

# The Jay

ISSUE 04



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INSIDE SMUS

The Annual Christmas Assembly

*by Yuhe Pan*

## OPINION

Why Do Students Burn Out in the First Place?

*by Byrdie Fisher-Franke*

Current Events

*by Bronwyn Ellis*

## SPORTS

The National Hockey League

*by Dev Wirk*

## MODERN LANGUAGES

Las Posadas: Una Tradición que Une a las Familias

*by Valentina and Isabel*

告别的尾声，新生的前奏

*by Ricardo Chen, Yina Ding, and Kathryn Yi*

Les vacances d'hiver

*by French 10A Students*

## INTERVIEW

Interview with Ms. Rusnak

*by Claire Ru*

# *The Annual Christmas Assembly*

by Yuhe Pan

December 12th marks SMUS's annual Christmas assembly: an event where all grades, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, gather together in the double gym to celebrate the last day before winter holidays. Everyone is invited to dress in red, green, and white, and wear festive accessories, making the celebration quite the affair. Performances feature students of all grades, with senior school science students singing renditions of popular Christmas carols, the middle school band performing, and even Kindergarten students showcasing music from the junior school's Christmas concert. After loud cheers for the photo competitions between faculty departments, everyone is invited to sing along to "We Wish You a Merry Christmas", in multiple languages to reflect the diversity of the student population. Finally, to bring a close to the event, all grades participate in an ear-splitting version of "The 12 Days of Christmas", where each grade sings (or screams) the gift that corresponds to their grade number, concluding with a climactic burst of confetti and noise from the graduating class, experiencing it all for the final time. Whether you are a returning student who has experienced the festivities before, or someone new to SMUS, the annual Christmas assembly is sure to be a memorable event for all.

