

401
RICHMOND

update

Summer 2021 Volume 28, Issue 2





The 401 Richmond Update is a community-building initiative of Urbanspace Property Group. The newsletter began in June 1994 and over the years has documented the eclectic activities and fascinating people who make a home in our historic factory in downtown Toronto. If you would like to be added to the 401 Update mailing list, please email: UPDATE@urbanspace.org.



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COVER IMAGE

401 artists King Wong and Rob Nicholls in Rob's second floor studio during Doors Open in May 2019. Read the Tenant Profile on page 4 to learn more about Rob Nicholls. Photo by Tomasz Adamski



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After 17 years at the helm of **Studio 123**, **Sandy Jackson** is set to retire. Story on page 3.



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MOVING IN

Please welcome artist **Peter Harris** joining the 401 community in **Studio 383**. Peter's artwork is represented by the **Mira Godard Gallery**, and he also operates **United Contemporary** gallery in The Junction. Peter is joined on the 3rd floor by **Sarah Dinnick** in **Studio 372**, a Canadian photographer represented by **United Contemporary**, and a founding partner of the award-winning design firm **Dinnick & Howells**. Sarah is committed to the cause of human rights and helped establish **Human Rights Watch** in Canada over 15 years ago.

MOVING AROUND

Longstanding 401 artists **Kris Knight** and **Winnie Truong** (2010 Career Launcher Prize recipient) have upgraded their shared studio space, moving out of **Studio 387** and into a larger space in **Studio 353**. Another pair of valued 401 studiomates, artists **Alex D'Arcy** and **Janna Walters** are also expanding their studios, moving from **Studio 383** down the hall to more space in **387**.

MOVING ON

Join us in wishing all the best to **The Good Partnership** as they leave 401 but continue with their mission to help small nonprofits fundraise better. And with a heavy heart, 401 says goodbye to long time tenant **DECODE**, experts in connecting businesses with young generations. **DECODE** president **Robert Barnard** also founded and operates **YouthfulCities** and the **YouthfulCities Index** analyzing 25 cities around the world from the perspective of young adults and how they can live, work and play in urban settings. You will both be missed!



Sign up for bi-monthly *What's On* updates to your inbox at www.401richmond.com.

news

401 SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT

Urbanspace's team collaborated with Seneca student group **Jillian Owens**, **Francesca McNaughton**, **Dubinia Nieforth**, **Emily Mitchell**, and **Binsy John**, as part of the college's Sustainable Business Management program. The team developed a sustainability guideline and a review of our carbon footprint. We're pleased to share that Urbanspace's footprint has been steadily decreasing over the last few years. We're now undertaking a full energy audit and look forward to engaging everyone in continuing this good work.



Top row Jillian Owens, Seneca; Jennifer Bhogal, Urbanspace; Francesca McNaughton, Seneca; Binsy John, Seneca
2nd row Emily Mitchell, Seneca; Elise Rodgers, Urbanspace; Vicki Rodgers, Urbanspace; Saskia Vegter, Urbanspace
3rd row Brian Graciano, Urbanspace; Dubinia Nieforth, Seneca

WILDLANDS LEAGUE SUPPORTS INDIGENOUS-LED MARINE PROJECT

Wildlands League is working with the **Omuskego** to protect James Bay and Hudson Bay with the launch of www.marine.wildlandsleague.org, a comprehensive resource website. The **Mushkegowuk Council of Chiefs** chose the tool of a National Marine Conservation Area to ensure the protection of their marine territory in western James Bay and southern Hudson Bay. Wildlands League and **Oceans North** are working in partnership to support this Indigenous-led initiative.

