

401
RICHMOND

update

Spring 2026 Volume 33, Issue 1





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

2025–26 401 Career Launcher Prize recipient FROSTILLO working in Studio 260 with wool felting for their *Brain Scans* project.
Photo: Dean Tomlinson



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STEVEN EVANS

City of Toronto's **Market Gallery Offsite** collaborates with 401 community members for programming connected to their pop-up exhibition *Sky & Bone*.



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MOVING AROUND

Recess Community moves from the 3rd floor to a larger space on the 4th floor. **Images Festival** joins the organizations in **The Commons** on the 4th floor. And, designers **Made By Emblem** move to a 3rd floor studio off the north hallway.

MOVING ON

We say goodbye to artist **Noor Khan** as she moves out of her 4th floor studio.

401 MEETING ROOM



If you are looking for a place to hold a meeting or workshop, contact us about renting **Studio 303**. The room boasts all of the necessary amenities at a reasonable rate.

Visit www.401richmond.com or contact frontdesk@urbanspace.org for more information.

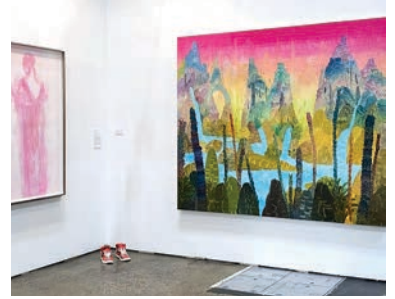
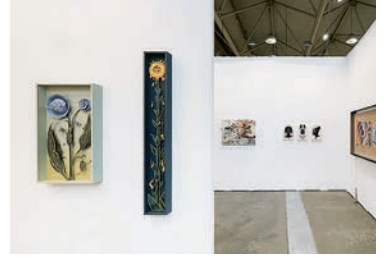


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news



401@ Art Toronto (clockwise from left) Simon Bentley Fine Art shows artist Nataka Husar (in front of her painting); YYZ Artists' Outlet; Jenn Law work (on top of cabinet) in Smokestack Studio booth; Winnie Truong paper works (on wall, left 2) at Patel Brown; Open Studio



Right Rob Nicols painting (right) at Equinox Gallery

401 COMMUNITY AT ART TORONTO

401's artists and galleries were in full force at the 27th Art Toronto international modern and contemporary art fair held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre each fall. **Simon Bentley Fine Art** featured Post-Modern Canadian Abstraction in his booth. **YYZ Artists' Outlet** exhibited work by artists that have shown in their 401 space, and **Open Studio** presented work from their archives including linocut prints by former 401 tenant **Jeannie Thib**. **Nour Bishouty's** work was on view at **Cooper Cole**, and the **Equinox Gallery** from Vancouver featured a large painting by **Rob Nichols**. **Patel Brown** made space for two paper constructions by **Winnie Truong** whose work was also featured on the fair's show guide and as their brand identity. And, **Smokestack Studio** from the **Cotton Factory** in Hamilton showed work they helped print by **Jenn Law**. The event showcased over 100 galleries from across Canada and the globe.

GAGNÉ CONTEMPORARY CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Beginning as a side-hustle in New York City in 2016, **John Gagné** started out volunteering with artist collectives, running gallery tours across downtown Manhattan, and ultimately curating his own shows in Brooklyn and Manhattan galleries. After four years in New York and six years in Toronto with two galleries, **Gagné Contemporary** marks a decade of working with artists and collectors.

MARKET OFFSITE COLLAB WITH 401 COMMUNITY

City of Toronto's **Market Gallery Offsite** collaborated with two 401 community members for programming complimentary to their pop-up exhibition **Sky & Bone** in **Studio 128**. Curated by **Jesse King**, **Sky & Bone** features artwork from the City's collection alongside works from contemporary Canadian artists examining land, spirit and sky through an Indigenous lens. **Vtape** hosted a screening of **Robert's Paintings**, a portrait of the painter directed by **Shelley Niro**, and **imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival's** Operations Manager **Jenna Bjornson** led a hands-on beading workshop grounded in storytelling and community.