# Why Do Students Face Burn Out in the First Place?

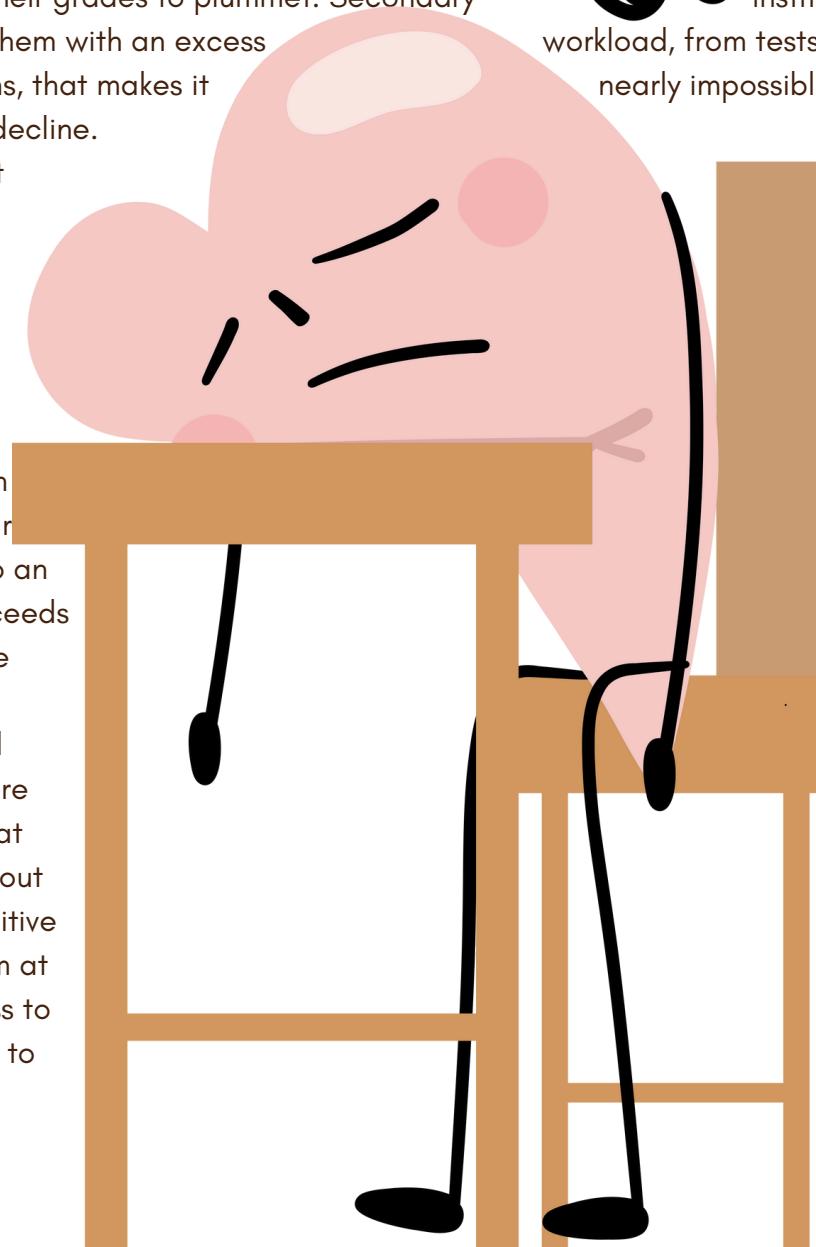
by Byrdie Fisher-Franke

According to the National Library of Medicine, burnout refers to occupational stress. If this sounds like a familiar feeling, it's because students in both secondary education and post-secondary effects daily. 70% of adolescents experience student health to sway and their grades to plummet. Secondary to excel, but supply them with an excess of university applications, that makes it inevitable cognitive decline.

Most student burnout is a result of a multitude of factors including the environment, digital devices, family support, academic pressure, and more. As students stress to perform, they encounter exhaustion. This exhaustion in the brain and lowers their energy levels. Not only does this lead to an increase in physical fatigue, but it proceeds to overexhaustion of the prefrontal cortex, the hub of neurological decision making, and problem-solving. Children and teens are still developing their prefrontal cortex, because that area of the brain is not fully developed. Without this distinct area of cognitive function, it is impossible to perform at your best. This irony being that stress to perform at your highest leads to the lowest.



