

WARNING! Mind The Gap: The Interstices Between Architecture and Experience

By

Justine Kohleal Hartlieb-Power

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ABSTRACT

WARNING! Mind the Gap: The Interstices Between Architecture and Experience
By Justine Kohleal Hartlieb-Power
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This thesis project takes as its starting point the physical and psychic disconnect between the spectacular architectural façade of the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U) and its lived, felt experience. It questions how performative, multi-sensorial artworks can force a reconsideration of the experience of space and, in so doing, embed alternative ways of being into built environments. Featuring artworks by Jessica Karuhanga, Faith La Rocque, and the duo Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *WARNING! Mind the Gap* activates transitory or ancillary sites (such as hallways and entryways), drawing attention to the ways in which institutional hegemony obscures itself spatially and architecturally. Implemented as a series of site-specific interventions, the artworks transform the University's interstitial spaces into sites of anti-colonial and institutional resistance through the creation of liminal experiences. The project thus encourages open-ended dialogue, un-settling the institution by privileging embodied responses within quotidian spaces.

Key Words: contemporary art, performance, installation, multi-sensorial, phenomenology, exhibitions, curating, architecture, space.

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Curatorial Essay

There is an old family video of me as a child in which I appear disoriented, babbling to myself as I waddle around in a star-shaped snowsuit. I had been tobogganing with my family, though by the time I enter the screen we must have been readying ourselves to leave. Long shadows mark the passage of time and the world is awash in a dying bluish-grey light. My father is filming my meandering from a distance, casually asking me where I think I am headed. I decline to face him and continue on, pausing here and there to prod snow-covered shrubs. While he expresses confusion, even mild amusement, at my childish sense of space and direction, I appear quite calm—confident, even. Though children often do not have a sense of the vastness that surrounds them, generally accepting what they see in front of them and feel in the moment at the expense of an entire world that lay *behind* and *beyond*, their naïve treatment of everyday space and materiality is complex and open in ways that can be elusive to adults.¹

Indeed, growing into adulthood requires continually renegotiating the sensorium against shifting spatial realities. Becoming more aware of the world beyond our fleshy bodies tends to diminish sensorial openness: perspectives narrow, and whatever ability we possess in our early years to wander aimlessly dissipates as our paths through life become more proscribed. Moreover, the increasing spectacularization of our environment privileges sight above proprioceptive, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile sense perceptions, resulting in disembodied subjectivity.² Architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa contends that our current “industrial mass production of visual imagery” encourages disembodied subjecthood because it “[alienates] vision from emotional involvement and identification,

and [turns] imagery into a mesmerizing flow without focus or participation” (2005: 22). Thus, late-stage capitalism (alternatively known as neoliberalism) exacerbates the disconnect felt between body and mind by transforming every surface into a visual spectacle.

Though neoliberalism is historically understood as an economic strategy, this narrow definition divorces it from its social impacts, ignoring the effect neoliberal economic policies have on the body and sensorium. This thesis insists, in the same manner as theorist Steven Shaviro, that neoliberalism more broadly encompasses both “a specific mode of capitalist production (Marx) and [a] form of governmentality [Foucault]” that influences subjects economically *and* bio-politically (2015: 7). The rise of urban neoliberalism within the city of Toronto in the early 1990s created significant shifts in the city’s economic structure: the privatization and aggressive branding of public space promoted by neoliberal policies shifted the city’s spatiality and ruptured its social fabric.³ As industries corporatized, buildings took on an aesthetic iconicity, public spaces and leisure time were subjected to increased regulation, and advertisements crowded the eye, all of which led to a focus on the visual. Soaring glass and steel structures are thus a consequence of societal neglect towards our sensing bodies (Pallasmaa 2005: 19). The speed with which the eye travels across the slick surfaces of skyscrapers, spectacular façades, and uniform box stores mirrors the fast-paced movements subjects are required to perform within neoliberal economies—citizens disengage from their sensing bodies in an effort to increase productivity, regulate their time, and guard the sensorium against an onslaught of flashy images.