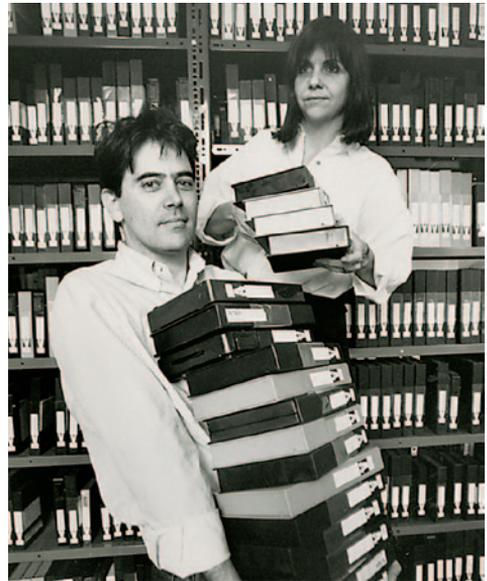


WOMEN IN VIEW LAUNCH ON SCREEN REPORT

Women in View launched their sixth **On Screen Report** this spring, tracking the effects of industry commitments and gender parity. The event in March was hosted online by **WIFT Canada**, featuring WIV Chair **Tracey Deer**, and co-authors **Jill Golick** and **Nathalie Younglai**.

VTAPE'S HISTORIC DIGITIZATION PROJECT

Vtape's Co-Founder and Restoration & Collections Management Director, **Kim Tomczak** is working with a talented team to digitize Vtape's extensive collection of film and video art. "We continue to make significant progress in digitizing the collection: I estimate that we are well over half-way at this point. The quality of the work in this collection is simply outstanding, and we are so proud to be bringing these artworks into the digital universe." Kim is working on this massive undertaking with **Dustin Lawrence**, **Alice Evensen**, and **Deidre Simmons**. Deidre joins the team in her capacity as quality control, looking at each file as they are produced as well as double-checking the inventory, and with around 7 thousand titles, it's an enormous job. Vtape also recently acquired an LTO-8 archiving unit. LTO-8 cartridges can hold up to 12 terrabytes each, and have a shelf life of 25 to 30 years. Vtape's entire collection can be safely stored on 10 of these LTO cartridges, taking up a mere 12 inches of shelf space. Currently, the shelf space occupied by the various videotape formats is around 810 feet!



Vtape founders Kim Tomczak and Lisa Steele in 1990.

VIBE PARTNERS WITH CB2



VIBE Arts partnered with the furniture and décor store **CB2** on a tote bag designed by artist **Jason Julien**. CB2 customers can donate \$10 to VIBE and receive the tote for free.

401 RICHMOND STORIES: SANDY RETIRES FROM STUDIO 123

401 community has long valued **Studio 123 Learning Centre** as a vital part of the building. Whether their children are cared for in the space, or they garner joy from the sound of play in the courtyard, having the younger generation as building mates adds energy much appreciated by all. **Sandy Jackson** has been at the helm as the centre's supervisor since the fall of 2004. This summer, Sandy will be retiring from her role, leaving shoes hard to fill.

Sandy remembers well the first time she walked into 401. She'd been invited to see the space by a colleague that was working as the temporary supervisor. "I opened the door to 401 and the lights went out. I thought, have I done something wrong?" Sandy later learned that she had opened 401's front door at Spadina at the exact moment of the infamous blackout that cut power to most of the eastern seaboard in the summer of 2004. Despite the loss of power, Sandy was warmly welcomed into the space—lit by its skylight and ample windows—by some of the same colleagues still working in the centre today. When asked to help in the role temporarily that fall, she knew she wanted to come back to the building that she'd connected with that previous summer.

In those early days, Sandy had been drawn to the story of how the centre came into existence. Internationally acclaimed early years learning expert, the late **Dr. Fraser Mustard**, had an office in the building and collaborated with **Margie** and team on establishing a daycare in 401. The idea was fully embraced, space identified and together with a dedicated team of 401 tenants volunteering their time to get the centre off the ground, Studio 123 Learning Centre came to be in 1999.