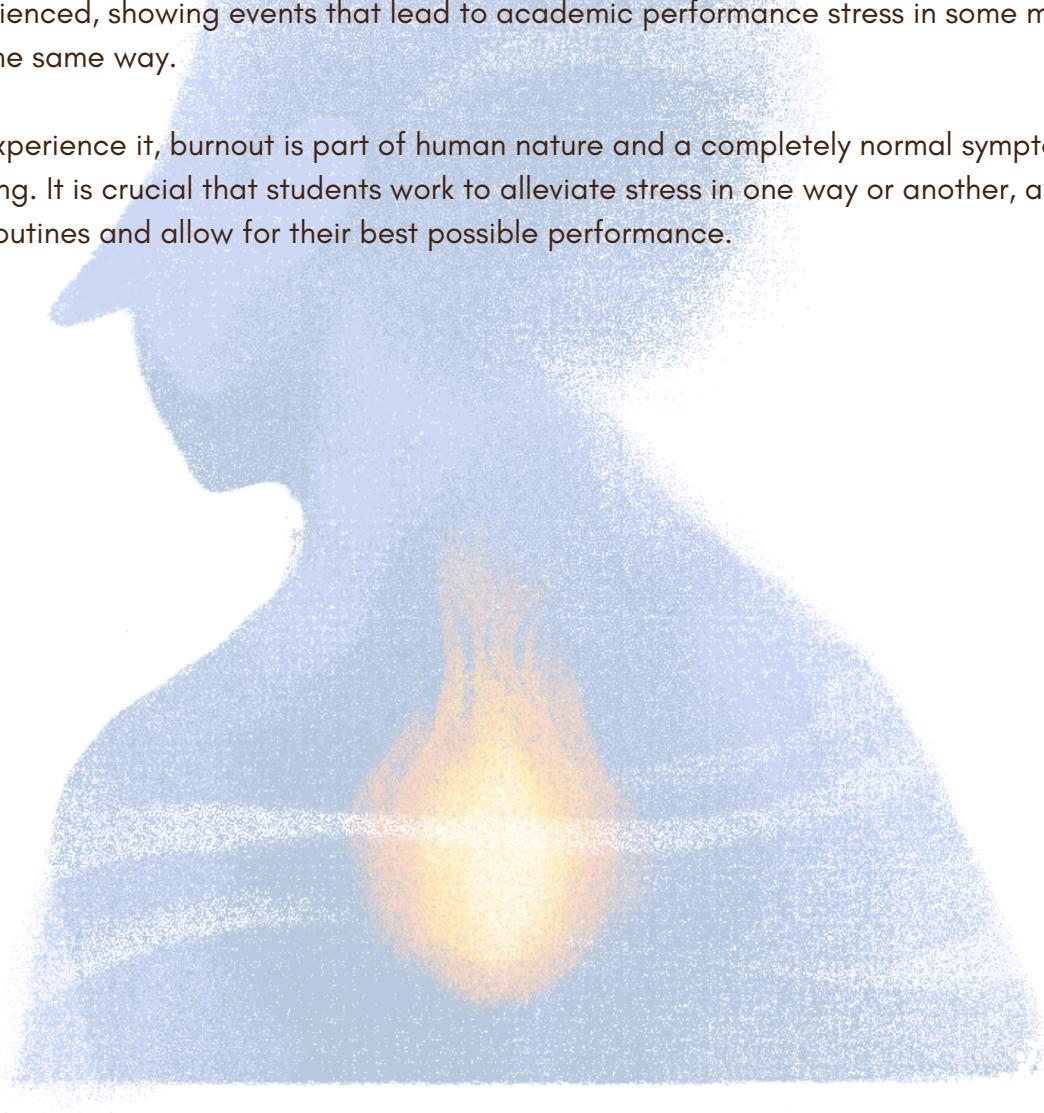
to a chronic response to stress. Because a large portion of education are feeling its effects daily. Institutes push their students to excel, but supply them with an excess of university applications, that makes it inevitable cognitive decline.



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Many may wonder why not all students experience burnout, and why some that may be performing at the best of their abilities see no decrease in their lifestyles. This is because students regulate their emotions and external pressures according to their own unique networks. Neurological regulation is not something you are born with, but rather something that you learn throughout your childhood. Some may have better conflict management skills than others, as they might have experienced external conflict growing up that led to their acclimatization to stress and academic pressure. Burnout does not have to do with the structure of your brain, but rather what components of life your brain has prematurely experienced, showing events that lead to academic performance stress in some may not impact others in the same way.

Although not all experience it, burnout is part of human nature and a completely normal symptom of secondary schooling. It is crucial that students work to alleviate stress in one way or another, as to promote healthy routines and allow for their best possible performance.



# Current Events

by Bronwyn Ellis

## Provincial Politics



Recently, the leader of the Conservative Party of British Columbia John Rustad resigned after his party and several Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) signed a letter calling for his removal as leader. The BC Conservative Party constitution states that leaders may only be removed in the case of resignation, death, a failed leadership review vote or by incapacitation, the party cited professional incapacitation which resulted in their decision to remove Rustad as leader. The party released a statement saying that he was "professionally incapacitated", abiding by the party constitution. Despite having an interim leader in Trevor Halford, the Conservative Party of BC is showing public signs of division, which could ultimately lead them to the same fate as the BC United Party, that being internal collapse. Their new leader is set to be chosen in six months, but until then, it is unclear whether the party will remain united.

## Federal Politics

At the start of November, Nova Scotian Member of Parliament (MP) Chris D'Entremont crossed the floor of the House of Commons in Ottawa, joining the Liberals and Prime Minister Mark Carney. Allegedly, a few Conservative MPs came to his office after the fact and called him a snake, although sources remain inconclusive as to the truth behind this event, D'Entremont says it only cemented his decision to cross the floor. He came to the decision after disagreements with Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and concerns that his voice is not being heard within the Conservative caucus. While it is not uncommon for MPs to cross the floor, it is certainly indicative of something deeper happening within the party and caucus, begging the question of how long Poilievre will last as leader of the Conservative party of Canada.



