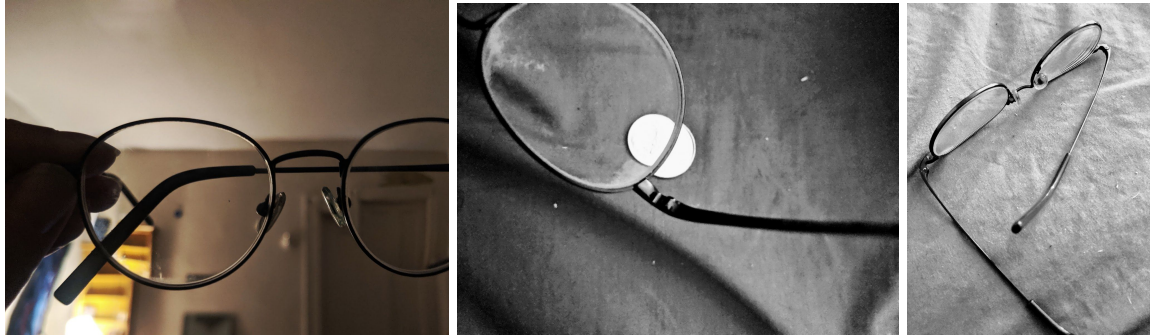


ÉTUDE ONE (CART 360, 2019)

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OBJECT 1: *glasses*



I've worn glasses since childhood. At this point, they are as much a part of my face as my nose, eyes or mouth. My glasses afford me vision, certainly, protection, security, clarity. More than that, they are a part of my identity. Integrated, yet apart. My glasses mediate the line between self and world in a unique way. Not only are they the literal lens(es) through which *I see the world*, they are an immediately recognizable feature and part of how *the world sees me*. When I'm not wearing them, friends and colleagues walk past me on the street as if I were a stranger.

I'm interested in this bidirectional feature of glasses. So often, we approach them with a one-way gaze. Whether standard eyeglasses, old-school cardboard 3D glasses, or newer tech designed for VR and AR, the focus is on what the wearer sees, how the experience of the wearer is mediated, how their perception of the world is altered by the lens. I would like to explore

Glasses are conductive, particularly those with metal frames. They are light and portable, wearable, where required. The lenses offer filtration, reflection, even the possibility of projection.

OBJECT 2: *bookstop*



Bookstops can be found throughout the city as practical public installations for the free exchange of books (leave a book, take a book). They are cabinets that act as miniature libraries, free of institutional or bureaucratic structure and constraint.

Books themselves act as gateways to other worlds, tools to guide and inspire the imagination. In this sense, bookstops are a physical manifestation of this gateway: a literal opening of the (cabinet) door. Free communal access leads to sharing of new realities, concepts, and imaginative landscapes.

It would be interesting to trigger an otherworldly night-time sound and light installation when the cabinet door is opened, as if it were literally as well as figuratively a gateway. Pressure sensors on the shelves could alter the output when a book is picked up or placed inside.

OBJECT 3: *traffic cone*



[This is the object I have selected for further study.]

The ubiquity of traffic cones in Montreal is a city-wide (not-so-inside) joke that borders on cliché. Their pervasive presence and visually assaulting orange hue makes them impossible to ignore. Of course, their *obviousness* is somewhat the point: visibility, a warning, an intentional intrusion. When trying to choose objects for study, I initially had a lot of difficulty. I found myself frenetically noticing and then, in a split-second, rejecting nearly every object I came across. Without delving into the depths of my psyche, I will simply state that a perfect storm of ADHD, anxiety and perfectionism has, for me, always been an impediment to linear creative processes. With that (likely) unwelcome and unnecessary disclosure out of the way, I shall return, as I have over and over, to the glorious pillar of fluorescence that is...the Montréal traffic cone.

If choosing an object were a numbers game of moments observed in time, there is little doubt that the esteemed traffic cone, constantly and unavoidably in one's field of vision, would automatically secure a place in the top five. And so it goes.

That said, there's a lot to a traffic cone. At least in Montreal: a city in a constant, and somehow simultaneous, state of repair and decay.

What does the traffic cone represent? A barrier? A border, a city, constantly in flux? An attempt to control a state of chaos that is, by nature, uncontrollable? A courageous affront to rationality? A warning to swerve, or you might bike into a sinkhole? All of these things, and more.

To me, and perhaps to many others, traffic cones represent home. There's something inherently comforting about driving into Montreal, re-navigating the city's dilapidated infrastructure, being greeted by its crumbling façade and by five-hundred iterations of its hideous and unabashed mascot, the traffic cone. "Oh, hello," they seem to croon in tandem, "Don't pretend you're not crumbling too, on the inside. We see you."

Maybe you curse them as you take your seventh new detour en route to work, maybe you appropriate them for your own blockade during a *manifestation*. Either way, we're all going to laugh when a visiting celebrity posts a photo to Instagram with traffic cones in the background. There's a shared meaning and sense of community there, and it goes beyond a sense that *this is our city*. It speaks to *what our city is*.

While cities in general are full of change, Montreal in particular seems to exist in a perpetually liminal state. Repair and decay. The possibilities therein. Traffic cones are a reminder, however cliché, that change is the only constant. They're also a relatively untapped opportunity for slapstick comedy. Montreal's traffic cones are absurd (and Absurd). They are signposts for a city in a perpetual state of existential crisis (is it still a *crisis* if you're just used to it?).

In terms of materiality, traffic cones are typically made from PVC (poly-vinyl-chloride) plastic. To my knowledge, PVC is not conductive, but this isn't something I had the opportunity to test. Montreal's traffic cones are typically tall, fluorescent orange pillars, wrapped in horizontal stripes of reflective tape (which is possibly pressure sensitive). Traffic cones are weighted at the base, making them difficult to tip over. They are also hollow (and may or may not have a "lid"), making it easy to hide things inside them.

INTERACTIVE ARTIFACTS / ENVIRONMENTS

Sorry, I wasn't able to finish the sketches and storyboard. Here is the main idea I was running with for the storyboard:

Idea: "talking" traffic cones as a public art piece integrated into the landscape of the city. Interactive traffic cones would be placed in strategic locations throughout Montreal, initially undifferentiated from any regular ol' cones. Proximity / motion sensors would trigger an interaction as someone approaches, with most electronic components hidden inside the cones, shielded from view (and the elements). Essentially, the traffic cones would talk to passers-by. I'm imagining a whimsical, humorous element that draws on the inherent absurdity of the artifact.

Ideas for interaction include:

- Pseudo-depressive or sarcastic traffic cones that pose existential queries
- Traffic cones that tell pieces of oral history about the neighbourhoods and locations in which they're placed, specifically peoples' history (for example, histories of community organizing in Pointe Saint-Charles, Little Burgundy's stories as a historically Black neighbourhood)
- Traffic cones that address the crisis of rapid gentrification and loss of affordable housing due to illegal Airbnb's and condo developments, possibly offering know-your-rights style housing tips
- Traffic cones with a personality that tell you to "Whoa, back up! Personal space!" when you get too close.