At the time Sandy first came to know 401, she was working as a supervisor in a daycare as part of a network of childcare centres operated by **George Brown College's Early Childhood Education** program. The centres are referred to as laboratory training schools where students work to gain practical experience alongside other opportunities at daycares outside of the George Brown network. Studio 123 has hosted more than a few students from the program. Sandy was also teaching part time at the college and enjoyed that part of her career. However, after a year in a temporary supervisor role, this George Brown ECE department director asked Sandy to choose to stay at 401 permanently or train her successor. At that point, Sandy knew the 401 centre had her heart; she chose to stay. "I thought, 'Oh, I love that building. I love that community. I have to be there.'"

While Sandy retires from an early childhood education career, this chapter was not the only path her work life led her down. As a young adult, Sandy attended **York**



Sandy (right) speaking to former Premier Kathleen Wynne in 2018.

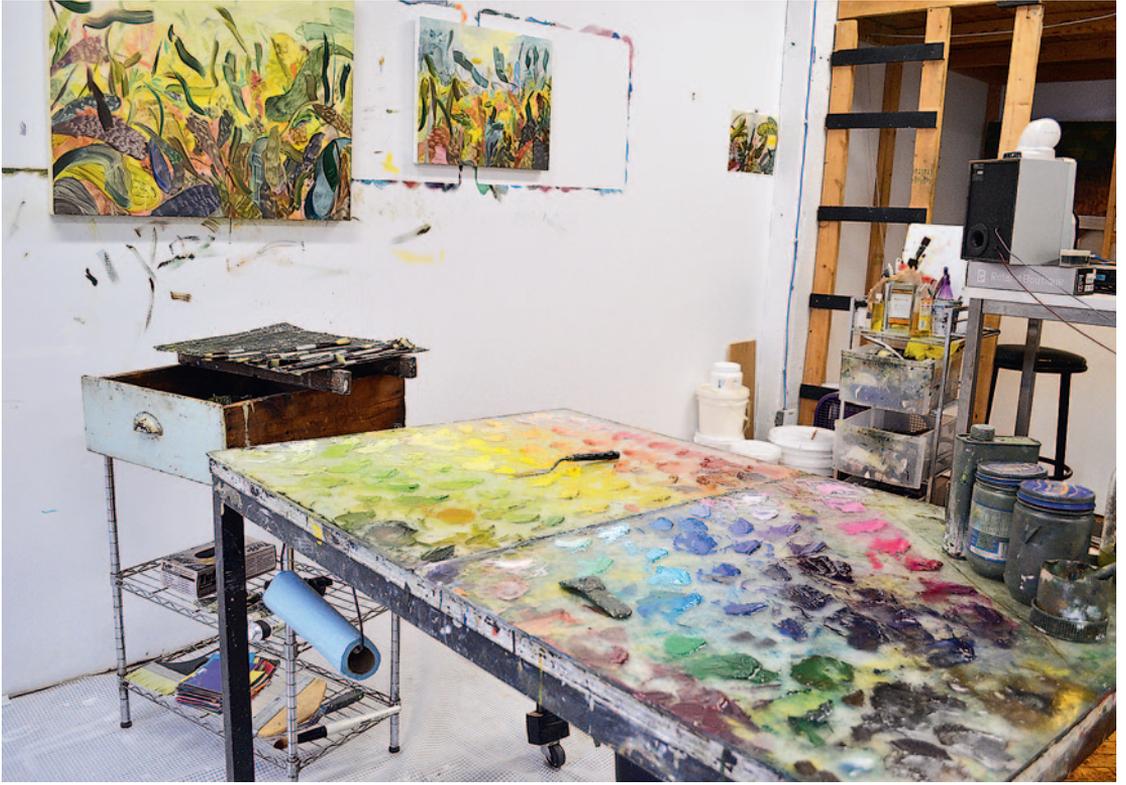
University to study theatre, and continued to study music and dance, but eventually worked as an accountant.