Jenna Bjornson (left) led a beading workshop

spotted & applauded



CITY COUNCILLOR TEAM CREATES WITH PH1 Deputy Mayor and City Councillor for Spadina-Fort York **Ausma Malik** brought her staff to 401 Richmond for a holiday team-building event. **PH1 Studios** led a plaster artmaking workshop in their lower level art market pop-up space.



401 ARTIST DONATES WINDOW WEIGHTS While replacing some of the windows in their Victorian home, 401 artist **Janine Lindgren** and her husband **George Farmer** (above left) came to have in hand the original cast iron window weights. Hidden in jambs, cylindrical lead or cast iron window weights balance double-hung sash windows connected by ropes or chains enabling smooth operation. No longer needing the 100+ years old weights and knowing that 401 still uses the weights in the building's heritage windows, Janine reached out to generously donate them. Having worked at restoring 401's 800+ original wooden windows for over 30 years, **Reden Paragas** (above right) was pleased to accept the weights as they are increasingly difficult to find.



PARK PEOPLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HONORED BY WORLD URBAN PARKS

Announced in Istanbul, Türkiye at the WUP@10 Awards, **World Urban Parks** awarded Erika Nikolai, Park People's Executive Director, the **Distinguished Individual Award**. The awards celebrate excellence and innovation in urban parks, public spaces, and community initiatives worldwide. Under her leadership, Park People has evolved from a Toronto-based initiative into Canada's only national, bilingual organization dedicated to city parks. Since 2011, the organization has supported hundreds of park leaders and communities, guided by principles of equity, accessibility, collaboration, and ecological resilience. Erica notes that, "This recognition reflects not just my work at Park People, but the dedication of our staff, the passion of the park leaders we support, and the commitment of our partners and funders. It highlights the importance of a national, bilingual network of park leaders across Canada, working together to create vibrant, accessible, inclusive, and resilient urban parks."



ADAC ON THE ART MARKET WITH TBDC

Canada's art market may sometimes fly under the radar, but in a conversation with the **Toronto Business Development Centre** (TBDC) and posted on their blog, the **Art Dealers Association of Canada's** (ADAC) Executive Director **Mackenzie Sinclair** (above left) and **Gabby Marcuzzi Herie, Manager of Appraisal Services** (above right) highlighted why it deserves closer attention. Mackenzie and Gabby emphasized the strength of collaboration in Canada's art ecosystem, particularly the growing exchange of knowledge between Canadian and European players. She pointed to opportunities for startups that make the art market more accessible, especially for new and emerging collectors who often find artists through social platforms rather than traditional channels. ADAC represents more than 65 commercial galleries nationwide and works at the intersection of advocacy, business, and culture.

tenant profile



COURTESY OF SPENCER MAGAZINE

WILLIAM HUFFMAN, METRO STUDIO Studio 306

Growing up in the Niagara region with practical, well-meaning parents, **William Huffman's** maker-driven creativity did not easily translate into an obvious career path. While he spent his time immersed in local galleries and hands-on creative work, his parents—seeing his comfort with precision and manual skill—enrolled him in pre-med at the **University of Toronto**, imagining a future in surgery. Within his first year, however, William redirected his studies to the visual arts, following an instinct that would shape his life's work.

William completed his fine arts degree with the intention of becoming a practicing artist. Upon graduation, two realizations changed his course: there were many artists making stronger work than he felt he could, and far too few people advocating effectively on their behalf. At the time, formal curatorial or arts marketing programs were rare, leaving artists to navigate visibility and opportunity on their own. William recognized both the creative potential of his peers and his own aptitude for communication, organization, and advocacy—skills that could help artists succeed.

Fresh out of university, William joined the **Arts Foundation of Greater Toronto** as an administrative coordinator. The role immersed him in the inner workings of public arts funding at a formative moment, exposing him to emerging technologies and to an influential board composed of leading artists, philanthropists, politicians, academics, and cultural leaders, including art consultant **Jane Zeidler**. Through these relationships, William gained insight into how arts organizations communicate

value, mobilize support, and engage broader publics around the importance of culture in civic life.

