401 RICHMOND update
Fall 2026 Volume 33, Issue 3

DEAN TOMLINSON

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
Surrounded by her work, artist Brigitte Nowak paints in her 2nd floor studio during the 2026 edition of Doors Open. Photo: Dean Tomlinson

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401 RICHMOND update
Fall 2026 Volume 33, Issue 3

Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik visited with **CFMDC** staff at **CineCycle**.

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MOVING IN

401 welcomes urban design and landscape architecture studio **Public Work** to the 1st floor. On the lower level, we're pleased to add the **Inuit Art Foundation** to the 401 community, a national organization dedicated to supporting Inuit artists, and the publisher of ***Inuit Art Quarterly*** magazine. **BAND Gallery and Cultural Centre** returns to the 1st floor, with an exhibition showcasing the artistic and cultural contributions of Black artists.

MOVING AROUND

After the **2025/2026 401 Career Launcher Prize** recipient **FROSTILLO** finished their year in the residency studio, they've moved into a studio around the corner on the 2nd floor. Artist **Nour Bishouty** moves upstairs to a space on the 3rd floor and **Park People**—a nonprofit connecting and supporting community groups to activate urban parks—has also made the move to the 3rd floor.

MOVING ON

Market Gallery | Offsite wrapped up their pop-up presentation space on the 1st floor, highlighting contemporary artwork from the City of Toronto's fine art collection. We wish a fond farewell to artists **Nathalie Quagglioto** and **Jessica Campbell**.

401 RICHMOND WHAT'S ON

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

news

ADAC panel discussion

MACKENZIE SINCLAIR

ADAC ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The **Art Dealers Association of Canada (ADAC)** celebrated its 60th anniversary with a pop-up exhibition at **Bau-Xi Gallery Dufferin** in Toronto. The show, in support of the ADAC Foundation, boasted a curated selection of over 100 artworks from 52 member galleries across Canada, and was accompanied by a full colour catalogue. Participating galleries included **Simon Bentley Fine Art** and **Gagné Contemporary**, and former 401 galleries **Abbozzo Gallery** and **Wynick/Tuck Gallery**. Attendees enjoyed seminal artworks by **Jack Bush**, **Cathy Daley**, **Sorel Etrog**, **General Idea**, **Tyler Bright Hilton**, **William Kurelek**, **Rita Letendre**, **Doris McCarthy**, **Leslie Reid**, **Harold Town**, and **Tony Urquhart**, all of whom have created prints at **Open Studio** at some point over the last 5 decades. ADAC itself has had two different offices at 401: Studio 361 since 2024, and Studio 393 between 2014 and 2019. The celebration also included a panel discussion on caring for a personal art collection moderated by ***ArtBeat Podcast***'s **Katie Marks**, and with panelists **Cailin Cser** from **Restorart**, art advisor **Danna Heitne**, and ADAC's Appraisals Manager **Gabby Marcuzzi Herie**.

TOAF MARKS 65 YEARS WITH 401 PARTNERS

The **Toronto Outdoor Art Fair (TOAF)** marked its landmark 65th anniversary at **Nathan Phillips Square**. Canada's largest and longest-running outdoor juried art fair featured over 400 artists, special anniversary awards totaling over $65,000, and their signature *Art Nest* exhibition. The Budding Art Buyers program returned for its third year with the **ADAC**. ADAC brought their expertise with invoices, consignments, and provenance, and provided educational and fun programming for children under 14 to get them started on their art collecting journey. Further involvement from 401 tenants included former **401 Richmond Career Launcher Prize recipient FROSTILLO**'s booth, **Le Labo's Flânerie** curatorial tour, and **Tangled Art + Disability**'s booth and accessible tours.

FROSTILLO at TOAF

DEPUTY MAYOR VISITS CFMDC AND CINECYCLE

Deputy Mayor, and **City Councillor** for Ward 10, Spadina–Fort York, **Ausma Malik** (pictured below, far right) paid a visit to **CFMDC**'s team at **CineCycle** in the **Coach House**. CFMDC, Canada's foremost non-commercial, artist-run distributor of independent and experimental films, operates the underground screening house and chatted with the municipal politician about how her office may be able to help the grassroots venue. They discussed improvements to accessibility, and how to increase awareness of the space as an affordable venue available for community groups for diverse events around the clock, and not only screenings in the evenings.

