

Dexter Barker-Glenn
Model Collapse
May 28 - July 11 2026

Dread

Dread. It is the backdrop of our days, a spiritual tinnitus, that is not always noticed but is always there. To be in the world today is to exist surrounded by the inexorable. Individually, we have access to more information than ever before in human history and, collectively, we are able to communicate with one another with unprecedented ease. Still, we live like scarecrows in a field, perched high enough to see all, but powerless to do anything but watch. Nowhere is this more evident than in the insidious creep of Artificial Intelligence, like blight in a vegetable patch. The hazards are well documented and oft-discussed, yet the momentum only multiplies— a runaway train on a straightaway. The data-centers drain our aquifers, the bots poison our discourse, the corporations announce record profits and layoffs in the same ChatGPT breath-written press release. They assure us there is nothing to be done; they shrug off the LLM's hallucinations; they insist the bubble won't burst. They declare the autonomous drones will only kill the enemy, but admit they don't know the answers. They shrug and say everything is inevitable. Inexorable. The sea boils, the forests burn, the air fills with poison. The machines hum through the night, bristling with revelations. And we watch, paralyzed, as the future builds like thunderheads above a barren plain. We close our eyes, but the glow of the screens penetrates us even there, suckling at our dreams.

There is no taxonomic distinction between the grasshopper and the locust. A locust is not a separate species, but a grasshopper that transforms in its habits and physiognomy under particular environmental conditions; drought, overcrowding, scarcity. The solitary grasshopper becomes a gregarious, nomad, compelled to join with its fellows. These groups grow bigger and bigger as they encounter each other, possessed of a rapaciousness that extends even into cannibalism. Here, we return to that scarecrow, hoisted upon a cross, watching the swarm gather on a darkening horizon.

- Billy Woods

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“Model Collapse” is a phenomenon in which AI systems cannibalize themselves, degrading through recursive training on their own outputs. In this show, the term expands to describe broader forms of self-delusion and self-destruction.

At the center of the exhibition sits a hollowed out server tower previously used in a data center in Montreal. The servers have been replaced with a strung up plow that is vibrating at 18hz or the resonant frequency of the human eye. Vibrations at this low of a resonance, named infrasounds, are barely audible, but are felt physically in the body. Data centers across the US have been recorded producing large amounts of infrasound from cooling systems, generators and fans. A subject ripe with conspiracy and superstition, the frequency of 18hz has been nicknamed the “Ghost Frequency” for its ability to vibrate the eye, causing hallucinations in peripheral vision, and feelings of dread.

Seen from the sidewalk, the painting *Dread* is a landscape depicting the Polaris Genesee Energy Campus in Alberta, a proposed data center that would be connected to an existing natural gas power station. The landscape bends downward into a bird's-eye topographic map of the plant and surrounding terrain, constructed from satellite imagery and open-source elevation data. The image suggests a landscape as something to be recorded, digested, and reproduced.

Dexter Barker-Glenn (b. 1999, Toronto, Canada) is a multidisciplinary artist based in the unceded territory of Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) and Tkaronto (Toronto). Taking cues from nature and biotic processes, he is interested in the life cycle of materials, images and symbols. His paintings, sculptures and installations carry signs of decomposition, mutation and reuse. Recent exhibitions include *First Water* at Centre Clark (2026), Montreal, *Groundless Ground* at Nicolas Robert, Montreal (2025), *Whale Fall* at Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto (2024), *Wolves* at Hawkins, Atlanta (2023), and *Parallel Universe* at Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal (2022). He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a minor in Computer Science from Concordia University (2022).