During his tenure, the foundation launched a public campaign asserting that “art is not a frill.” While effective, the messaging struck William as defensive. He began to develop a more affirmative language around cultural value, believing that the arts should be framed not as a necessity under threat, but as a privilege that enriches collective life. As he later reflected, “Every year we had to tell politicians why arts and culture is important. Let's stop saying ‘it's a frill,’ and start saying, ‘we're lucky to have this. It's a valuable add-on to our culture.’” This instinct—to articulate pride, value, and belonging through culture—would become a hallmark of his career.

William moved to **The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery** as administrative assistant to the director, gaining exposure to internationally recognized artists and large-scale exhibitions. Working with established artists including **Anish Kapoor** and **General Idea**, and alongside a globally connected board, he learned how major institutions operate at an international level. “It was the who's who of the visual arts world,” William recalled. “It was a privilege for me to cut my teeth in the contemporary art world at a place like The Power Plant.” The experience sharpened his understanding of exhibition building, governance, and cultural networks.

Leaving The Power Plant, William took on leadership of **A Space Gallery**, a seminal artist-run centre then housed in a neglected Bathurst Street building. Early in his tenure, he received a call from **Margie Zeidler** who



Left to right William Huffman: U of T art student; with Matthew Teitelbaum; in his role as Art Gallery of Sudbury Director

was assembling the initial tenant community at 401 Richmond. Recommended by her mother Jane, William was invited to view the unfinished space. Alongside **Gallery 44**, A Space became one of the first galleries to sign a lease. William recalls the building as vast, unfinished, and full of possibility, “401 was open spaces and football fields of columns. We were a bunch of twenty-somethings with this huge opportunity running around with painter’s tape marking out gallery walls on the floor. I don’t think any of us knew how significant it was going to be.”

At A Space, William led an ambitious six-month program celebrating the organization’s 25th anniversary. Recognizing its foundational role in Canadian contemporary art discourse, he invited curator **Tom Folland** to help shape a series that included a retrospective exhibition, and limited edition sets of historical A Space publications with forewords by **Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) Director Matthew Teitelbaum** and gallerist **Av Isaacs** (also a former 401 tenant). The celebrations culminated in a performance-infused dinner at the AGO by artist **Tanya Mars**—an unforgettable event emblematic of A Space’s experimental legacy.

In 2000, he left Toronto for the first time to direct the **Art Gallery of Sudbury**. There, as an outsider in a northern mining town, William focused on listening—learning about the community and its gallery’s collection. Encountering works by the **Group of Seven**, **Michael Snow**, and **Joyce Wieland**, he asked how institutions could create shared language around cultural assets already present, fostering local ownership and pride. By pairing work by iconic Canadian artists alongside their international counterparts, he reinforced the idea that art strengthens a community’s sense of worth and global relevance.

Returning to Toronto after two years, William brought with him a renewed belief in the relationship between the local and the global. He engaged with his neighbourhood residents’ associations and with 401 Richmond as part of his professional and personal grounding. He emphasized that cultural impact depends on sustained relationships and trust. “If you don’t remain connected to your grounding,” he notes, “the importance is lost. You need the right people involved, the right relationships. That makes it resonate.”

William entered the public funding sphere as **Head of Visual and Media Arts** and the literary program at the **Toronto Arts Council (TAC)**. Acknowledging the emotional weight of grant adjudication, he prioritized authenticity and empathy. In a gesture reflecting both responsibility and solidarity with the artists receiving an unsuccessful grant application response, he tattooed the phrase “I regret to inform you” on his forearm. “For me, putting that on my body was a response to that relationship to the arts community,” he explained.

