

Title of project: Holofuturist Outlooks [provisional]

Holofuturist Outlooks is a trans-media project aiming to design for majority marginalized co-authors writing a Canadian protopian narrative audio miniseries, inspiring audience participation in current actions to pursue proposed near-future developments in their municipalities.

300 characters script Logline: Residents of Canada's biggest cities, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, grapple in 2040 with localizing resources, while keeping cross-country support relations. Live/work eco-complexes are city hubs iterating municipal self-governance, while families address needs of the hubs and migrants.

100 word summary: Trans-media project of a radio drama year-long seasonal series, with a companion interactive web platform, episodes sober yet hopeful, set 15-20 years ahead in the largest Canadian radically refashioning urban-scapes. Four episodes, each in a different city to invest audience nationally, touching on Ottawa relations too.

Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal's community members work to continue adapting localized resilient housing, food, energy, healthcare, civic operations, and trade. With: "speculative realism" storylines from emerging innovation trends, collaboratively scripted with artists of those cities, representing realistic urban futures with majority disabled and/or racialized cast and crew, encouraging audience input via discussion forums.

Brief introduction to proposing artist/designer and forming a creative team:

For Ensemble Collective is beginning, and seeks members for producing work foregrounding equity-seeking communities, including racialized, queer, gender non-conforming, disabled, deaf, migrant, sex working, and working class. Initiated by seeley quest, my experience with performance-based ensembles includes Sins Invalid and Other HeArts Collective. Multi-disciplinary, I'm keen toward work impacting at the "ensemble" level: what can be fostered connecting creatives and audience peers together. Themes often engage experiences of embodiment, eroticism, capitalism, futurism, and ecology, and goals are artful pursuits that support liberatory political work growing civil society engagement and bonds of care. More intro is at <https://www.questletters.net/about/> and further arts background/CV is by request.

A Gen Xer originally of the US, I worked in AmeriCorps projects in 1998. While critical of program aspects, it's had some success in a mission to engage young adults in national service work. In Canada, as Seth Klein of the <https://www.climateemergencyunit.ca> notes, in WWII the government set a mission of prevailing through the war, and deployed sufficient resources to meet the mission. Media propaganda significantly influenced the public's war support; art and media-based, story-centred cultural messaging has been key in mission campaigns for centuries. A campaign with leadership from known players in Canada's media landscape has potential to spur substantial community engagement, with a mission calling for creative experiments in enacting various changes suggested by a hopeful, inclusive, compelling narrative.

There are a dozen+ theatre artists across Canada who've expressed interest in the project but none yet confirmed to actively work on it. So far, primary outreach has been to theatre sector folks; however, goals reach beyond typical "applied theatre" endeavours, and momentum is building now toward identifying colleagues in other sectors. This is a trans-media project that

needs collaborators who can help develop “impact producing” usually associated with documentary films, and not just performing arts makers, scripted media creators, interactive design technicians, but also people with political savvy to get e.g. city councillors in discussion forums, taking on proposals inspired by episode scenarios, and allies in e.g. industrial design roles to move forward production pilots of achievable depicted innovations.

Since late fall 2024 first moving to Canada’s largest metropolis, I’m seeking more cross-sector connected potential collaborators in Tkaronto, following news from e.g. U of T’s School of Cities, and have begun learning of possible regional philanthropic foundation allies via participation through April 2025 in a [Wasan Network “Huddle”](#) on Mission-Based Approaches to Social Innovation for impactful change in Canada. I expect also input in Oct ‘25, sharing at the international Systemic Design Association’s <https://rsdsymposium.org> at OCAD.

A first “proof of concept” iteration will be needed to persuade bigger project investment. This might entail creation of a pilot episode and assembling “playtest” audiences for feedback on: the worldbuilding; the project online portal’s design effectiveness in enticing engagement with metrics on how much audiences take up discussing feasible plot point applications, plus what incentivizes more expression of motivation to pursue related civic actions; and what factors promote the most agency for city residents to take on organizing “holofuturist” efforts, as well as for power brokers to enable residents’ pursuits of these organizing steps.

Project goals include: CBC broadcasting, website highlighting current science and social practices in the storylines, discussion forums and live events, new episode listening/transcript reading/ASL/LSQ video sharing parties, participatory challenges of students submitting proposals for next plot points and for contemporary initiatives in their cities, tracking the episodes’ production- and website-GHG impacts and aiming for progressive reduction—this can be supported by using <https://www.cgtoolscanada.org/about/thetools> and province “green screen” industry guidelines like <https://www.ontariocreates.ca/filmcommission/ogs-about-us>.

Aiming for beyond Canada Reads national engagement, I’ve been invited to pitch by a CBC Arts producer, but want to amplify theatre sector work, and explore what liaising with “legacy” media (CBC, perhaps NFB for documentary components) and game design sectors might co-develop. Potentially useful to develop co-production relationship with some PACT member companies based in the four (or five) cities where narrative segments are focused, in Toronto these could be e.g. Soulpepper, Tarragon, The Theatre Centre.... Local institutions could contribute anchor roles supporting live audience broadcast readings and related programming in their respective communities—though “studio” live readings could also happen with partners like e.g. the city Public Library, or <https://www.ocadu.ca/research-and-innovation/research-projects-labs/global-centre-climate-action>.

The project currently has ~4 pages of script draft, initial outlining of one node of city characters, a few plot points. Also, a guessed production timeline and budget, some pitch deck components. Wanting to co-write with at least one Francophone scriptwriter, and to explore mechanics involving crowdsourcing some plot lines relevant to audience communities, to date I’ve assembled some initial worldbuilding, and project design ideas but not drafted much script. I’ve done much research of related international futurist fiction projects and methods, eco de/growth developments to feature, and possible project resources. Have thought of a few co-

writers to ask in these cities, and keep finding new people interested. First conceived as a Montreal-set project for a 2018 grad course assignment, the professor, with work experience including TV production, suggested considering monthly episodes instead of quarterly.