On the one hand, this type of distraction can be generative. It affords the chance for subjects to become shocked into mindfulness: as German philosopher Walter Benjamin states, mechanical reproduction's "relentless destruction of the aura" ensures that historical artworks and architecture are wrenched into the present moment, dismantling bourgeois hegemony through ubiquitous availability (1969: 17); on the other, Benjamin, writing before the Second World War, could not have envisioned the overwhelming array of moving images and products that would come to dominate the sensorium under advanced capitalism. While it is possible to radicalize technological advancements related to artistic, architectural, filmic, and literary genres, the reappropriation and subsequent containment of each emerging technology by neoliberal states and corporations nullifies their progressive potential. Spectacular architecture, advertisements, and dwindling public space are technologies of separation and control that ensure subjects remain numb to their embodied reality. Thus even in a society where, as art historian Jonathan Crary insists, "mobility and circulation are ubiquitous"—where moving through space happens at an ever-rapid pace and information flows freely online—people are increasingly individuated and separated (2001: 74).⁴

Embodiment is also promoted, however, through habit, custom, and usage. The exhibition, *WARNING! Mind the Gap* situates itself within the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U) to examine how sites of passage and transit can be harnessed to create moments of shared contemplation and understanding. Using the concept of an experiential 'gap' to explore sensorial connection and subversion within the institution's interstices, *Mind The Gap* endeavours spectators to find the profound within

the banal and repetitive. That OCAD U is home to one of Toronto's most iconic structures is significant. The school's playful 'tabletop'—constructed by famed British architect William Alsop and officially named the Sharp Centre for Design—is a colourful, monumental ode to creativity. However, the Sharp Centre's spectacular design and façade are not reflected within the 100 McCaul building's ordinary interior, suggesting a sensorial and embodied disconnect between the institution's projected image and its lived experience (fig. 1a – e). Thus, as the University readies itself for its first major architectural overhaul since the creation of the Sharp Centre in 2005, it is worth examining how its spaces are produced on the level of the body and the senses.

Visual artists Jessica Karuhanga, Faith La Rocque, and the duo Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh create durational performances and subtle, multi-sensorial artworks that disrupt OCAD University's everyday spaces. The artworks are staged within transitory or functional locations, such as hallways and entryways, bringing embodied awareness into spaces that typically lie outside the preferred sites of knowledge production (classrooms, work spaces, galleries, and boardrooms), allowing for unexpected encounters between artists, artworks, and publics. Engaging with the sensorium and the body foregrounds knowledges and histories that may have been overlooked by the institution, and un-settles notions pertaining to its fixity and permanence. The presence of performative artworks within quotidian space endeavours audience members to reach *behind* and *beyond*—to generate curiosity, contemplation, and connectivity towards the place of OCAD University, their sensing bodies, and one another.

Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh: Capital Expansion

Interdisciplinary artists Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh often create artworks that intervene into public space. Akhbari is concerned with institutionalized ways of interpreting knowledge, art-making as labour, and architecture as a physical manifestation of state or corporate hegemony, while Safaei-Sooreh's current practice focuses on Foucauldian systems of knowledge production that have been exacerbated by neoliberal economic policies. After moving from Iran to Canada to attend OCAD U, Safaei-Sooreh comments that she “became interested in understanding agencies inherited in this new [Canadian] structure [including] interests/desires [...] new laws and regulations, the most wanted and marketable ideas,” which led her to wonder if “pursuing a common knowledge favour[s] controlling systems” (Safaei-Sooreh 2014). During a studio visit, Safaei-Sooreh remarked that, as she began her BFA at OCAD U, she was introduced primarily to Western-based theorists. Later, upon visiting her home country of Iran, the artist “found that all of [her] Iranian friends were likewise talking about these theorists— [Gilles] Deleuze and [Felix] Guattari, [Michel] Foucault—all the big Western names” (Safaei-Sooreh 2016). This homogenization of knowledge, discourse, language, and art making speaks to an ongoing colonization of the ‘Other,’ albeit one that relies on the repetition of certain intellectual frameworks rather than physical violence.

Akhbari's background in Marxist theory has led to his preoccupation with systems and theories of hyper-capitalism: he endeavours to make the labour that goes into creative practices visible, including the labour performed by institutions that support artists and their work. He does so, primarily, through “counter-actions”—sculptural gestures that

intervene into monumental, capitalist structures (Hicke 2014). Akhbari's sculptures are often indecipherable from the quotidian objects that surround them, and yet their surreal materiality and awkward placement somatically call attention to the ways in which institutions, corporations, and nation states promote or restrict certain ways of producing knowledge through their architecture and built environments.

Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh's collaborative project, *Top Seven* (2017), critiques the neoliberalisation of institutional and, in particular, postsecondary educational space. The work consists of seven flags, evenly positioned atop the inside entryway at OCAD U's main campus on McCaul Street. The swinging doors and the haste of people entering and exiting cause their fabric to stir, agitated by the light breeze emitted by bodies and air currents. One side of each flag is a simple phrase; the other is saturated with colour. Both are appropriated from the websites of some of Toronto's most prominent corporations:

1. The Four Seasons Hotel, owned by Rosalie and Isadore Sharp, "Times Change, But Our Dedication To Perfecting the Travel Experience Never Will"
2. Delaney Capital Management, President and C.A. Catherine (Kiki) Delaney, "Fundamental, Bottom Up Investing"
3. Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), "One Of Canada's Best Corporate Citizens"
4. Relay Ventures, co-founder and managing partner John Albright, "Mobile. From The Sensor To The Cloud"

5. Bell Kearns & Associates Ltd., President and CEO Helen Kearns, “Smart. Money.”
6. The Carlu Corporation Limited, co-founder and managing partner Mark Robert, “Commitment to the Ultimate In Sophistication and Service”
7. WJ Properties, Vice-President Carol Weinbaum, “Downtown: Happy Happy Home” (fig. 2a –f)⁵

Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh chose to highlight these particular institutions as their Presidents, Vice-Presidents, CEOs, and co-founders either serve on OCAD University’s board of governors or have donated large sums of money to the institution—sometimes both⁶ (see Appendix C for more information).

Shifts in the academy’s funding structure have led to the neoliberalisation of its spaces, and *Top Seven* argues that connecting family names to the corporations that they helm makes the privatization of the University’s budget visible. For example, prominent facilities and buildings are dedicated to wealthy families (The *Sharp* Centre for Design; the *Ada Slaight* Gallery; the *Nora E. Vaughan* and *George A. Reid* wings), while classrooms and utilitarian spaces take on the names of corporations (TBWA Toronto in an elevator; Blackstock Leather Inc. in a critique space), ensuring that many surfaces of the institution are associated with a wealthy patron or company. In addition, the placement of a twenty-four hour, manned security desk at the front entryway of 100 McCaul greets students, faculty, and staff as they enter and reminds them of their constant surveillance, while open workspaces on the top floors of the Sharp Centre promote self-

regulatory behaviour as much as they encourage collaboration. Few common gathering areas exist, and there is little access to Grange Park from inside the structure (which is, in any case, owned by the Art Gallery of Ontario). Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh engage with the exhibition's theme of an architectural and sensorial 'gap' by subtly asking students, faculty, and staff to examine how an increased reliance on donations from the private sector alters the schemata of public space within the University.

Large, private donations are often celebrated, however, as they lay the foundation for major re-builds and technology-based upgrades. In 2004 the Government of Ontario allocated a portion of the newly established Ontario SuperBuild Growth Fund towards the transformation of OCAD University.⁷ However, the high cost of building (\$42.5 million, in part due to the commission of internationally renowned architect William Alsop), and the government's insistence on public-private partnerships, necessitated that the University collaborate with capitalist entities.⁸ Though the construction of the Sharp Centre and the overhaul of OCAD U's original building propelled the former college forward academically and provided much needed resources for its departments across the board, the significant donation by the Sharp family (\$5 million), and the subsequent naming of the building after them, prompts the question: what sensorial and bodily affects are triggered as students enter and exit monumental spaces so closely associated with the name of a singular family? While Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh argue that re-naming public spaces after corporate-entities might encourage the "demarcation of pedagogical space [remodelled] after the University's external funding bodies" (2017), there is no evidence that this is the case with the Sharp Centre. Nevertheless, Alsop's 'tabletop' enhances the

value and prestige of the Sharp family name by raising the prominence of OCAD University locally, nationally, and internationally.

Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh chose subtle repetition (the flags) in the face of excess (the Sharp Centre) to create a point of resistance against capitalist spectacle. *Top Seven* provides a particularly slow, embodied response to the immense architecture and space of OCAD University. The atrium where the artists installed *Top Seven* is designed to be experienced visually, rather than inhabited: though it is filled with natural light, its surfaces are primarily rectilinear and composed of industrial materials, such as concrete, glass, and aluminum, that are slick to the touch. The lightness and fluidity of the flags render the institution's inhuman materiality and monumentality visible, their softness juxtaposed against the rectilinear interior. Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh's intervention into the space is a type of *détournement*—defined by French theorist Henri Lefebvre as a radical act of “diversion” that punctures hegemonic space, shifting the ways in which subjects experience familiar sites through occupation and appropriation (1991: 168). Though Lefebvre conceives of *détournement* as an occupying force (the appropriation of the Halles Centrales in Paris after the student riots of 1968, for example), this method has been adapted to include subtle gestures, shifts in spatiality, and surreal or sensory-based objects that activate the body and the gaze (1991: 168).

Even as it prompts deceleration and awareness, *Top Seven*'s placement above OCAD U's entryway paradoxically fashions itself in the building's likeness: the flags' colours are reflected in the tinted windows that face McCaul Street, and they physically tower above the people entering and exiting the building. By mimicking the institution's

monumentality, Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh enmesh themselves within the social fabric of the institution. In doing so, they create an ambiguous, interstitial space between publics, physical building, and the corporate donors who made its construction possible.

Moreover, the flags' animation reminds us that architecture and space are influenced, not only by specific associations, corporations, and social codes,⁹ but also by the everyday movements and actions of students, staff, and faculty, whose bodily presence enables and re-produces the academy's neoliberalisation. The institution is thus exposed as merely one aspect of what is, ostensibly, a social relationship, demonstrating the potential bodies have to reinscribe space through movement, occupation, and appropriation.

Faith La Rocque: Embedding

Visual artist Faith La Rocque works primarily within the realm of sculpture and installation, incorporating scent, sound, and performance elements into her work. Her interests lie in supra-sensorial objects or events and the ways in which they affect viewers' perceptions of space: La Rocque (quite literally) sniffs out spatial oddities or ticks, intervening to heighten their hidden quirks. Her work is always site-specific, as each space she activates contains its own unique atmosphere. Through the intersection of space and material, La Rocque explores the healing potential of natural substances, such as quartz, Himalayan salt, essential oils, and obsidian. Examining the human experience through the lens of these alternative health therapies, La Rocque combines their physical properties and cultural uses within a greater narrative structure to invoke contemplation, conversation, and shared understanding.

La Rocque installed *Sumac* (2017) in OCAD U's Anniversary Gallery. The space is comprised of three parts: a carpeted area where visitors typically observe artworks, a glass enclosure that rings the gallery, and an entryway that is an artwork unto itself. The entrance is the permanent home to Gord Peteran's sculpture *Inbox* (2009), comprised of an array of objects and designed to mimic OCAD U's Sharp Centre for Design (fig. 3). The tree trunks allude to the Centre's twelve stilts, and once belonged to trees uprooted to make way for Alsop's building. Peteran's intention was to "celebrate the creative diversity of OCAD University, both past and present" by soliciting "small examples of artworks from anyone [he] encountered in the halls," ensuring that pieces of the former building grounds would remain after they were demolished (Peteran 2009). Besides intervening into the Anniversary Gallery space, *Sumac* also moves beyond it to explore the interstitial quality of OCAD U as a whole. La Rocque's performance foregrounds the Anniversary Gallery's visual connotations with the Sharp Centre, its literal in-between-ness (the glass enclosure in contrast to the main space), and its historical associations between the University and the student body to interrogate the human impact past and forthcoming architectural expansions have had, and will have, on the community.

For the installation, La Rocque hung two large, semi-opaque white tarps inside the glass partition, along the east and west sides of the Gallery. This action enabled radiant white light, emitted from six seasonal affective disorder (SAD) lamps (three on each side, positioned behind the tarps) to spill into the room, making it reminiscent of a light-box. While in the space La Rocque performed a series of slow, meditative gestures: placing staghorn sumac seeds and branches throughout out the gallery, including hanging a

branch in front of the glass and placing one on a folded, light green tarp located behind the glass (fig. 4); moving back and forth between the interior space and exterior perimeter of the gallery; picking sumac seeds from the branches and counting them in her hand; pushing and blowing seeds through the gaps in the glass (fig. 5); pulling back the carpeting in the northwest corner of the room to make arrangements of seeds on the floor underneath (fig. 6); and dropping sumac ink into a clay vessel filled with water (fig. 7). After a period of approximately six hours, La Rocque gathered a handful of seeds and surreptitiously placed them inside the 100 McCaul building's cracks and seams (fig. 8a – f).