After a decade at the TAC, William accepted an 18-month role at the **Canada Council for the Arts** in Ottawa, working in audience and market development to promote Canadian arts internationally. Shortly after completing that contract, he received a pivotal call from the **West Baffin Cooperative**, a community-owned Inuit organization based in Kinngait, Nunavut. He learned that the co-op—founded in 1959—was the oldest community art studio cooperative in Canada and a cornerstone employer and service provider in the community. He accepted a role focused on building international audiences for Inuit art, splitting his time between Toronto and the North.

William approached the work as he had in Sudbury: by listening and building trust. His role soon expanded beyond art promotion into deeper engagement with community realities, including education, health, and food security. Over time, he helped elevate the international profile of Kinngait artists through high-visibility public projects such as the **Venice Biennale** (twice), and most recently a projection on the **Sydney Opera House**.

By increasing the international profile of the artists working in Kinngait, the **Metro Studio** project space at 401 Richmond became viable. Late in 2025, the West Baffin Cooperative’s 100% Inuit board visited Toronto, spending significant time at 401. For many, it was their first experience in southern Canada. Through meetings and exchanges with national arts organizations, the visit revealed the sophistication, confidence, and legacy of West Baffin’s six decades of community-driven cultural work. The encounter underscored 401 Richmond’s unique role as a people-centred cultural hub—one capable of bridging worlds through trust, openness, and shared purpose.

listings

March to May 2026

The Listings Board is your opportunity to communicate with other tenants and keep them informed about what's 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: April 15, 2026

GALLERY DIRECTORY

A Space Gallery (Studio 110)

aspacegallery.org

Craft Ontario Gallery (Studio 108)

craftontario.com

Artspace Gallery TMU (Studio LL106)

artspacetmu.com

Critical Distance Centre for Curators (Studio 122)

criticaldistance.ca

Gagné Contemporary (Studio B20)

gagnecontemporary.com

Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography (Studio 120)

gallery44.org

Le Labo (Studio 277)

lelabo.ca

Market Gallery | Offsite (Studio 128)

Metro Studio (Studio 306)

westbaffin.com/metro

Museum of Toronto (Studio LL01)

museumoftoronto.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

YYZ Artists' Outlet (Studio 140)

yyzartistsoutlet.org

EXHIBITIONS

continues to MARCH 14

Open Studio

Main Gallery Alize Zorlutuna: *What You Seek Is Seeking You*

Project Space Zoe Teng: *Required field must not be left blank*

continues to MARCH 21

Gallery 44

Vitrines Aleksandra Blazevski: *A Mirror That Forgets,*

A Frame That Spirals

continues to APRIL 4

A Space Gallery

Main Gallery + Windows Gaza Biennale, T'karonto Pavilion:

Witnessing Sumud with Alaa Abu Saif, Alaà Al Shawa, Liza Madi, Mosaab Abusal and Motaz Naim

continues to APRIL 18

YYZ Artists' Outlet

Simon Fuh: *Cowboy Poet*

antoine lefebvre editions: 2015–2025 archive

continues to APRIL 25

Urbanspace Gallery

Park People Start at the Park: Reimagining Toronto's Public Spaces, 2010–2030

continues to MAY

Museum of Toronto

The 52: Stories of Women Who Transformed Toronto

MARCH 4 – 28

Red Head Gallery

CUM GRANO SALIS by Elaine Whittaker with Mathew Borrett,

Teri Donovan, Tracy Gorman, Kelley Aitken, Kaz Ogino, Jim

Nason, Kim-Lee Kho, Kat Honey, Heidi Breier, Kai Kan

MARCH 11 – APRIL 18

Craft Ontario Gallery

Akash Inbakumar

APRIL 1 – 25

Red Head Gallery

Pearl Van Geest

APRIL 29 – JUNE 6

Craft Ontario Gallery

Gabriel George

APRIL 29 – MAY 23

Red Head Gallery

James Fowler

MAY 25 – JUNE 28

Red Head Gallery

Jean-Pierre Mot: *The Yabi.Deh Project*



Aleksandra Blazevski in the vitrines at Gallery 44 until March 21



Above antoine lefebvre editions at YYZ Artist's Outlet (until April 18) **Left (top to bottom)** Gaza Biennale, T'karonto Pavilion (until April 4); *CUM GRANO SALIS* at Red Head Gallery (March 4 to 28)