## International News

On December 5th, the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) announced its first ever peace prize and awarded it to U.S President Donald Trump. This comes after, despite aggressive campaigning, the President was not awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his brokering of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire. President Trump said that he does not care for the award but had settled eight wars in his ten months in office, though that number is highly disputed. After the ceremony, the Human Rights Watch asked FIFA for nominees, judges, as well as criteria and selection process, but have yet to receive a response. They ask for this as the U.S president has launched several campaigns against immigrants and specific groups such as Somalis, Afghans, and Hispanics. Given current American legislation tightening border control, it is unclear whether football/soccer fans will be able to watch the games taking place in the United States or whether teams will even be allowed in at all.



# *The National Hockey League*

by Dev Wirk

Welcome back sports fans!

In this column I will give my take on the state of the National Hockey League (NHL).

There are 32 teams in the NHL, with two conferences in the league: the Eastern Conference and the Western Conference. There are two divisions in each conference; the Pacific and Central divisions in the West, and the Atlantic and Metropolitan divisions in the East. A total of 16 teams, three from each division, and two wildcard teams from each conference make the playoffs each year.

Heading into the season, six teams were heavy favorites to win the Stanley Cup: the defending champions Florida Panthers, last year's runner up Edmonton Oilers, Carolina Hurricanes, Vegas Golden Knights, Colorado Avalanche, and Tampa Bay Lightning. So far this season, these teams have undergone ups and downs. The Carolina Hurricanes lead the Metropolitan division, Tampa Bay Lightning lead the Atlantic division, and Colorado Avalanche lead the Central division. On the flipside, the downs include the Edmonton Oilers struggling in the Pacific division, and the Florida Panthers trailing in the Atlantic division. The Vegas Golden Knights have recently surged and are in second place in the Pacific division.

But wait, the NHL holds even more surprises and disappointments further down the standings. Starting with disappointments, everyone's favourite local team, the Vancouver Canucks, are badly struggling, recently falling as low as 32nd (which isn't good considering there are 32 teams!), the New York Rangers have disappointed with multiple losing streaks in the Metropolitan division, and the formerly successful (in the regular season at least) Toronto Maple Leafs, fresh off of chasing local player Mitch Marner out of town, occupied dead last in the Atlantic division to start the season. In terms of pleasant surprises, the Anaheim Ducks lead the Pacific division, while the Montreal Canadiens, Chicago Blackhawks, and San Jose Sharks have all shown big time improvement. All of these teams seem to have engineered successful rebuilds around exciting young star players.

My NHL playoff predictions are as follows:

**Atlantic division:** Tampa Bay Lightning, Montreal Canadiens, and Detroit Red Wings

**Metropolitan division:** Washington Capitals, Carolina Hurricanes, and New Jersey Devils

**Eastern Conference Wild Card:** Boston Bruins and Pittsburgh Penguins

**Pacific division:** Anaheim Ducks, Vegas Golden Knights, and Edmonton Oilers

**Central division:** Colorado Avalanche, Dallas Stars, and Minnesota Wild

**Western Conference Wild Card:** Utah Mammoth and Los Angeles Kings

Stay tuned for my next edition after the break!

# Las Posadas: Una Tradición que Une a las Familias

by Valentina and Isabel

Cada diciembre, cuando las calles se llenan de luces navideñas y el aire huele a ponche y tamales, muchas familias mexicanas y latinoamericanas celebran una de las tradiciones más bonitas de la temporada: las posadas. Pero ¿qué son exactamente y por qué siguen siendo tan importantes?

Las posadas son celebraciones que se llevan a cabo durante nueve noches consecutivas, del 16 al 24 de diciembre. Cada noche representa uno de los nueve meses de embarazo de la Virgen María, y la tradición conmemora el viaje de María y José desde Nazaret hasta Belén buscando un lugar donde hospedarse para el nacimiento de Jesús.