spotted & applauded

Cast of *Octet* at Doras

Sandra Laronde

MUSICAL STAGE AND RED SKY WIN DORAS

The **46th Dora Mavor Moore Awards** celebrated the best of Toronto's performing arts scene with **The Musical Stage Company** and **Red Sky Performance** taking home awards. In the Theatre for Young Audiences division, Red Sky Performance's *She Holds Up the Stars* captured three key awards. Founder **Sandra Laronde** received accolades for Outstanding New Play and for Outstanding Direction, while **Nick Barnes** won Outstanding Achievement in Design for his puppetry work. The production *Octet*–co-produced by **Crow's Theatre**, **Soulpepper Theatre Company**, and The Musical Stage Company–led the Musical Theatre division with three wins. The a cappella show claimed the prestigious Outstanding Production title, its cast won Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble and **Olivia Wheeler** was recognized with Outstanding Achievement in Design for sound design.

MVRDV AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

As part of their travelling exhibition most recently in the **Urbanspace Gallery**, ***Carbon Confessions***, Rotterdam-based **MVRDV** presented a keynote conversation at the **John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design** at the **University of Toronto**. During the talk, founding MVRDV partner **Nathalie de Vries** (above center) and **Sanne van den Burgh** (above left), head of **MVRDV NEXT**, reflected on the practice's three decades of work and shared insights into the ambitions, challenges, and trade-offs involved in working towards lower-carbon design. The lecture was moderated by ***The Globe and Mail***'s **Alex Bozikovic**.

MADE BY EMBLEM AT DESIGNTHINKERS

Erik Mohr, Creative Director at **Made by Emblem** and an **Association of Registered Graphic Designers (RGD)** board member, was on the slate of presenters for **Design-Thinkers 2026** in Vancouver. Erik's interactive workshop **First Drafts & F*ck-Ups** highlighted the "First Pancake Principle," encouraging designers to embrace early mistakes to build confidence and overcome perfectionism in the creative process.

Where is Home? activity

Guido Costantino projects inc.

Toronto Art Club

Alice Burton

Eric Cadesky, Ken Myhr, Donald Quan

DOORS OPEN SHINES DESPITE RAIN

Despite a rainy day, **Doors Open** at 401 saw almost the same attendance numbers as the year before, welcoming close to 1,500 visitors throughout the Saturday in late May. Guests enjoyed chats with tenants in their studios, building tours, hands-on art activities, live musical performances, and the world shrunk down to fit inside a 401 hallway. The day wrapped with a reception for tenants hosted in the pop-up **SITE Toronto** artist-in-residence studio, a reciprocal residency program with international and Toronto-based creatives.

tenant profile

CRITICAL DISTANCE CENTRE FOR CURATORS Studio 112

by Dave LeBlanc

"No path," laughs **Shani Koo Parsons**, as she recalls the journey from receiving her architecture degree at Philadelphia's **Temple University** to establishing **Critical Distance Centre for Curators** in Toronto.

"Anti-path," she continues. "You know how Steve Jobs said you look back, and then all of a sudden the dots connect? It's kind of like that."

Despite interning at a firm that designed hospitals, the Philadelphia-born Shani knew she would never become a workaday architect–it was history and theory that clicked for her–so, after she'd "cast about for a bit" she enrolled in the graphic design program at **Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)**, the legendary school that produced **Dale Chihuly**, three members of **Talking Heads**, and **Shepard Fairey**, to name a few.

"It was the only place I wanted to go, and luckily I got in," she says. While there, she developed an interest in "the ideas that happen in between disciplines" and this outside-the-box thinking would eventually lead to her gallery.

But first–and still in wandering phase–Shani flew to New York City and found herself at the **American Museum of Natural History (AMNH)** in 2000, where she first worked in the tactile Discovery Room. Within a few months, however, she was asked to lead the design on ***Einstein***, which ***Voice of America*** called the "most comprehensive exhibition ever presented on the life and theories of Albert Einstein" with "dazzling interactive exhibits" and "original manuscripts and personal treasures…[not] seen by the general public."

Leaving her post at the AMNH, Shani subconsciously began connecting more dots as she worked in a commercial gallery, the **Museum of Chinese in America**, and at the legendary **MOMA**, all while taking curating classes at **New York University (NYU)**.

When her first child came along in 2007, her already tiny apartment in the East Village seemed even smaller, so she knew she had to make a decision: "Either getting a bigger space in Brooklyn or just coming to Toronto, which is where my partner, at the time, grew up…we knew we'd have some babysitting here," she laughs, "and I was kind of amenable because I knew Toronto had a great Chinatown and good mass transit."