IBRAHIM AL SULTAN

EVENTS

continues to **MARCH 7**
The Musical Stage Company
After The Rain
 Tickets at: musicalstagecompany.com



MARCH 19
401 Richmond
 Art Hunt

MARCH 26
New Music Concerts
 Ana Sokolović's *Love Songs*

APRIL 16
Le Labo
 Reel Canada Screening

MAY 23
401 Richmond
 Doors Open

JUNE 2 - 14
26th imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival
 In-person: June 2 to 7
 Online: June 8 to 14

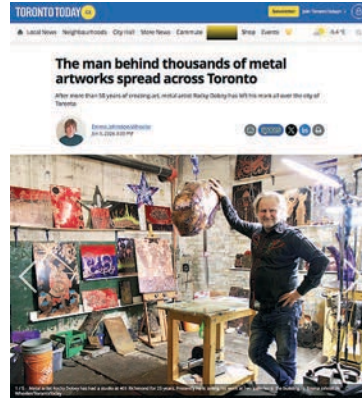


MATHEW BORRETT AND ELAINE WHITTAKER

press check

ROCKY DOBEY ↻

Toronto Today sat down with **Rocky Dobe** and learned how the artist began installing his signature plaques around Toronto while in his twenties, using copper scraps from construction jobs. The small objects included etched activist phrases, symbols and personal references tied to prison justice, anti-capitalism, and grassroots movements. Though he once resisted recognition, Rocky eventually stepped out of anonymity in the early 2000s and now documents his work online while continuing to install new pieces.



URBANSAPCE GALLERY ↻

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) hosted a panel on Indigenous–Palestinian solidarity in the **Urbanspace Gallery** emphasizing community-based learning and activism. Moderated by TMU professor **Lama Arneh**, the discussion featured Indigenous, Palestinian, and labour activists who highlighted the role of art, shared labour and intersectionality in resisting colonialism.



CRAFT ONTARIO GALLERY ↻

Exhibiting at **Craft Ontario Gallery** as part of **DesignTO**, designer and woodworker **Heidi Earnshaw** joined a panel hosted by *The Globe and Mail's Style Magazine* editorial director **Andrew Sardone** discussed how approaches to living with local design have evolved to meet a growing Buy Canadian enthusiasm, and where homegrown architecture, interiors and housewares are headed.

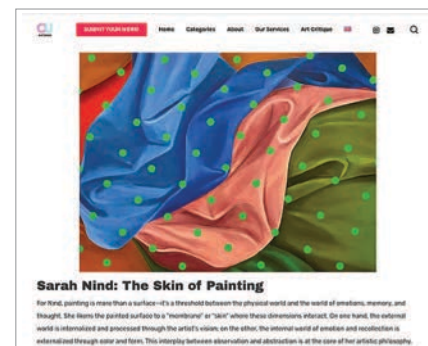


CYCLE TORONTO ↻

Cycle Toronto's Executive Director Michael Longfield was included on *Toronto Life's* year end list **The Influentials**. Recognized for "being the David to Ford's Goliath," the magazine's round-up celebrated Michael and the cycling advocacy organization for successfully proving that removing existing bike lanes violates cyclists' Charter-enshrined rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

SARAH NIND ↻

Artist **Sarah Nind** was featured in the Japanese-based publication **AATONAU** that showcases international artists. Born in Brunei and holding UK and Canadian citizenship, Sarah's story includes her decade-long career as an architect and how it shapes her sensitivity to structure, space and scale.



the back page

PH1 STUDIOS Studio 282

PH1 Studios creates encaustic photographic works that capture memory and traces of human presence in the urban landscape, preserving ephemeral gestures and nostalgia through photography and encaustic painting. ph1studios.ca @ph1_studios



PH1 Studios, *Paradise*, 2025, encaustic, photography on panel, 36 x 48 inches



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update

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