Inspirations: Audio drama can more accessibly reach audiences widely: audio format is lower cost to produce than video, lower in data usage and emissions generated, and enables more imagination space than providing prescribing visuals. Drawing attention to actually achievable scenarios that aren't dystopian, to prompt civic action toward transitional practices.

Themes: solarpunk, protopia, speculative realism, representation of preferable near-future social relations to sustain neighborhood and regional reparative dynamics, transparency in 'the making of' considerations,

Why interactive and co-designed: audience engagement techniques are a priority. Serialized speculative fiction, in graphic novels/genre series/webcomics/podcasts/TV/etc. gets fans invested in the scenario world. Opportunities for audience to interact and have agency, regarding scenarios of near futures to aspire to, are necessary to get past inertia from passive story receiving. Platforms like Wattpad have a design to study, with audience incentivized to add feedback and propose new plot options; enabling play-along and practice negotiating collective input and problem solving is key to this project agenda. Using platform moderation and designing to encourage respect, discourage derailing "fake news" is also key, and to be informed by multiple stakeholders. Multi-media, multi-format possibilities engage wider audience too.

Why aiming for majority disabled and/or racialized cast and crew: I'm a white artist and organizer who's been part of multiracial anti-racist projects since high school. Canada's urban futures represented by Global Majority participation in the project team is realistic. Multiple disabilities inform my approach to project work and its timeline, and as more planetary and societal health conditions are compromised in the immediate future, building teams and better living together with a majority of disabled participation is also realistic.

Potential project outputs: A distributable podcast, and live broadcast of voice actors for studio show attendees, episode event hosts facilitating transmission of attendees' questions/proposals, a website hub with transcripts, sign language videos, 'behind the scenes' interviews and short doc videos, highlight spots on feedback from topic expert guest artists/social scientists—and from student, workplace, and elder community teams—also incentivized with rewards and school credit—to create assets ranging from different mediums of (fan) fictional narrative offshoots, to documents of community achievements toward actualizing civic steps...and more ways to access and build project material.

Some can link with <https://curio.ca/en/about> which features "CBC/Radio-Canada content...selected for its educational value...available in teaching-friendly formats."

Goals: Working with others to best support audiences (and art creators) from young to old in accessing this as a tool toward enacting real-world steps, and motivation beyond "appreciating the art." Finding satisfaction in an immersive conceptual space (e.g. an exciting miniseries) partially sustains us, yet needs scaffolding to prompt taking action in more complex conditions. Another goal is design that feels inviting vs imposing, including at the sensory-processing level. I find less immersive visual, and to a degree, sonic environments to be less overwhelming and

more accessible. Likewise for slower paced exposure to sensory input, so providing for attending episode performance events live(streamed) to be one option, and also a rich array of access to content and follow-up discussions via the website hub can allow audience to absorb material further on their own time, aligning with aspects of 'relaxed' performance staging.

An important element is providing production info about ecological impacts of the live studio recordings, the website data hosting, also sample reports from school or civic clubs hosting group streaming parties using audience devices to access more of the A/V content together, and of related points of communication infrastructure involved in relaying the content. Ideal is not getting into the weeds, but tracking available data over the active project year, and modeling transparency about the energy required to share key components of the media. Companion reporting, such as on ways the production team has kept working to confirm lower emissions energy sourcing, or best practices for minimizing GHG impacts from personal and workplace electronic device use—can have parallel tie-ins to plot issues characters navigate.

This project invites big questions: what public-private industry alliances of benefit are possible? e.g. how might CBC Gem, NFB, Telefilm, the NAC Creation Fund (run by Ottawa's National Arts Centre), etc. partner with worker-coop and unionized game and experience design studios to facilitate widely distributed artistic and interactive programs for the public good? How might series features tie to educational curricula for youth and adults? Exploring boldly will be key.

Goals with Pitching: Practicing how to introduce audiences to a multi-layered endeavour concisely will be helpful. To inform potential collaborators of the value of moving the project forward, and start conversations with those willing to join For Ensemble in a collective with me (or potentially invite joining an artists' collective they're operating in), to begin more effective project drafting together and funding applications.

Resources that would help: Connections with aligned creatives who have Canadian status (I don't yet) and eligibility to apply for arts funding; connections to collaborators skilled in design for website-hosting mediated discussion platforms; co-strategists for national impact campaigns involving events in multiple cities and CBC broadcast, support to make carbon accounting and reporting during the project accessible to the public...

Supporting Material: 2/13/24, "Ecofuturist Dispatches" [prior working title] first early draft snippet in public presentation recording, unlisted: <https://youtu.be/ZjaNQXmDNDc> --14 min. Features cold first read-through of early version few pages of script, and brief discussion with actors' impressions from encountering the project's scenario and tone.

Hopefully a fun intro, despite a first reading having awkward qualities too. All are racialized; four of five in the cast are queer, three identified as nonbinary, three as disabled.

Touli - Sherine Menes

Keven - maddison schmitt [other readers are more visibly racialized; maddison is Métis]

Georg - Davey Calderon

Sarita - Sadie Berlin

Brigit - Sophie Gee

— 4 pg script, early draft tidbit: <https://drive.proton.me/urls/8IHEHJSVR0#gHsxD52iMyWE>
Thanks! Feedback's welcome. seeley quest, squesting@pm.me