La celebración típica comienza con una procesión donde los participantes se dividen en dos grupos: los peregrinos que van de casa en casa pidiendo posada, y los anfitriones que inicialmente les niegan la entrada. Los peregrinos llevan figuras de María y José mientras cantan la tradicional letanía de las posadas. Despues de varios intentos, finalmente se les permite entrar y ahí es cuando empieza la verdadera fiesta.

Lo mejor de las posadas es que combinan lo religioso con lo festivo de una manera única. Despues de la parte ceremonial, viene la comida, la música, y por supuesto, la piñata. Ver a los niños con los ojos vendados tratando de romper la piñata mientras todos gritan "dale, dale, dale" es algo que nunca pasa de moda. Y cuando finalmente se rompe y caen los dulces y las frutas, es como si toda la comunidad compartiera esa alegría.

Aunque las posadas tienen raíces religiosas simplemente como una forma de reunirse momento para conectar con recordar la importancia de la generosidad.

En un mundo donde todo olvidamos de las cosas recuerdan el valor de abrir corazones a los demás. Ya tradicional o con tu propio vivo ese espíritu de caracteriza.

Así que si este año tienes participar en una posada, canciones aunque no sepas buñuelos que puedas, y disfruta de estar rodeado de gente que quieras. Porque al final, eso es lo que realmente importa.



profundas, hoy en y mantener nuestras

día muchas familias las celebran vivas las tradiciones. Es un raíces, compartir con los vecinos y hospitalidad y la

va tan rápido y a veces nos simples, las posadas nos nuestras puertas y nuestros sea que las celebres de manera estilo, lo importante es mantener comunidad y alegría que las

la oportunidad de no lo dudes. Canta las toda la letra, come todos los

# Les vacances d'hiver

by French 10A students

Il était une fois une petite classe de Français 10A qui habitait à Victoria. Cette classe était très, très intelligente, créative et belle ! Le professeur, lui aussi, était incroyable et possédait toutes les mêmes qualités que la classe. La classe vivait dans un grand château d'hiver en glace au sommet du Mont Tolmie. Chaque jour, la classe buvait du chocolat chaud et chantait des chansons françaises dans le foyer du château, près d'un grand feu dans le foyer. Toute la classe appartenait à la royauté de Victoria : il n'y avait que six princes et sept princesses. Mais, malheureusement, le prof, déguisé en roi, était en réalité un méchant. Il s'appelait LabuBen et voulait supprimer les vacances d'hiver et il insistait pour que tout le monde fasse des devoirs chaque jour du 12 décembre jusqu'au 6 janvier.

Les princes et les princesses voulaient arrêter cette idée-là, alors, le 11 décembre, ils ont payé le chauffeur d'autobus de SMUS, nommé Jody, pour kidnapper le roi, le conduire à l'aéroport, lui fournir un billet d'avion et le mettre dans un avion qui l'a ramené en Angleterre, d'où il venait.

Heureusement, il a rencontré labEmmaWatson à l'aéroport de Heathrow, et ils sont tombés amoureux et ont passé le reste de leur vie ensemble. Une fois qu'il était parti de Victoria, toute la classe est allée à l'extérieur du château, au sommet du Mont Tolmie, s'est tenue par la main et a crié : « Passez de bonnes vacances amusantes, et Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année ! »



# 告别的尾声，新生的前奏

by Ricardo Chen, Yina Ding, and Kathryn Yi

旧事了却，

再迎新春

新年的钟声即将敲响，跨年的烟火将要绽放，  
墙上乙巳年的挂历只剩屡屡几页。

朝朝暮暮，岁岁年年，时光总是悄然而逝。

也许，2025的故事将要迎来独属于它的结局了，

或许并不圆满，但一定回味无穷。回首过去的一年，我们或许有欢笑，有伤感，  
有与三两好友结伴而行的喜悦，有被学业压垮的崩溃；体验了期许和遗憾，感受了  
梦想成真，也明白了事事不尽如人意。你也许结交了新朋友，亦或许学会了“告别”  
这一人生必修课。但无论如何，这些点点滴滴都在我们人生的剧本上留下了斑斑  
点点的墨渍，成了冒险家旅途中独一无二的风景。

