

Great Minds at Work

Thursdays, April 7 to May 26, 2016 – 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

April 7 The Most A-maize-ing Story in Ontario Archaeology

Gary Crawford

Maize, or corn, was instrumental in transforming indigenous societies in the New World into a variety of powerful economies that remodelled landscapes wherever maize grew. Ontario was no exception. Professor Crawford, his colleagues and his students have been investigating the earliest maize in Ontario and the subsequent impact of agriculture on indigenous people and the landscape of southern Ontario. We will explore how maize evolved from an unassuming grass in Mexico more than 6,000 years ago and ultimately made its way to the Grand River 4,500 years later to stimulate a revolutionary transformation of indigenous lives.

April 14 Who Opened this Door?

Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak

When technologies are involved in the production of art, what role does the artist play? Drawing examples from a variety of their own interdisciplinary artworks, visual artists Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak will not so much answer their own question as pose new ones.

April 21 Making the Move: Moving Minds

Paul Bedford

As the number-one issue facing our region, transportation is a source of frustration forecast to get much worse unless bold action is taken. Massive public investment in transit of all types is needed to provide a range of choices beyond the car. In order to pay for it, we will have to embrace a variety of funding mechanisms, including road pricing, gas taxes and income taxes. We must also move minds in order to build, operate and maintain the transportation network needed to serve a future GTA population estimated to reach eight or nine million by 2041.

April 28 Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan

Rita Leistner

Photojournalist Rita Leistner returned from a military embed in Afghanistan in the spring of 2011 with an iPhone full of photographs and a bad case of the blues. Looking for McLuhan, whom she knew almost nothing about, began as a kind of prophylactic therapy to keep from sliding into full-blown depression and it ended in a journey of process and discovery. *Looking for Marshall McLuhan in Afghanistan* is both self-help book and guidebook to this moment in history when smartphones and war first collided.

Burnhamthorpe Community Centre, 1500 Gulleden Drive, Mississauga, ON, L4X 2T7

Registration fee: \$40 per person per series

For information or to register, go to www.lifelong-learning-mississauga.com or phone 647-300-4878

Great Minds at Work, continued

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May 5 The Struggle for Human Rights in Olympic Sport**Bruce Kidd**

Sport has long been a site of advocacy and activism for human rights. Those excluded from its opportunities and benefits turn the “moral” claim of sport to be a level playing field and the symbolic status accorded to athletes into powerful arguments for inclusion and dignity, not only within sport but for all people. Feminism, civil rights, the campaign against apartheid, and other mobilizations have all fought successful battles over and through sport. Most recently, the 2012 London and 2014 Sochi Olympics brought two more significant issues into the international arena – gender identity and the rights of LGBT.

This talk provides a historical overview of the struggle for human rights in sport, outlines the campaigns precipitated by London and Sochi with their successes and failures, and recommends a way ahead.

May 12 Lost Girls: Sex and Death in Renaissance Florence**Nicholas Terpstra**

Numbers of Florentine women pooled their resources to open the Florentine orphanage known as the House of Compassion in 1554. It soon grew to become the largest girls’ shelter in Florence and the most innovative orphanage in Renaissance Italy. Yet this safe house was also a dangerous place. Before long, girls started dying there by the dozens. Was it forced labour that killed them? Prostitution, sexual abuse or possibly even syphilis? Where were the authorities? We will look at all these questions as we recreate the world in which teenage girls lived and died in Renaissance Florence.

May 19 The Evolution Explosion: Mankind as the Agent of Natural Selection**Arthur Weis**

Everyone knows that evolution is a long, slow process – but not always! While it is true that it took a long time for the first mammals to diversify into the mice and elephants we see today, each of the many steps along the way could be rapid. When the environment favours it, evolving from a small mouse to a smaller mouse can occur in a few generations. Human impact on the environment induces selection pressure: agriculture radically changes the landscape, and there are many examples of crop, weed and pest species adapting to farming practices. But also, over-fishing leads to evolution of smaller fish, water pollution leads to evolution of tolerant water fleas, and climate change is leading to evolution of early flowering in some plants. By altering the environment, humans exert selection pressures on species, and many – the weeds in our fields, the fish we haul from the ocean, the wildflowers we pick in the spring – evolve in response.

May 26 Why We All Signed up: the Emotional Impact of Music**Don McLean**

Music trains and entrains the emotions. Its capacity to move us, to drive body and mind, to medicate and manipulate, to trigger memory and feeling, accompanies us from cradle to grave. What in our biological and social makeup makes this possible? What in the sonic and structural character of music makes it so powerful? What do we know? What should we be trying to find out? What is music’s potential as a technology for educational and medical applications? Illustrated with musical examples, the talk addresses the current range of teaching and research at UofT Music, including MaHRC, its Music and Health Research Collaboratory.

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