Shani's biggest dot was connected after she arrived in Toronto, when **OCAD University** professor **Jennifer Rudder** mentioned **CARFAC** (**Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens**; CARFAC Ontario is located in 401 Richmond's Studio 414). CARFAC, she said, speaks on behalf of artists, sets fees, and provides legal advice, while independent curators have no such support. "I'm interested in curating, I'm not

Above Shani Koo Parsons
Right ***Scooped and Scattered*** **by Catherine Blackburn at CDCC's Yongeplace Billboard on Shaw Street**
Opposite Shani leads a tour at Doors Open 2026 of John Climenhage's ***The Continent Image***

an expert, but maybe this is an opportunity to open a space that allows for asking questions around curatorial practice, equity, sustainability, experimentation—even, just what does it mean to curate?" Shani remembers thinking.

Her first foray into running her own space in 2013 was **Typology Projects**: a 425 sq. ft., half-classroom in **Givens Street Public School** (built in 1914), which had been transformed into **Artscape** (now **Youngplace**), just north of the gallery strip along Queen Street West. Typology Projects was run as a not-for-profit because Shani wanted to ensure "it was clear that this was not a vanity gallery" or commercial gallery, but rather something with community purpose. As such, her focus was on the artistic process rather than finished work along with "the way that people classify or categorize things and ideas and objects in their minds." Interestingly, Typology Projects presented exhibitions in the stairwells and took possession of an abandoned 8 x 8 ft. billboard on the front lawn by asking artists to design custom artwork for it. Shani still programs the **Billboard on Shaw Street** to this day. She also began conversations at the time with a group called **Curators Network** about advocacy work.

In 2016, Shani hosted a round table for local curators, hoping to mine them for ideas about the kinds of activities, opportunities, publications, and programs they'd like to see going forward, and a very respectable 75 people turned up. After that, the gallery's name was changed to Critical Distance Centre for Curators to clarify, once and for all, that the gallery was "not one person's project space" but rather "a community." True to that ideal, Shani handed the reins to others by "providing opportunities for guest curators to experiment, to test ideas, to present their research, to attempt something in the production of an exhibition or a program that they wouldn't otherwise get to do," she says.

Sensing the gallery exodus from the Queen and Ossington area, Shani moved CDCC to 401 Richmond in 2021. With twice the amount of space, her thoughts around accessibility and full inclusion were able to come to fruition. Some highlights: **AXIS Curatorial**'s ***Of the Sacred***, which explored the remnants of faith and traditions "in the face of colonialism and migrations"; **Ariel Smith**'s ***Materialized***, which featured Indigenous art that combined photographs and textiles and assemblages using unexpected materials; and **Safia Siad**'s ***This Bridge Between Starshine and Clay***, which featured Black aliveness using sound, movement, and art. There have also been workshops, talks, open houses, and film screenings.

Although advocating for curators is still on her radar—which may include lobbying and/or helping create legislation—Shani is still navigating Canadian waters to understand how she can best serve the curatorial community. As CDCC is likely the first of its kind in Canada, Shani is aware that she is blazing a trail…now that all of her dots have been connected.

And, of course, the question of how to fund the CDCC's pioneering work is always top of Shani's mind: "There is always pressure on us as arts institutions, arts organizations, artists, curators, to do more with less, and that's not going to change, and so can we do that in ways that hold us all up together instead?"
criticaldistance.ca

listings September to November 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: October 15, 2026

GALLERY DIRECTORY

A Space Gallery (Studio 110)
aspacegallery.org

Artspace Gallery TMU (Studio LL106)
artspacetmu.com

Black Artist's Networks in Dialogue (BAND) Gallery and Cultural Centre (Studio 128)
bandgallery.com

Craft Ontario Gallery (Studio 108)
craftontario.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

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

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 SEPTEMBER 5
Gallery 44
Vitrines Connie Oreamuno: *Embed_v2*
Production Gallery *Low Res 2026*: Robert Gerritsen, Ivan Goncharov, Xin He, J. Leslie, Vanessa Mata, Lauren May, Mihir Shah, Jaqueline Silva, Kaitlyn Simpson, Ekjot Singh

continues to SEPTEMBER 5
Red Head Gallery
Drea Cohane

continues to SEPTEMBER 26
Craft Ontario Gallery
Hitoko Okada

continues to DECEMBER 31
Urbanspace Gallery
Lisa Ditschun: *A Translucent City: Collective Memories of the Future*

