

401

RICHMOND

update

Winter 2023/2024 Volume 30, Issue 4





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

Attendees enjoy Nuit Blanche 2023
 outside 401 Richmond
 Photo: Tomasz Adamski



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The street art of Rocky Dobey (pictured above) is the topic of a new CBC documentary called *Public Display*. See News section.



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MOVING IN

Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) are joining the 401 Community as they take occupancy in **Studio 378**. JHR works to empower journalists to cover human rights stories objectively and effectively.

MOVING BACK

Lana Yuan, our **2022 401 Career Launcher** Prize recipient joins us as a tenant in **Studio 209** building on her time in Studio 260 and moving forward with her practice.



Vtape founders Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak



Still from *Public Display* showing Rocky Dobey in his 401 Richmond studio

VTAPE FOUNDERS RETIRE

The 401 Community came together in **The Commons** to celebrate the incredible commitment and accomplishments of **Vtape** co-founders and multi-disciplinary artists **Lisa Steele** and **Kim Tomczak** as they shift into retirement from the video art distribution centre as Artistic Director and Restoration & Collections Management Director, respectively. Established by Lisa and Kim in 1983, Vtape represents an international collection of contemporary and historical video art, documentaries, and installations. Vtape makes its collection accessible to curators and programmers, educators, scholars, and public audiences worldwide. We hope to continue to see Lisa and Kim in the corridors of 401 for years to come.

ARTIST CATE MCGUIRE BACK FOR DESIGNTO 2024



Former Red Head Gallery member artist **Cate McGuire** returns to 401 in January for a **DesignTO** exhibit at **Swipe Design | Books + Objects**. Cate is a Toronto based artist using various media to build spaces that reference both the natural and the built world. She has an

extensive background in both art and design, having both a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Concordia, concentrating in both painting and film studies, as well as a post-graduate degree in Architecture from the University of British Columbia.

ROCKY DOBEY IN CBC DOC

Artist **Rocky Dobey** was featured in an eight-and-a-half minute **CBC.ca** documentary as part of a new series about street art called *Public Display*. Rocky has been installing art in the streets of Toronto since he was a shoeshine boy on Yonge Street in the 1970s. Joining the construction trade as an ironworker in his twenties gave him access to the scrap copper he transforms into metal monuments, plaques and sculptures across the city. Filmmaker **Kate Colenbrander** was intrigued by Rocky's work noting, "I think what really struck me is that Rocky was memorializing people and places in a city where things are really quickly turned over and forgotten about."

A VALUABLE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AT 401 RICHMOND



The University of Toronto's website published an article by **Kelly Zhang**, a fourth-year undergraduate student majoring in Art History, and minoring in English and Visual Studies, chronicling her time as an intern at 401 as part of

the **Canada Constructed Initiative** in the **Department of Art History**. Working with 401's Special Projects Curator **William Huffman**, Kelly helped organize an augmented reality exhibition for **Nuit Blanche** and assisted in curating an exhibition of Inuit prints and drawings. Reflecting on the experience, Kelly notes "Although I was nervous in the beginning of my placement, I now have more confidence in my skills and a larger network to help me achieve my ideal career."

spotted & applauded

401 ARTISTS RECOGNIZED AT TAF INDIGENOUS AWARDS

The City of Toronto announced Red Sky Performance Executive/Artistic Director Sandra Laronde as this year's recipient of the Toronto Arts Foundation Indigenous Artist Award. Sandra received the award for her work as a renowned multidisciplinary artist and leader, with a body of work in performing arts that has led to powerful transformational experiences across Canada, USA, Europe, and Asia. Cynthia Lickers-Sage was a finalist for the award for co-founding The Centre for Aboriginal Media, imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and Tkaron:to Music Festival. Cynthia is currently the Executive Director of the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance and a recent recipient of the Governor General's Meritorious Service Cross. Congratulations to Sandra and Cynthia!



PAULA WILSON

Left to right
Sandra Laronde
and Cynthia Lickers-Sage



EXPLORE TORONTO BOOK LAUNCH

Urban designer Ken Greenberg and Toronto aficionado Eti Greenberg launched their new book *Exploring Toronto* in the Urbanspace Gallery. The Greenbergs combed the city on foot and by tandem bike discovering 28 of Toronto's best outdoor public spaces. "*Exploring Toronto is a beautiful tribute to the people and places that have shaped the city's public landscape*" says David Carey & Ilana Altman, Co-Executive Directors of The Bentway. Available for sale at Spacing Store and Swipe Design | Books + Objects.