La Rocque sought to explore more deeply what it meant to 'embed Indigeneity' into institutional space (La Rocque, 2017). Recent newspaper articles, such as "Toronto's OCAD University May Boast Another Landmark" (Bozikovic 2017), and the updated five-year Academic Plan for the University, stress that OCAD U's forthcoming expansion will endeavour to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action by actively seeking to "advance Indigenous ways of knowing and being within the academy" (Academic Plan 2017: 8). For OCAD University, this includes a new Indigenous Visual Culture Centre and an "emphasis on the values of sustainability" (Diamond qtd. in Bozikovic 2017) in addition to "devising processes of reconciliation in public spaces [especially in regards to] the Creative City Campus [expansion]" (Academic Plan 2017: 9). Unlike the Sharp Centre, OCAD U's Creative City Campus will expand horizontally, towards the Art Gallery of Ontario, and it is in this corner of the complex that La Rocque placed the velvety sumac seeds.

Observing the artist as she tucked seeds into cracks and corners emphasized the inhospitality of the institutional environment, and highlighted the gap between OCAD U's rhetoric and its architectural reality: La Rocque's gesture exposes the University's infecund spatiality (promoted by the school's modernist architecture) for, within a few days, the seeds had been swept away. While the University has stressed its desire to "ensure that 'Indigeneity is embedded successfully throughout the complex'" and not just within the Indigenous Visual Culture Centre itself (Bozikovic 2017),¹⁰ La Rocque troubles these good intentions by asking "when you embed something, is it dormant or active? Visible or invisible?" (La Rocque 2017).¹¹ I would add: who is allowed to embed? And, when those without the 'authority' to embed knowledge or objects within the institution do so, is what they disseminate nurtured or destroyed? La Rocque draws from her Metis heritage to foreground a plant (staghorn sumac) that is not only indigenous to the area, but also possesses important healing properties for many Indigenous communities across Canada. Her use of staghorn sumac on the level of the senses, the body, and materiality problematizes notions of embedded-ness, particularly as they pertain to the institutionalization of Indigenous ontology and cosmology.

Though universities across Canada are working towards centering and encouraging Indigenous cultural practices, many continue to use terminology and systems implicitly designed to ensure a settler futurity that is bound up within systems of accumulation.¹² La Rocque's meditative actions actualize this paradoxical situation on the level of the sensorium and the body. Her performance spans the length of a typical workday, and yet her actions do not produce a usable product. La Rocque's use of

impermanent or shifting materials (seeds, water, light) in combination with her repetitive motions contradicts the institution's *modus operandi*, wherein students and faculty are prompted to generate artworks and ideas continually. Moreover, while the installation and performance are dependent upon the University's existing gallery space, the materials are, in the end, spread throughout the complex—it is the gallery and the University's informal pathways, nooks, and openings that are utilized and activated, emphasizing a futurity not dependant upon the accumulation of space. Rather, *Sumac* exists within a relationship of reciprocity that lies outside the trappings of capitalist culture.

Indeed, the futility of La Rocque's attempt to embed the seeds within OCAD U's hallways is a poignant reminder of the institution's desire for cleanliness and order. As Henri Lefebvre articulates in his critique of the everyday, "A social group is characterized just as much by what it rejects as by what it consumes and assimilates" (2008: 31). La Rocque's gestures illuminate the modernist desire to rid its spaces of natural materials that seem 'out of place.' At the same time, her actions call forth the dialectical relationship performed between bodies and building—her delicate handling and placement of the sumac seeds creates fleeting moments of collective engagement, while their removal illuminates the potential for generative and productive fissures to be created within the academy by the student body.

