where "ConcernedApe" is written above - but this specific message will appear if you choose the game developer himself.

Once you have created your character, they inherit a plot of land and a dilapidated house once owned by their grandfather located in Stardew Valley. As the game is open-ended, it is up to you how you choose to play - whether you prefer to interact with the NPCs and form relationships with them, foraging and collecting materials or even fishing (which might be my favourite part so far).

The creator of Stardew Valley still remains very involved in the game, informing users directly via the blog on the Stardew Valley website about new updates and other information. The most recent update (Stardew Valley 1.6) was released on November 4th for mobile and console users. This brought a range of new content, visual improvements, multiplayer changes, bug fixes and many more features.

I would highly recommend this game to anyone who has always had a soft spot for Minecraft but also feels that it lacks aesthetics. Also, you'll soon find out that Stardew Valley Wiki will quickly become your best friend throughout your journey in this indie video game!



Credit: Unsplash

Will Unplugged be Unplayed?

By Steven Whitear

Euphoric Brothers - still the new kids on the block when it comes to game development - have taken a break from the viral success of their Garten of Banban games to create a new IP. Unplugged was revealed on YouTube unexpectedly to almost a million disappointed subscribers who are still eagerly waiting for news on Garten of Banban 8. As Euphoric Brothers first non-Banban venture since the franchise started, many felt that it was a breath of fresh air, and very impressive that a team so small had been working on an ambitious title behind the scenes. Looking back, any hope that Unplugged would be massively different from the incomplete and bare-bones experiences Euphoric Brothers are known for were utterly misguided.

Unplugged describes itself as a 'medieval co-op multiplayer online horror' game. This alone makes it sound quite distinctive. The game works as follows: a team of up to four companions are dropped off in a small, procedurally generated medieval village in the Euphoric Brother's signature art style. Together, you must gather ingredients and battle monsters before regrouping in your little hut and creating a potion. When you have the correct combination of ingredients to create this potion, the village becomes cured of its 'plague,' you head back to your vehicle and another village is created. The cycle then repeats.

It sounds fun - and Euphoric Brothers deserve massive

respect for being able to create a multiplayer experience like this - but there is no looking past the absolute disaster of a launch the game suffered.

There are small annoyances, such as the 'cooldown time' between picking up items, which happens a lot. It makes the smallest job when you're out in the wild laborious and irritating. However, these don't hold a candle to some of the bigger issues, such as - game mechanics flat out refusing to work.

Firstly, not all collectibles can be used as ingredients for creating a potion, but the items that can't be used serve no additional purpose making them useless. When you have the right items (either 2 or 4, the game never specifies) the lever, which is used in your hut to operate the cauldron and begin creating a potion, has a 1 in 3 chance of working at all, even if all the ingredients presented are correct - leading to a lot of confused faces on day one from streamers and players alike.

The in-game mic quickly made a name for itself as being unusable. Words are incomprehensible and the sound is so loud it makes a task as simple as speaking to your other teammates torturous.

When an enemy is defeated, it isn't guaranteed to actually die. In fact, sometimes they will continue to swing at players with four times the range and power.

Due to the nature of the villages being generated at random, some environments spawn on top of each other, making some maps unplayable as some crucial items can't be reached. The list goes on.

When quality settings are set to low, the instructions on the walls of your hideout are unreadable and grainy. One reviewer has stated the graphics quality, when set on low, 'looks as though you have a 90% alcohol level.'

Even if you don't encounter a single glitch when playing Unplugged, the game is a chore. Running between the forest area and the hut is boring enough by itself. I've played Unplugged for 10 hours and have achieved everything. The title has been out for a month, and has only broken 10,000 concurrent players once, despite being free to play for a short period. Today, that number looks more like 200 players consistently. Negative reviews outnumber the positive by a ratio of 2:1 which has caused the game to display on its Steam page as either 'Negative' or 'Mixed.'