ONTARIO PLACE BOOK LAUNCH

Spacing Store and Swipe Design | Books + Objects co-hosted a launch in 401's Lower East Side for architectural and documentary photographer Steven Evan's new book *As it is: A precarious moment in the life of Ontario Place*. The event included remarks from Deputy Mayor and Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York City Councillor Ausma Malik. Edited by Beth Kapusta and with essays by John Lorinc and Maia-Mari Sutnik, the volume highlights black and white images of the iconic waterfront location. Available for sale at Swipe and Spacing.



APRIL HICKOX AT TORONTO ARCHIVES

Photographer April Hickox joined fellow artists Vik Pahwa and Avard Woolaver in an exhibition at the Toronto Archives. Featuring photos of Toronto from the 1980's to the late 2000's, the show explores how contemporary artists use photography to capture the ever-changing city. Hickox's vernacular photographs document the uniqueness of the Toronto Island community.

tenant profile



Dyana Ouvrard and
Eléonore Donati

LE LABO / LE LABORATOIRE D'ART Studio 277

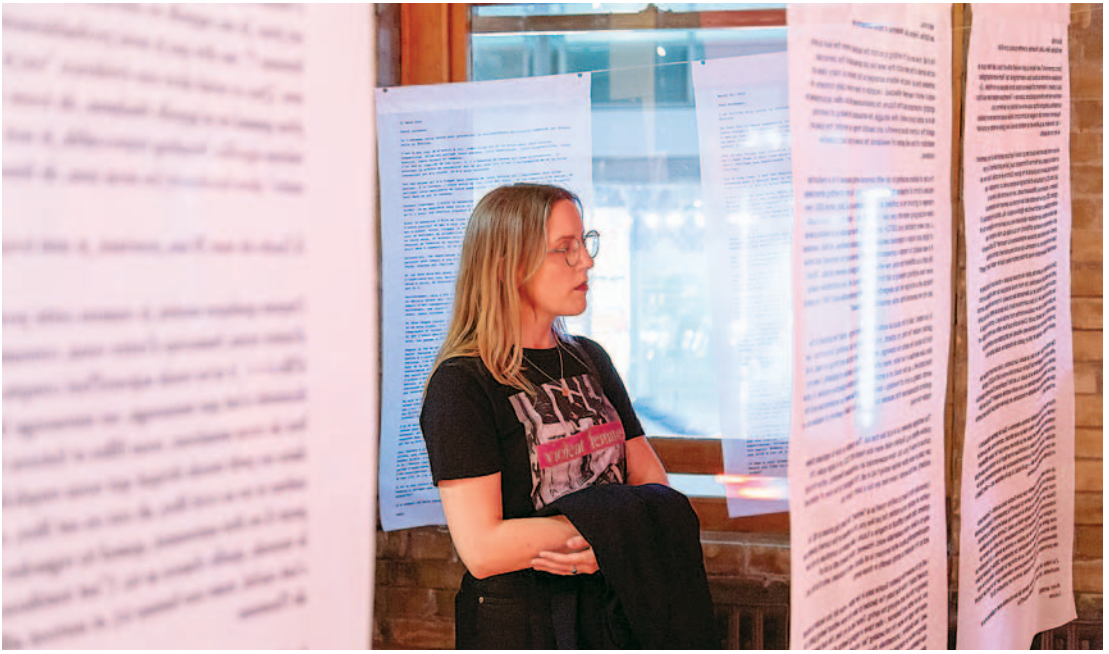
"We're all here together for the love of art and the language," says **Eléonore Donati** of **Le Labo** francophone media arts centre. A space for artistic experimentation and production in the field of media arts, interdisciplinary and digital art, also known as le Laboratoire d'Art, Le Labo is Toronto and Ontario's only francophone media arts production and presentation centre.

In 2001, as a member of **BRAVO-Sud**, the southern arm of le Bureau des Regroupements des Artistes Visuels de l'Ontario, filmmaker and producer **Babek Aliassa** recognized the desire of French-speaking media artists to have a place and a program that would meet their specific needs. Over the next 3 years he worked with fellow artists organizing countless meetings, writing grants and gathering support. In 2004, their efforts were rewarded with two major grants from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** and **Heritage Canada**. This kicked off the artists taking charge of their association and putting into practice what they'd imagined in the preceding years: the creation of a visual and legal identity, the development of projects and collaborations, setting up of training courses, and more. **Nicole Croiset, Dominique Banoun, Alex Loukos, Joseph Muscat, Denis Leclerc, Marc Audette, Mireille St-Cyr** and **Dante Lacarde**, among others, got the centre up and running. Le Labo officially seceded from BRAVO in 2006 to become an autonomous and formally incorporated

organization, and has been supporting incubation, innovation, creation and production in Toronto's media arts scene ever since.