每逢新年将至，各平台与软件的年终报告就会去总结那些我们的过往，是抖音给出的最喜爱的视频类型，是QQ音乐的年度最爱歌单，它们对我来说是总结亦是告别。那些被我们放在心底的委屈与惊喜，倔强与遗憾，都会在年末随风悄然散去。我们渐渐懂得，有些人只会陪我们走过人生中的其中一段路，有些事即便回头也无力改写。于是，我们愿意为过去的一切画下句点，带着理解，也带着释怀，在新年的钟声里轻装上阵，更坦然地拥抱即将到来的旅程。

洗尽铅华，云开月朗

年初的我曾野心勃勃的立下军令状，告诫自己要向上，要成长，要挑战，宛如要上战场的将军一般。但人总有力不从心的时候，我会因为考不到自己满意的分数而质疑自己的能力，会因为拖延没有完成规定作业和自己生气，会在一个个等待成绩的晚上焦虑难眠。年初的目标我都悉数达到，但少了松弛也少了快乐，但却多了对自己的失望和不满。我常想，目的地真的重要吗？还是经历更重要？在学校的攀岩旅行中我找到了答案，行驶在蜿蜒曲折的山路上，比到达目的地更重要的是学会欣赏海平线的紫红日出，是感受在山间穿行的自由，是享受和朋友们的嬉笑打闹……，过程才是旅途中的至宝，那何不让过程变得愉悦。我相信努力固然重要，但更重要的是在繁忙和杂乱中学会和自己和解，新的一年我要学会在焦头烂额时给自己一个拥抱。山山复山山，祝我心自斐然。

在这一年往复里，总有一群人永远能理解我的沉默，接住我的不安。友情，是2025年我最珍视的礼物。我想，好朋友的意义大概就是收到生日礼物时难以忘怀的惊喜，是听到糗事和八卦时迫不及待的分享，是面对争议时给予无条件的支持。虽然人生就像一列穿梭四季的列车，人来人往，总有乘客下车换乘，也总有乘客继续赶路。有，也有过客。但我想说，能与你们同行一段，已是我这一年最难得、最真切的幸福。也望来年，我们依旧能在各自奔赴的路上，彼此看见、彼此照亮。

“老去又逢新岁月，春来更有好花枝。”元旦的目的并非仅仅拥有新的一年，而是我们得此契机拥有新的灵魂与新的起点，愿我们能带着心中的憧憬与祝福，扬帆起航。取代寒冬的将是暖春的曙光与期许。新年伊始，愿所有美好，如约而至。

祝你，祝我，无灾无难，有情有幸！



# INTERVIEW w/ MS. RUSNAK

by Claire Ru

In this issue, I interviewed Ms. Rusnak, an artist and teacher for visual arts from grades 9 to 12 and AP Art History. She sheds light on how art opens students to others' perspectives. I hope that this interview reveals a perspective from the visual arts and social studies department and encourages more students to take visual arts courses.

## **For students unfamiliar with AP Art History, please describe the course in two sentences.**

AP Art History is an amazing class where we explore the world through the lens of art and architecture. We look at artworks from prehistory to the present and ask why they were made, who they were for, and how they reflect the time and place in which they were created.

## **Why might students take AP Art History?**

Students might be interested in learning more about art, like to travel and go to museums, or just enjoy looking at art. They might want to know more about art and how to think about and analyze it, or talk about it. You do not have to be good at making art to take the course. [AP Art History] offers a chance to see the world from new perspectives and understand how people across history have expressed ideas through art. We explore works from all over the world, from Chicago to Constantinople, and visual arts students often find that it opens up fresh directions for their own creativity by drawing inspiration from the artists who came before them.