The Completionist Community: What It Is, Why It Matters, and Games That Fuel the Passion

Credit: Unsplash

By Abby Eastwick

It will surprise nobody that, like other hobbies, different gamers have different ways in which they like to tackle each new adventure. On one end of the spectrum you have the casual gamers, who play games as and when they feel the desire; on the other end you have the completionist. This gamer will leave no stone unturned in the games they pick up, going above and beyond in completing the main story, fully mastering and collecting everything the game has to offer. Over time this has grown into its own unique subculture, bringing gaming perfectionists together over their shared drive to squeeze all possible content out of their beloved games.

experience this side of gaming and as such can miss out on intentional details left by the developers. Of course, there are levels to this, varying from those who only 100% complete games that interest them to those who strive for 100% in all games they play, often replaying games to catch what they missed. However, they all share common goals for what they want to achieve in their completionism: achievements, hidden lore, collectibles, alternative endings and 'hard' modes. These together provide a picture of the game experience being 100% completed.



Credit: Unsplash

What is Completionism?

Firstly, completionism is the pursuit of achieving and collecting everything a game has to offer, beyond simply reaching the end of the story. This can include completing side quests, collecting all resources and unlocking trophies or achievements. Many casual gamers never

What brings the community together?

As with any community, completionists are often drawn to each other. It makes sense - the patience, attention to detail and dedication required to complete these games would seem tedious to many, but completionists thrive on the sense of accomplishment gained from full completion of a game. Spaces on the internet exist aplenty for people to share their passion, from dedicated forums on Reddit, servers on Discord and dedicated guides on TrueAchievements and TrueTrophies. Further, the hugely popular 'The Completionist' YouTube channel boasts an impressive 1.4 million subscribers and produces content such as completion guides and reviews. Completionists may appear to be a relatively unknown corner of the internet, but it's far more popular than it first seems.

Popular games in the community

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild offers a vast open world full of hidden secrets, shrines and unique items. Finding all shrines, defeating all bosses, completing all side quests, discovering all map locations and collecting and upgrading all equipment is a huge undertaking, not to mention collecting all 900 Korok seeds (each of which are in a unique location with no way to tell which you already have).

The Dark Souls series (and Soulslike games in general) offers intense and challenging combat and hidden lore pieces that can only be accessed by exploring every corner of the world, as well as having unique boss weapons and items that are only accessible by fulfilling

certain conditions; this can require multiple playthroughs.

The Batman: Arkham series of games have a healthy mix of main story, side missions and Riddler challenges. Particularly, Arkham City and Arkham Knight provide a vast number of collectibles and challenges, such as Riddler trophies and full combat upgrades. Persona 5 Royal adds to the original Persona 5 with even more confidants, activities and items to collect, as well as multiple endings to experience. The time-limited nature of each in-game day makes it especially challenging to accomplish everything in one play through.

The ups and downs

As an intensely engaging hobby, completionism naturally comes with its upsides and downsides. Accessing every element of a game can provide a deeper enjoyment of the experience, adding a sense of personal achievement by achieving something the average player has not. However, this unsurprisingly proves extremely time-consuming, sometimes leading to burnout and stress in an attempt to achieve such perfection.

The unique culture of completionism in the gaming community is driven by a collective spirit for enjoying their favourite games to the maximum extent possible. Completionism offers a rewarding, immersive way to experience gaming. For those who enjoy challenges and perfectionism, it's a deeply satisfying way to engage with a game on a whole new level you may not have otherwise known existed.



UEA(SU) PRESENTS...

indie

VS

EMO

THE LCR
THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER
22:30 - 02:30 • £4.50 • 18+

y2k VS
2010s
from **£4.50+**

LCR

Tuesday 3rd Dec

10.30pm-2.30am

Tickets £4.50+

ueasu.org/tickets

£2
PINTS



Christmas
★ AT THE LCR ★

FRIDAY 13TH DEC
10:30PM-2:30AM

UEASU.ORG/TICKETS