"I could never decide what I wanted to be when I grew up," Sandy recounts. Sandy sees her different career pursuits as leg-up in understanding the varied lives of each child's family and the schedules they keep.

Sandy and her team at Studio 123 take advantage of the unique opportunities present for a childcare centre situated in 401 Richmond, including time spent on the rooftop garden, and walks through the art-filled hallways and galleries. "I always say that our children have seen more fabulous art than any of their parents in the short time they're here," Sandy boasts.

With no grand plans for retirement, Sandy is looking forward to gardening, and to finding the right organization to give back and volunteer her time, outside of childcare, "My plan is to look for the right opportunities to be able to give back to the community, whatever community that might be."

tenant profile



The east side of Rob's studio focussed on his painting practice.

ROB NICHOLLS Studio 220

As a child growing up in British Columbia, when artist **Rob Nicholls** wanted a new toy or pair of sneakers, he would channel his fixation into drawing the object excessively. This habit developed a daily relationship with image-making. His love of music further fed his art-making practice in his youth, inspired by the colourful and fantastical world of heavy metal band album cover artwork - a visual arts and music overlap that would continue into his adult career. He was further inspired by the graphics adorning his skateboard, starting to get a glimpse of where art might be able to take him.

Spending his teen years drawing, playing music and skateboarding, Rob came to realize that he didn't connect with traditional models of work. He explored graphic design, and even considered teaching art in the public school system, but neither clicked. Eventually landing at **Langara College** in Vancouver, surrounded by other artists focused on sculpting and painting, Rob felt at home. His instructors encouraged him to follow his passion and trust that a sustaining career would follow, running contrary to his previous take of trying to choose a traditional job with a salary attached.

Rob finished his visual arts diploma at Langara and moved on to complete a BFA at **Emily Carr Institute of**

Art & Design in Vancouver, further learning what a career as a professional artist could look like, expanding his knowledge of the commercial art world, and the ins and outs of selling work. He came to realize that "if you want to be the person that makes the art, you have to take the risk and just go for it." And so he finished his degree at ECIAD, and was accepted into the MFA program at the **University of Waterloo**, deepening his investment into his practice, and broadening his artistic network.

As he moved through his education, Rob became fascinated by the hyper-real colours and richness of Rococo painting and the vast landscapes of the Romantic period. He came to apply the same invention and exaggeration to his own landscape abstractions. Working from memory, Rob now creates ornate worlds with feathery forms and a heightened colour sensibility. Starting with multiple layers of gesso on the surface, colours move on the plane fluidly, and light passes through the semi-transparent oil paint, creating spatial depth for overlapping shapes.

Wrapping up his MFA, Rob moved to Toronto and into a studio at the storied **Coffin Factory** on Niagara Street. Rob worked in his studio daily, producing work



Rob on the west side of his studio where Provincial Parcs albums are produced.

and waiting for the commercial gallery visit that would launch his career: “Everybody’s got that dream, right? But it rarely happens that way.” He kept creating in his studio all the same, but also started teaching at **OCAD University**, and focused on immersing himself in the community of artists and arts professionals that inspired him, going to events and openings, and learning through osmosis.

Forced to leave the Coffin Factory along with all his fellow tenants to make way for a condominium development, Rob joined the 401 community in early 2019, moving into a studio on the second floor. “Knowing I have that security has really helped in terms of confidence, planning, setting goals and just knowing that my home base is taken care of. And meeting people in the building, popping into each other’s studios to talk about art, that’s very inspiring. I just loved seeing how people create.”

