

## ***Fragments of You and Me: Temporary Public Art Project***

As part of the City of Mississauga's (the "City") collaboration between the Public Art Program and the Parks, Forestry and Environment section, the City has commissioned an artist team – Ameen Ahmed and Lara Hassani - to develop temporary public art that explores our relationship to garbage.

This annual collaboration challenges artists to combine artistic excellence, creativity and innovation with environmental conservation. In early 2023, an artist call for Request for Proposals was issued, asking artists to propose artwork for J.C. Saddington Park that uses locally collected trash as a major part of its creation and explores the connection among the environment, waste reduction and the circular economy.

Ameen and Lara's proposal, "Fragments of You and Me", was unanimously selected by an arms-length art selection committee. This temporary public art project will be installed at J.C. Saddington Park (53 Lake Street, Mississauga, ON), from September 2023 until September 2024.

### **1. About the Artists**

Lara Hassani  
Hons. B.A. Architecture and Visual Studies  
M.Arch. Architecture  
University of Toronto

Ameen Ahmed  
Hons. B.A. Architecture and Visual Studies  
M.F.A. Visual Studies  
presently in the Ph.D. program in Architectural History  
University of Toronto

### **2. Artist Statement**

Garbage, more than any other material form, is *of us*, in a way no other states of matter are. While we frequently read the term "Anthropocene" and have come to understand it as generally indicative of the negative impact of human civilization on our planet, geologically it is

an “epoch”: time defined by an observable layer of “stuff”. This “stuff” consists of soil chemistry changes in response to land use, soot, ash, and particulates from the burning of hydrocarbons, radionuclides from the testing and use of nuclear weapons, and, most recently, “technofossils”: near-immortal plasticated agglomerates, known as “plastic rocks”.

Consider the microscopic bodies of ancient plankton: liquefied under pressure and heat for 400 million years, buried under sediment, covered by ocean or mountain, discovered, drilled, tested, excavated, collected, transported by ship, refined, transported by pipeline, resinated, manufactured into pellets, heat-blown over moulds, labelled, transported by truck, filled with redirected “fresh spring water”, transported by truck, stored, refrigerated, purchased, transported by car, consumed, discarded, eroded, broken down into smaller and smaller particles, blown or cast into waterways, swallowed by living beings and supplanting their cells, or sedimented into rocks more lasting than stone. Litter — misdirected garbage — is one visible moment in a multi-dimensional problem that otherwise conveniently exists outside our reality.

A park atop a landfill beside a former oil refinery is emblematic of the transformation of this problem. Imagine then, J.C. Saddington Park as the new vision of a planet where garbage was a historical problem, now containing only some remnants of the memory of a misguided past. Strolling through the park, you approach a mound in the earth. Near the top, something is exposed. You cannot make out what it is, nor what lies underneath, but you can make out a plaque that reads: THIS MONUMENT COMMEMORATES THE FINAL DAYS OF THE ERA OF PLASTIC. IN THE NEW GREEN LEAVES, WE READ THE FUTURE. IT IS HOPEFUL. The monument, you assume, is buried below. While you cannot see it in its entirety, the portion you do see seems to be made of a material you later find out is known as “plasticrete”: concrete that uses plastic trash as its aggregate matter. Nearby, there is an informative plaque warning you that there may still be some plastic around.

The partially-concealed sculptural works (that suggest they may be part of a larger buried object) function to invite visitor curiosity. They hint at the history of the park as landfill, prompt interest, and are a repository of previously collected litter. Mainly, they serve as a plausible subject for the plaques to refer to. Marshall McLuhan said, “One must begin by becoming extra-environmental, putting oneself beyond the battle in order to study and understand the

configuration of forces...". Of course, one is never beyond the battle — but the belief that one is permits us to consider ourselves anew. The global, national, and local processes we all invisibly engage in that manifest in our immediate experience as visible litter can be seen from this point of view.

Litter becomes a matter not only of a lack of awareness, or of carelessness or laziness, but also, and more importantly, a function of our individual and political relationships with our world. Rather than plead with visitors to care about their immediate environment — thus presuming a lack of care — we instead assume a quasi-fictional past in which people cared, as indeed most people in this present claim to do. The visitor reads the plaque under the impression that it refers to the sculpture and its world, whereas in reality they are reading a plaque that refers to them, and to their world.

Practically, the sculptural objects are minimally impactful, using existing terrain to suggest that they are the visible portions of buried objects. The plaques follow plaque standards for heritage sites and public parks, and are demonstrably robust and safe, as well as being appropriate in scale and material.



*Figure 1 Example of "plastic rocks" from the Federal University of Parana, Brazil.*

### **3. Proposed Artwork**

Inspired by “fossilized plastic” that has been found around the world, the artists are proposing working with community members to collect plastic materials littered around the park and waterfront and then incorporating the found material into a concrete mix to create “plasticrete”. This material will then be cast into shapes and installed in the park as monuments to this period of time, peaking out of from the grass like fossils. The pieces will be accompanied by interpretive signage explaining the project and adding to the narrative.



*Figure 2 Early concept for the "monument" showing the plasticrete material and example of interpretive plaque. Note: All monuments will be located closer to the path to increase accessibility to the artworks.*

There will be two locations for the monuments, accompanied by interpretive plaques, and one additional location for just an interpretive plaque. The monuments will be two plinth-like forms, roughly 3 feet deep x 3 feet wide x 5 feet high.