SEPTEMBER 9 — OCTOBER 3
Red Head Gallery
Laura Millard

SEPTEMBER 11 — NOVEMBER 21
Open Studio
Opening: Friday, September 11, 6–8 pm
Main Gallery Dana Tosic: *Memories of You*
Project Space Özge Dilan Arslan: *Tracing What the Sea Alters*
Vitrines Claudine Crangle: *Building Blocks*; Elizabeth D'Agostino: *Woven Topographies*

OCTOBER 7 – 31
Red Head Gallery
Tazeen Qayyum

NOVEMBER 4 – 28
Red Head Gallery
Alexander Irving

EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 26, 12 to 5 pm
Ontario Culture Days at **Open Studio**
Sceenprinting demonstration

OCTOBER 3, 7 pm to 7 am
401 Richmond
Nuit Blanche, Built for Art

NOVEMBER
Reel Asian Film Festival

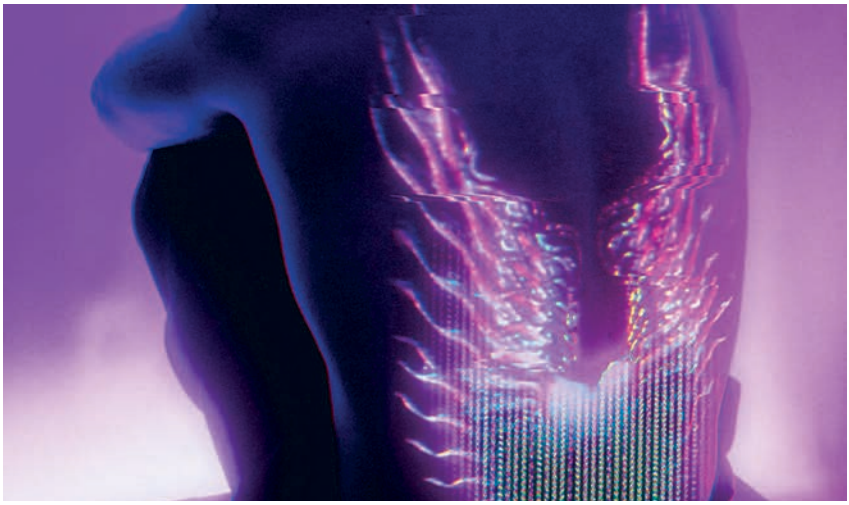
NOVEMBER 26, 5 to 8 pm
401 Richmond
Holiday Open House

TONI HAFKENSCHEID

Left Hitoko Okada at Craft Ontario Gallery (until September 26). Image from installation at Cambridge Art Galleries in 2024.

Below Lisa Ditschun at Urbanspace Gallery (until December 31)

Right
Connie Oreamuno in the vitrine at Gallery 44 (until September 5)



press check

Director of Creative Communications & Marketing, Christine Vu with *CTV News*' Andria Case

TORONTO REEL ASIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

CTV News joined **The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival** for their Photo Booth Pop-Up at **CineCycle** to celebrate 30 years of the festival. Founded in 1997, Reel Asian has grown from a grassroots film festival into one of Canada's leading year-round platforms for Asian artists and storytelling. Reel Asian marked the anniversary with a refreshed visual identity by **Meat Studio**, a community digital archiving project, and a "30 for 30" fundraising campaign.

Windspeaker.com

Main navigation

Jason Baerg bridges Indigenous fashion and visual art worlds

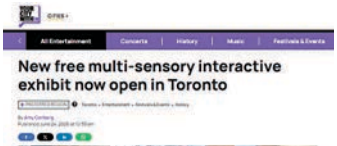
Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026
3:45pm

Fashion designer Jason Baerg is seen at middle in the second row wearing a black shirt and beads during his show at Fashion Art Toronto in May. Photos supplied.
By Patrick Quinn
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
Windspeaker.com

It's been an exciting spring for Cree-Métis artist Jason Baerg, whose newest immersive exhibition of visual art is titled *aen nistwayr mayshkotoonikayhk/First Story*.