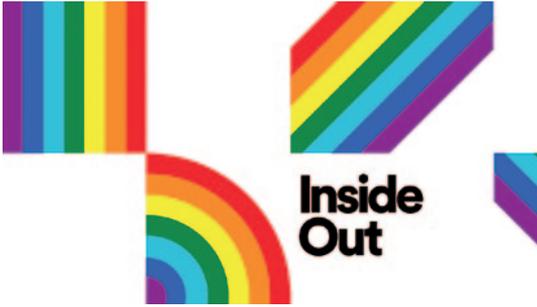
Alongside painting, music-making continues to be a significant part of Rob’s creative output. “I’ve always enjoyed going between making music and painting. I paint, and then I play guitar, and go back and forth.” Rob played guitar in bands while in Vancouver, but eventually was drawn to the world of electronic music, producing

music as **Provincial Parcs**, an experimental electronic and jazz project born out of his interest in blending circuit-based sounds with organic rhythms. Sometimes mimicking sounds of nature with electronic instruments while sampling the outdoor landscape gives Rob the result he’s after: both futuristic and nostalgic. Rob further includes the outdoor landscape by incorporating projected visuals of vintage, grainy, analogue video footage in tandem with his audio compositions. 401-ers may have caught Rob performing Storm Island as Provincial Parcs near the 401 loading dock for **Nuit Blanche** in 2019 incorporating projection with live and electronic music and collaborating with multi-instrumentalist and composer **Bill Cutbill**.

Rob’s practice hasn’t slowed down over the pandemic. He continues to work in his studio regularly and entered a new chapter: husband and father. Rob and his new wife were one of the last couples to have a City of Toronto marriage in March 2020 and welcomed their baby son into lockdown life this past fall. Rob shares parenting with his wife, balancing time for both her career and his time in the studio.

www.robnicholls.ca

spotted & applauded



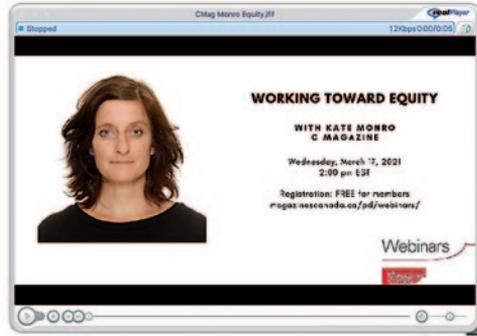
INSIDEOUT PAYS IT FORWARD

Inside Out is making history by forwarding 10% of the grant it received from the Ontario Arts Council via the provincial Ministry for Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries for culture organizations with budgets larger than \$1M negatively affected by the pandemic. "We are hoping to create a ripple effect with other large cultural institutions across Ontario taking up our challenge," says Executive Director **Lauren Howes**. "If we all pay forward 10%, this could potentially put \$2.5 Million into smaller arts organizations that are equally impacted by effects of the pandemic."

C MAGAZINE'S PUBLISHER SPEAKS TO EQUITY

Featured on **Magazines Canada's** webinar *Working Towards Equity* this past spring, C Magazine's Publisher and Executive Director **Kate Monro** shared how the publication addresses its commitment to equity by embedding principles of anti-oppression and meaningful inclusion into its strategic plan, organizational culture and programs.

Kate explained how these ongoing efforts have been manifested through staff and board training, the establishment of an equity committee, the development of new policies and procedures including an affirmative action framework, and the setting of targets and formulation of innovative strategies that aim to increase the presence, self-determination, and discourses of marginalized communities.



KOYAMA PRESS PROVIDES



KOYAMA PRESS PROVIDES

Koyama Press Provides awarded a \$1,000 grant to **Allie Graham** and **Aliya Pabani**, for their podcast 'We Are Not a Virus', a four part documentary made with the **Encampment Support Network**. The duo will use the grant to compensate encampment residents that contributed to the podcasts with interviews, music production, and audio diary entries. Annie first met the duo in 2018 when they interviewed her for their **Canadaland** podcast **The Imposter**.



DONALD QUAN JOINS LOCAL JAZZ ARTISTS

Composer and musician **Donald Quan** performed live online this past March as part of **Jazz in Toronto**, promoting local jazz artists in the Greater Toronto Area.