*Figure 3 Drawing of the proposed form for one of the "monuments"*

#### **4. Interpretive Plaque**

There will be three interpretive plaques installed in total. Plaque 1 will discuss plastic in general; Plaque 2 will illustrate the complex path of the manufacture, use, and disposal of single-use objects, and Plaque 3, which will be situated overlooking the water, will consider the lake itself as a monument to an era when people acted to rid our waterways of waste.

Please forgive translation errors in the Punjabi and Chinese translations on this design; final print versions will have correct translations in these two languages as well as in Arabic, Urdu, and Polish. The plaque shown here is only for illustrative purposes.

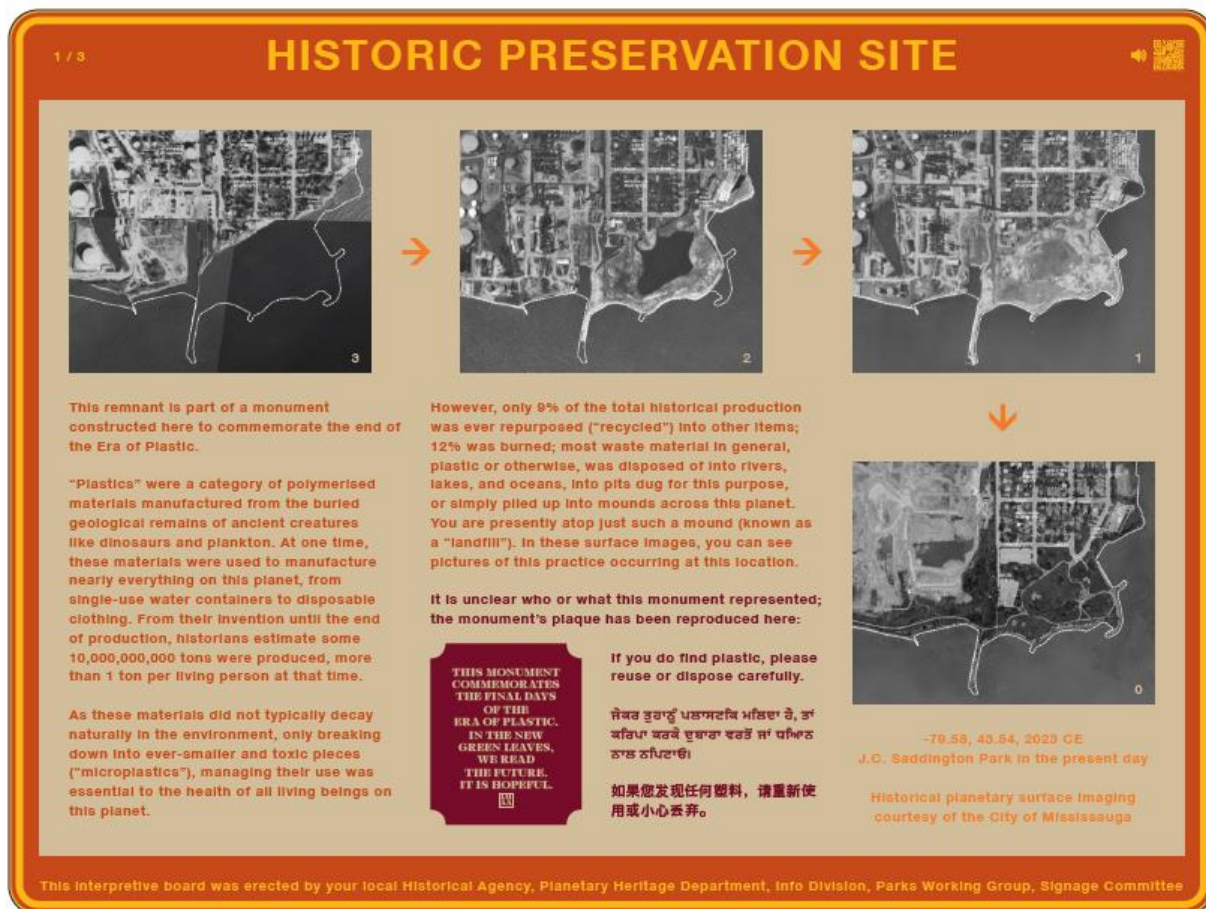


Figure 4 Example of Interpretive Plaque. Final content is subject to change, in consultation with City staff.

## 5. Artwork Location

[J.C. Saddington Park](#) at 53 Lake Street, Mississauga.

This large green space was created out of landfill deposited in Lake Ontario between 1949 and 1970—in part to protect against further erosion of the shoreline. Located within the park are the remains of the Port Credit Waterworks dating back to 1922-23.

Throughout the park is a looped path system, pond, picnics areas and a playground. There are also heritage buildings and an informal amphitheatre.



*Figure 5 Images of J.C. Saddington Park*

The artists have proposed two locations in the park for the monuments (shown by the red circles in the image below) and one location for an additional interpretive plaque (shown by the yellow circle). All locations will need to be finalized in consultation with City staff, and are subject to change.



*Figure 6 Proposed Locations for the Artwork*

Photos of proposed sites:



Site 1



Site 2



Site 3

## 6. Anticipated Schedule

Date*	Project Phase
June 2023	Technical Design Review
July 2023	Community engagement and litter collection
August 2023	Artwork Fabrication
September 2023	Artwork completion and anticipated unveiling
September 25-27, 2023	Artwork presented as part of the Livable Cities Forum (hosted by Mississauga in 2023)
September 2024	Artwork de-installation

\* Schedule subject to change