Over 17 years, Le Labo's original 10 members have grown to 80 media artists reflecting a diverse francophone community spanning age, gender and background. With French-speaking artists arriving in Canada as immigrants from countries across the globe, Le Labo is uniquely positioned to support their integration into Toronto and Ontario's arts fabric. Membership comes with reciprocal privileges with **Charles Street Video** and **Trinity Square Video** including access to equipment rentals and workshops. Le Labo offers multi-tiered levels to join their community including reduced fees for younger adults and newcomers, and free membership for Inuit, Métis and First Nations artists.

Le Labo's main goal is to support Francophone artists in the region at the moment of their artistic creation. As Toronto has many presentation spaces, and a portion of the organization's membership has existing relationships with other galleries to show their work, Le Labo recognized a different need for space, time and resources for their artist community to produce and further their practice. Le Labo's second floor studio is divided into two spaces: a small office area for both their **Executive Director, Dyana Ouvrard**, and **Arts Administrator, Eléonore Donati**, and a larger space



Opposite page (left) and above Le Labo presents *6 degrees: A Feminist Letter Writing Project* at 401 Richmond for Nuit Blanche 2023.

designated for their residency program **Le Cercle**, and membership use overall. Lasting a few weeks or a month, Le Labo's residencies prioritize providing: space and suitable resources based on an artist's individual practice along with artist fees for their time in the studio; opportunities for artistic discussion, feedback, and exchange with curators and peers; and a galvanizing program for the membership to come together and support one another.

The importance of an artist creating work in their first language was explored in a 2018 Le Labo program entitled *The Third Tongue*. The curatorial project, commissioned by Le Labo and curated by **Carolina Reis**, included film screenings, an exhibition, and a panel discussion that explored the notion of a 'third tongue' as a language that emerges from the co-existence of two languages. The series investigated the unique experience of living and creating artwork in the context of two languages, especially artists living within a linguistic minority. The project highlighted the importance of an organization like Le Labo supporting Francophones in Canada's artistic fabric.

Throughout the school year, Le Labo conducts French and bilingual media art workshops in primary and secondary schools in Francophone communities across the country, including Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The sessions aim to introduce youth to the origins of media art and prepare them to better understand the medium, thereby giving them tools to create photographs, video and digital work that communicates their histories and cultures. The program also provides Le Labo members with an opportunity to educate and engage with youth in French and English.

Moving in to 401 Richmond in 2018, Le Labo has actively partnered with aligned tenants. This past summer, Le Labo's ED Dyana conducted bilingual tours at the **Toronto Outdoor Art Fair**, whose office is across the hall from Le Labo. Dyana introduced attendees to Francophone artists exhibiting at the fair while encouraging a slow approach to appreciating art. And, Le Labo partnered with **Images Festival**, also part of the 401 community, hosting a screening of *Song for the New World* by **Miryam Charles** for the duration of the festival including a live virtual chat with the artist.

Most recently, Le Labo launched **6 degrees: A Feminist Letter Writing Project**, an invitation to write a letter to ask questions about identity, gender and patriarchy, in any language. The project kicked off with an exhibition in Le Labo's space in March 2023 displaying letters by artists **Noémie Roy, Julie Lassonde, Sophie Dumesny** and **Éveline Boudreau** and a station with a typewriter, paper and pens for anyone to contribute their own letter, which can also be received by email or post. Le Labo replicated the exhibition and collaborative project for Nuit Blanche at 401 Richmond with hundreds of attendees adding their letters to the initiative. The project will culminate in an exhibition of the letters in Le Labo's studio in March 2024.

Looking ahead, Le Labo has prioritized introspection and discovery, over perceived goals of success. With a full 2023/2024 programming season developed alongside a notion of cultivation, Le Labo's team aims to sow seeds for the future including increased organizational collaborations, onsite exhibitions, film screenings, and external growth opportunities for their membership.

lelabo.ca

listings

December 2023 to February 2024

The Listings Board is your opportunity to communicate with other tenants and keep them informed about what is happening in your organization. If you are having a sale, exhibition, or event you would like advertised, email details to communications@urbanspace.org. Open to all tenants.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: January 15, 2024