RED SKY EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

Red Sky Performance awarded The Barbara Laronde Emerging Artist Award to Michel Dumont, a queer Métis Two Spirited disabled artist living in Thunder Bay. The award is given in the spirit of fostering the careers of emerging Indigenous artists in Northern Ontario who are women and/or Two Spirit people and/or gender marginalized people and honours the legacy of Native Women in the Arts founder Barbara Laronde and her vision and commitment to Indigenous artists.



MYSEUM ON NOW'S LIST OF BEST VIRTUAL EVENTS

Myseum of Toronto made *NOW Magazine's* list of "The Best Virtual Events in Toronto This Spring," with their Intersections Festival, an annual city-wide arts and culture festival that explores Toronto through intersectional perspectives. This year's festival takes place between April and June, and adopts a new hybrid model, balancing socially distanced physical exhibits with virtual exhibits, events, and experiences.

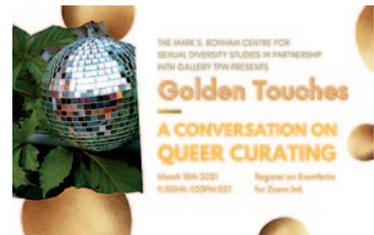
SEAN LEE ON QUEER CURATING

Tangled Art + Disability's Director of Programming Sean Lee was included on the panel *Golden Touches: A Conversation on Queer Curating* this past March, reflecting on the politics and practices of queer curating in Canada, presented by University of Toronto's Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies in partnership with Gallery TPW.

Sean Lee



Director of Programming, Tangled Art + Disability



G44 DIRECTOR HOSTS PANEL AT MACLAREN ART CENTRE

Gallery 44's Executive Director, Alana Traficante, as part of the MacLaren Art Centre's Wintertide series in March, moderated a panel with artist and animator Tarun Luk, creator of *India Vignettes*, along with guest commentators Dr. Deepali Dewan and Dr. Sailaja Krishnamurti.

press check

BOOKNET CANADA ↗

CBC News included data collected by BookNet Canada—a non-profit organization tracking the book industry—illustrating sales of anti-racism and social justice books jumped by an unprecedented 955 percent from May to June 2020.

The screenshot shows a CBC Radio One article. The headline is "'We call ourselves the star people': Trace explores Anishinaabe star story through dance". Below the headline is a video player showing a group of dancers in white loincloths performing a contemporary dance. The article is dated Jan 07, 2021, 5:02 PM ET and was last updated on March 28.

The screenshot shows a CBC News article. The headline is "'We can hardly keep them stocked': Why books by Black authors are flying off the shelves". The article is categorized under 'Cost of Living'. It reports that sales of anti-racism and social justice books jumped by 955% from May to June, according to BookNet Canada. The article is dated Feb 28, 2021, 4:00 AM ET and was last updated on March 4. A photo of author Sandy Hudson is included.

RED SKY PERFORMANCE

Executive and Artistic Director **Sandra Laronde** made an appearance on the *CBC Radio One* show *Unreserved*, hosted by **Falen Johnson**, to promote the film *More Than Dance, We Are a Movement*, produced by **Digidance**, and presented by **Harbourfront Centre** online this past April.

SPACING Creative Director **Matthew Blackett** was interviewed on *Metro Morning* to discuss their recent book release, *Packaged Toronto*, Spacing's attempt to help fill the missing gaps of local and Canadian graphic design history.



TAPA ↗

data was sourced this past April in a *Toronto Star* article which reported on the effects of the pandemic on the performing arts community. The piece quoted a COVID-19 impact survey released by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts indicating a loss of over \$900 million in performing arts revenue since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

The screenshot shows a Toronto Star article. The headline is "The show will go on, beleaguered performing arts companies hope – but mostly outdoors". The article is dated Feb 24, 2021, 12:01 AM EST. A photo shows a person standing next to a blue trailer with a sign that says 'PERFORMING ARTS' and 'CONCERTS'.

the back page

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Nature in The City



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