

The respectful tourist on tour. Notes from the Junkie Library.

Throw a stone soaked in bleach at Main and Hastings. You'll hit a cop or a service provider or one of those missionary kids. Fascinated with the authentic junkie. Fascinated with the lengths of crack tubing and a flood of clean needles, sterile water in nicely stacked plastic, alcohol swabs. Star junkies come from white, middle class families. Fallen angels. Model minority addicts make movies about using, write poetry, speak discursively, pass Humanities 101.

Fascinated.

You are an informed bystander. You read the newspaper editorials. You understand the discourse. "Four Pillars." "Harm reduction." Someone came to talk about addiction in your class. You wrote a paper.

You are an activist. You go to meetings. You actively attempt to recruit authentic voices to your meetings. You write articles. You plan protests. You go to protests.

You are an artist. You do art that relates to social issues. You teach about social issues. You draw pictures of the oppressed and place them in public spaces. You talk about your oppression. You talk about someone else's oppression.

You are a service provider. You counsel addicts. You give out food and needles.

You are in government. You were elected. You were hired. You are paid to go to meetings. You write policy. You fund things for addicts.

You were an addict.

You are an addict.

Your father, mother and sister are addicts.

We all come to Main and Hastings reserve just to see what dying's really like.

This tour begins at the junkie library.

This land stretches white space over red land. Europeans stole land and created reserves where Hell's Angels run coke, steal girls, and the government sells liquor and dispenses

benzo-diazepines and anti-depressants to keep you in your home. No one who didn't grow up on the reserve goes out of their way to see a reserve.

Main and Hastings is a reserve stretching white space over red land. A reserve isn't about addiction. It's about stolen land. A reserve is about containing what we don't want to see.

Hastings reserve is one of many stops you can make across the country. Drugs are equal opportunity whether you are in Seaton House, stepped over on the way to the Calgary stampede, passed out in Kenora.

The city zoned addicts into this part of town. You can do crack from Cambie to Clark, keep it to the industrial districts or we'll have to involve meetings with community policing centres and the health unit.

Containment. It's all about containment.

Some academic said we have a drug problem because we are a port town. Really, Vancouver is a frontier town. Cowboys and cowboys and cowboys and sheriffs and missionaries and "Indians" and everyone else. That's right, Shanghai noon. That one time Jackie Chan made a Western.

Out West, we forget. We stole the land. We hired "indentured servants", politely, yellow slaves who built the railroad. We made internment camps. And we still hire indenturedly. Because when it's not black and sometimes red, it's hard to think that those other colours are problems for Europeans too. We prefer to think of our problems as resources and cheap open markets.

Yes, junkies have a colour, and a gender, and a religion. And some of us on this tour don't want to talk about colour and stolen land. All services are not equally distributed to all people.

Look, whites have problems. Whites left Europe too. The English oppress the French, you know, the irishdoukabourukraniancatholicfrench-question. I don't care if you're ten kinds of white or purple or green. Can we just get back to the main issue, class. Class war. Drugs. Cops. The literature at hand.

Junkie literature. Junkie Library.

The library was made by authentic junkies, who may have deliberately wanted to choose books for

by Ga Ching Kong

Hastings Junkie

a library. Or someone needing a bus ticket to sell, or someone who was bored while they were waiting to do free laundry. The faces who chose these books may also have been Native, African, Latin American. But no one really suspects the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean, Arab, Indian from India. Yes, we're here too.

This library was brought to you by the authentic junkie. The books of choice of addicts. Junkie literature. The first junkie literature that comes to mind are beat poets. Think of how many of the great Western writers of the world were addicted.

Gees, that's a long list of men.

Gees, that's a long list of white men.

Do junkies only read only white men too? Do only white junkies write?

That's why we call it a **Nova Library**. Like William S. Burroughs' *Nova Express*. You know aliens are taking over our language. Now, we're talking about green racism. Green racism, folks.

Some artists were addicted and wrote bad, I mean beat poetry. It's obvious.

But I'll make a proper sociological case for the junkie canon.

The Hastings Reserve junkie canon:

- witch hunts
- industrialization
- colonization
- genocide
- opium wars
- drug wars
- global expropriation
- slavery
- Men raping children.
- Men beating on women.
- Men raping women.
- Women beating on children.

It's thousands and thousands of years of oppression. Burroughs is a thousand miles from that Native guy doing the residential school lam.

Privileged people, know what you've done. Check your ego, Burroughs. All of us on tour have something to answer for.

Wipe that garbage off your hands.

Safe library. Safe space. Safe injection site.

Is a public library not enough because addicts can't go there? Because books walk. Because the books in a regular library represent regular people. Because addicts speak only in the language of addicts.

If we can prove that addicts are educable, then we prove addicts are citizens. If we prove that an addicts' library gives addicts a moral life, then we can take the credit for saving addicts. Is the artist leading the addict out of the cave of false consciousness?

Will an addicts' library be the first world democratic Jesus we've always wanted. Does an addicts' library save society. If we can be so humble as to accept being saved by addicts, will addicts save society?

But addicts didn't author this conception. A clever artist conceived on a three hour tour that addicts read, addicts think, addicts muse, addicts create.

Plato, shine a light this way. A reserve is not a cave. A reserve is a physical manifestation of Platonic superiority. Education will get you off the reserve. Education will take you out of the cave. Sugar daddy's gonna give you something if you just stay where you are. We made you. We'll break you.

Consciousness is a cave and inclusion is a house of multiple coloured cannons. Another cannon for your house, Master. An addict's cannon. Like a black cannon. A red cannon. A yellow cannon. A Neil Bissoondath canon. The Canadian conflation crisis. A whimpering canon for the white man's junkie.

Is a junkie library a privileged fat man through the eye of the needle?

It's all caves and houses here, folks. Buying now earns huge reward points in heaven. Act now. Redeem your points now. Redeem.

\$50,000 for the master's tools, \$500,000 for the master's house. This is an unauthorized sale. Master's listening, now, better look sharp.

Race. Money's coming faster now. Race. Grants are being given now.

Boom. Not with a bang.

boom