A SPACE GALLERY

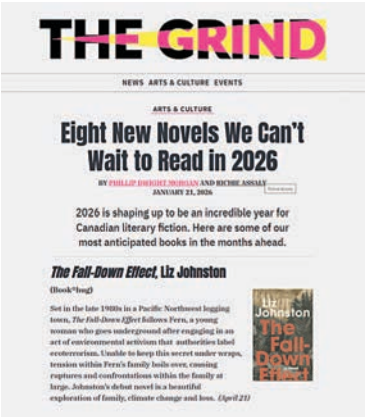
Windspeaker.com spoke with artist **Jason Baerg** about his exhibition at **A Space Gallery** ***aen nistwayr mayshkotoonikayhk/First Story***. The show celebrates the healing power of shared family narratives and the deep connections and continuity between memory and place, and honours the matriarchs in his mother's family. In the article, Jason credited A Space Gallery for being so responsive to his creative direction, even painting its walls customized colours. The online publication noted that the exhibition was on at the same time as his multidisciplinary clothing designs were showcased at **Fashion Art Toronto** and the **Textile Museum of Canada**, and was also a part of **imagineNATIVE's 26th** annual **Art Crawl**.


All Entertainment | Concerts | History | Music | Festivals & Events

New free multi-sensory interactive exhibit now open in Toronto

MUSEUM OF TORONTO

Your City WithIn spent some time with Museum of Toronto's last exhibition at 401. ***The T.O. You Don't Know*** told more than 150 stories, with 50 objects and archival materials exploring over 200 years of the history of Toronto. Highlights included: 2001's **Vazaleen**, a monthly queer rock & roll party hosted by the late **Will Munro**; **Diego Maradona**'s final soccer game in a Scarborough stadium in 1996; the **No-Fun Sunday Tobogganning Ban**, lasting from the 1910s to 1961; and the **21,000 "Bomb Girls"** who manufactured explosives at the General Engineering Company of Canada in the 1940s.


THE GRIND

NEWS ARTS & CULTURE EVENTS

ARTS & CULTURE

Eight New Novels We Can't Wait to Read in 2026

BY PHILLIP DWIGHT MORGAN AND RICHIE ASSALY
JANUARY 21, 2026

2026 is shaping up to be an incredible year for Canadian literary fiction. Here are some of our most anticipated books in the months ahead.

***The Fall-Down Effect*, Liz Johnston**

(Book*hug)

Set in the late 1980s in a Pacific Northwest logging town, *The Fall-Down Effect* follows Fern, a young woman who goes underground after engaging in an act of environmental activism that authorities label ecoterrorism. Unable to keep this secret under wraps, tension within Fern's family boils over, causing ruptures and confrontations within the family at large. Johnston's debut novel is a beautiful exploration of family, climate change and loss. *(April 21)*

BOOK*HUG

The Grind included **Liz Johnston**'s debut novel ***The Fall-Down Effect*** in their 2026 fiction preview. Set in the late 1980s in a Pacific Northwest logging town, the book follows Fern, a young woman who goes underground after engaging in an act of environmental activism that authorities label ecoterrorism. Book*hug publishes writing that challenges and pushes the boundaries of cultural expectations.

TORONTO STAR

Newsletters

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CANADA

Donald Trump halted her path to safety — and Canada threw her a lifeline. Yet even here, new rules are making it harder for LGBTQ refugees

Countries including Canada are making it harder for refugees to access protection, said the group helping displaced queer people escape harm.

June 20, 2026 · 3 min read

Terry-Kay Walker, a trans woman from Jamaica, resettled in Canada in December as a government sponsored refugee.

RAINBOW RAILROAD

The ***Toronto Star*** put the story of **Terry-Kay Walker** on their front page, highlighting the role of **Rainbow Railroad** in ensuring her safety. When United States executive orders abruptly halted refugee pathways, Terry-Kay—a transgender woman who fled deadly persecution in Jamaica—was left stranded in Colombia on her way to the U.S. "I was afraid and needed to go anywhere apart from Jamaica, so I reached out to Rainbow Railroad," Terry-Kay said. The Toronto-based advocacy group stepped in to reroute her through Canada's Government-Assisted Refugees program, which allows them to directly refer up to 250 high-risk LGBTQ+ individuals annually.

the back page

JILLIAN TAMAKI
Lower Level

From ***Young Cat, Old Cat*** a picture book about the agonies and ecstasies of life with cats, published by **Groundwood Books**.
@jilliantamaki
jilliantamaki.com

Queenly Cat **(detail), 2026, acrylic ink, crewel embroidery wool on fabric**

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