

Call for Presentation Proposals



Guilty Pleasures

A multi-disciplinary series of lightning talks and roundtable discussion

18 March, 2027/6PM-8PM/PATRICIA WHELAN THEATRE/CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The idea of guilty pleasure invites us to consider the things we enjoy despite and sometimes because of their perceived cultural, moral, social or intellectual undesirability. It could be a cheesy romance novel, a reality TV show you would never admit to watching, some junk food you secretly love to eat, listening to endless celebrity gossip, spending an insane amount of time on social media or a song you love but somewhat embarrassed to admit. Our guilt occupies an interesting space between our desires and social approval and between enjoyment and others' judgement.

Possible themes might include but are not restricted to:

- Who gets to decide whether something is embarrassing or silly?
- What does our guilt reveal about the values, sanctions and cultural norms that determine what is considered worthy or unworthy of enjoyment?
- Can our guilty pleasures change with age and take on a different meaning as we grow older?
- Gender and the Politics of Pleasure
- Why are some pleasures feminized or masculinized?
- How do class, gender, race and sexuality shape the distinction between what is acceptable as pleasure and what is not?
- Why might something embarrassing at 18 become nostalgic or comforting at 40?

- Why are some forms of consumption described as “cultured” while others are dismissed as “trash”?
- Can the idea of “unbothered indulgence” become a form of resistance to cultural authority? When does indulgence become resistance?
- Is guilt that is associated with some pleasure-seeking avenues necessary after all to maintain social norms?
- Is Guilt Necessary for Social Order?
- When Does a Guilty Pleasure Stop Being Guilty?

Come prepared to share your guilty pleasures in an entertaining 7-minute presentation and perhaps convince the rest of us that we shouldn't feel guilty about ours.

We invite proposals that explore the idea of *guilty pleasures* through exploring a favorite movie, song, food, hobby, a personal story, a creative piece or even a performance. If you would like to propose a presentation for this event, [please click here](#) and provide a brief (150 words) description on the subject of your proposed presentation. The organizing committee would like to include as many presentations as possible, but if it becomes necessary to select a feasible number of speakers for the event, the selection will be done by a blind review of proposals.

Submission Deadline: Monday, February 4, 2027

If you would like further information, please contact the Phoenix Rising working group Chair, Tamara Jenkins (TJenkins@mtroyal.ca).