## **Why does Art History interest you? How did you find out about it?**

I took my first Art History course in my first year at UBC and was hooked right away. After that, I took an Art History course every year; in some years, even more. It opens up a worldview. In the courses, the lecturer tells you about all these artworks as you are frantically taking notes. [You are learning about the stories behind each artwork.] Was it a war that



inspired this artwork? Was it a royal person who inspired it? Was it a religious figure that inspired it? Was it the artist's personal feelings that inspired it? So now, when we look at these works, we know why they were made in that time and place and why the artist used those particular materials [for a specific effect].

My favourite course was Modern Art History taught by Serge Guilbault, who wrote *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*. He was such a passionate lecturer that I still remember him describing the Abstract Expressionists; he helped me appreciate, and even love, artworks that many people might overlook. I was always interested in making art, but my Art History courses helped me appreciate the art that others were making.

### **How has Art History changed how you view the world?**

I tell my students that Art History will change their lives, and I genuinely believe it. When you spend time learning about art, especially from places with incredibly deep and complex histories, you begin to understand how art, place, culture, and the human story are intertwined. Studying art history also shapes how I travel and how I see the world; when I visit different cities, I visit art galleries, museums, and architectural sites not just for inspiration but also to learn new stories about other people and the ways they see their world. For instance, I was watching the choir performance [in Christ Church Cathedral]. When I looked at the church, I realized those are Gothic arches, because they are pointed. Thus, knowledge from art history allows you to interact with everything in a different way. This is also why I enjoy working at a school where I get to be around people from so many places, because their perspectives enrich everything we discuss and learn together. Taken together, [learning art history] broadens one's sense of how people experience and interpret the world.

### **What does art education mean to you? What should be its goal?**

Art is a piece of the human puzzle that looks at what people create and allows us to understand each other better. It [allows you to empathize with others and understand them]. It opens up worlds. It is for anyone who wants to see the world in a different way. For example, last year I had students asking about how idealized beauty has shifted throughout time. [They focused on that] throughout the course, [posing] questions such as: Who is determining what a beautiful person is? How is that shifting [through time and place]?

Another example would be how we look at different religions. A student who has never learned about Islam or Buddhism, or Hinduism will at least have a glimpse into those cultures and the arts that they create to honor their gods. Thus, art opens up conversations and sparks new ideas. One of my former students described art as “a portal between two people.” The more you encounter art, the more open you are to that kind of connection and understanding. Art education is about letting art become part of your life, whether you make it or simply appreciate it. You don’t have to be an artist to find meaning in art and change how you experience the world.

### **What is your favourite historical event or figure in Art History?**

One of my favourites is the **Lamassu**, a massive guardian figure that stood at the gates of Sargon II's citadel in ancient Assyria. It has the face of a man, the powerful body of a bull, and the wings of an eagle, all carved from a single block of alabaster. It is gorgeous and majestic, but also fierce and imposing. This huge mythical creature was carved out of one enormous monolithic piece of alabaster, but alabaster was not even found in that region, implying that these figures were so important that people would import this stone from far away. [People dragged alabaster] on boats, then on sleds across the desert to the site. Then, people carved the stone by hand with beautiful, delicate knotwork for the beard and the hair. [This artwork] was made to intimidate his enemies, so the Lamassu is the protector for the Assyrian people at their gates. Yet, it is beautiful, and its face is so at peace, [which contrasts with its purpose].



### **How should we borrow in the arts without plagiarizing?**

That's something that I think about a lot, because [we study the Silk Road in AP Art History]. We look at how traditions are passed along the Silk Road. For instance, we look at some Chinese ceramic vases from the Yuan dynasty called the David Vases. The blue glaze, patterning, and pigment are believed to come from Iraq. We also see elephants, which were seen in India, as well as papyrus from Egypt. Therefore, I'm not sure if we can make work that is not influenced by other people. [Although we do not exactly copy from others], we should recognize the work that we borrowed.