GALLERY DIRECTORY

A Space Gallery (Studio 110)

aspacegallery.org

Abbozzo Gallery (Studio 128)

abbozzogallery.com

Artspace Gallery TMU (Studio LL106)

artspacetmu.com

BAND Gallery (Studio LL108)

bandgallery.com

Critical Distance Centre for Curators (Studio 122)

criticaldistance.ca

Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography (Studio 120)

gallery44.org

Myseum of Toronto (Studio LL01)

myseumoftoronto.com

Open Studio (Studio 104)

openstudio.ca

Red Head Gallery (Studio 115)

redheadgallery.org

Simon Bentley Fine Art (Studio 133)

simonbentleyfineart.com

TAG (Tangled Art Gallery) (Studio 124)

tangledarts.org

Trinity Square Video (Studio 121)

trinitysquarevideo.com

Urbanspace Gallery (Studio 117)

urbanspacegallery.ca

yumart Gallery (Studio B-20)

yumart.ca

YYZ Artists' Outlet (Studio 140)

yyzartistsoutlet.org

EXHIBITIONS

continues to DECEMBER 9

A Space Gallery

WITH IMAGINATIVE

Dayna Danger, Duane Isaac, Roberto Fatal: *Celestial Bodies*

continues to JANUARY 13

Abbozzo Gallery

30th Anniversary Exhibition

DECEMBER 1 – JANUARY 27

Urbanspace Gallery

20 Years of Spacing

An exhibition on Spacing Magazine

DECEMBER 2–23

yumart Gallery

11th Annual Holiday Salon

JANUARY 5–FEBRUARY 3

Gallery 44

Main Space Stephanie Comilang: *How to Make a Painting from Memory*

Vitrines Julie Pasila: *Sand Sigh*

JANUARY 12 – FEBRUARY 24

Open Studio

Main Gallery Reyhan Yazdani

Project Space Karen Law

Feature Wall Marzieh Mohammadmiri

JANUARY 18–28

Abbozzo Gallery

DesignTO

JANUARY 18–FEBRUARY 24

Abbozzo Gallery

Group exhibition

FEBRUARY 16–MARCH 16

Gallery 44

Main Space Kohui: *Perceive*

Vitrines Svava Terjesen: *Garnished Sundries*

EVENTS



DECEMBER 7–22

Open Studio

Holiday Shop & Screen-o-rama

Time: 6–9pm

press check

THE GLOBE & MAIL: SARAH BODRI, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE



JILLIAN AND MARIKO TAMAKI

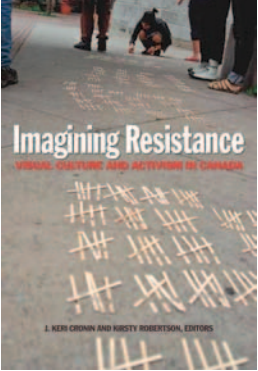
The title of cousins Jillian and Mariko Tamaki's graphic novel *Roaming* is a play on words: the young protagonists roam through New York City while worrying about roaming charges on their cell phones. *Roaming* has received critical acclaim across major news outlets including *The Globe and Mail*, *The Grind*, *CBC*, and *The New York Times*. Says Jillian, "I knew I wanted to do something on travelling with your friends when you're young and your horizons are being expanded."

IMAGINATIVE

ImagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival celebrated its 24th edition in the midst of a financial crunch. As reported in *The Globe and Mail*, "This is the first year in my time here where I've had the funds we expect to get not come through, or come in reduced," says Executive Director Naomi Johnson. "It's like that for most nonprofits, all compounded by inflation and the cost of being in Toronto, particularly for hotels. Our average hotel room booking last year was \$189 a night. This year it's \$350."

ROCKY DOBEY

Activist and artist Rocky Dobeey makes an appearance in J. Keri Cronin and Kirsty Robertson's book *Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada*, documenting the history of radical artistic practice in Canada. Rocky has been installing street art in Toronto and other Canadian cities for 40 years, since he started making street posters and graffiti in the mid 1970's.



SUMMERWORKS

performance festival plays *i am your spaniel*—by Winnipeg performance collective *We Quit Theatre*—and *Lady M* caught the attention of *The Toronto Star* this past summer for their "fresh takes on Shakespeare." *i am your spaniel* took the form of a lecture in which a transgender man plays a female academic named Gisлина Patterson. *Lady M*, the inaugural production of *1s1 Theatre*—a deaf-led company founded by deaf actor *Jani Birley*—reinterpreted Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with a new kind of theatre language visually adapted for the stage accommodating both deaf and hearing audiences.

the back page

HUGH C. BISSET Studio 258

“This work started as a sculpture, then a B&W photo of same, which was then given an overlay of ‘digital’ paint. It explores what ancient sculptures (both public and temple) originally looked like, as they were almost always garishly painted. This is true across all continents, cultures and eras. Ancient sculpture was never at all austere, as we now perceive it to be, starting with the Renaissance onwards.” – Hugh C. Bisset

@hughcbisset / hughbisset.com




Stone Deity, 2023, giclée on canvas, 36 x 33 in., edition of 3 (+ 1 AP)



RICHMOND

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Toronto, ON Canada M5V 3A8
www.401richmond.com

update

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