Sumac undeniably makes clear that embedding Indigeneity and creating safe spaces within the University will require more than simply re-designing and adding on to the structures students, faculty, and staff already inhabit. Performance provides a means to imagine architectural and spatial alternatives without having to completely dismantle

existing structures, and it exposes our implicit sensorial biases: performance scholars Sally Banes and André Lepecki have argued that live performances reveal “the conditions under which the body interfaces with and assigns privileges to certain modes of the perceptible while condemning other modes to the shadows of the imperceptible and the valueless” (2007: 2). Live performance requires sensory synaesthesia within a carnal body;¹³ in other words, performances that require embodiment endeavour spectators to engage more deeply with their unmediated emotions, opening up new pathways of knowledge production and embedding alternative ways of being within their sensing and feeling bodies.

Jessica Karuhanga: Unearthing Strata

Visual and performance artist Jessica Karuhanga draws from her personal experiences to create poignant critiques of institutional violence and anti-blackness. In particular, the willingness of the Canadian nation state to overlook the specific challenges faced by black men, women, and non-binary people in Canada. Because of this, site-specificity is an important factor in her work. She has been outspoken about the fact that blackness in Canada is too often imported from “elsewhere,” including the United States, Caribbean, and United Kingdom; for Karuhanga, “pop culture or [...] cultural institutions” within Toronto perpetuate harmful stereotypes about the black experience by refusing to focus on “the regional [black] community” (Karuhanga qtd. in Forson 2015: 21). Her gestures highlight the ways in which her sensing body reacts to institutional spaces and platforms. Her experience as a queer, black Canadian is foregrounded through choreography that

speaks to Karuhanga's intersectional identity—one that has been shaped by the weight of history (including the Canadian public's own issues with anti-black racism),¹⁴ familial and non-familial relationships, her art practice, and the metropolitan environment in which she lives.

In her performance *ground and cover me* (2017), Karuhanga addresses the site of OCAD U using her body and gradual, deliberate movements designed to draw attention to the gap between the institution's current spatiality and what lies beyond or beneath it. Beginning at the end of a blindingly white hallway on the third floor of the Nora E. Vaughan wing, a light-filled corridor that overlooks Grange Park and the back of the academy, she picks handfuls of geranium flowers out of a potted plant. Holding the geranium petals softly in her hands, she moves from window well to window well, tracing the objects located just beyond the glass with her body (fig. 9). Over the course of an hour, Karuhanga inches her way towards the audience, her movements becoming more frenetic, her breathing heavier as the sheer physicality of her exertion becomes evident. *ground and cover me* is comprised of a mixture of gestures that, at times, contradict one another—Karuhanga glides seamlessly, then abruptly jerks her body forward and backward. The choreography may appear bewildering, but her movements are a deliberate reaction to the site of OCAD U as well as the cadence of Solange Knowles' *A Seat At The Table* (2016), a soaring jazz and hip-hop infused album that Karuhanga listens to through headphones. Swaying to an internal rhythm, red petals fall from her hands, coating the windowsills, linoleum floor, and white-painted radiators (fig. 10a – b). Karuhanga signifies her interest in OCAD U's strata by caressing, rubbing, and beating

upon the building's frame, marking the lines that divide inside from outside, soft skin from rectilinear formations, and black (bodies) from white (walls).

Though Karuhanga's route is marked by twists and turns, the hallway's proscriptive narrowness necessarily brings her nearer to OCAD U's original, 1920s entrance, which faces the Art Gallery of Ontario's Grange House (fig. 11). One of Toronto's oldest architectural landmarks, The Grange belongs to the AGO although, for nearly a century (from 1817 to 1912) the building and adjacent park were in possession of the wealthy Boulton family (Litvak 1988: 3). Again, the importance of the site cannot be overlooked, as the artist declares: "This work speaks to the site, its infrastructure and accumulation of strata" (Karuhanga 2017). In particular, her use of geraniums as a prop directly references the Boulton family garden, where flowers exported from their native England were cultivated (History of the Grange 2011). Geraniums were the family's most prized flower,¹⁵ and Karuhanga's handling of the plant is a mixture of care and indifference, her attempts not to drop the petals resulting in their destruction—by the time she arrives at the end of the hall, the petals have turned to pulp in her hands, staining them red. The plant's presence implores the audience to imagine the site before it existed as a university, exploring what was displaced, first by the Boulton's and, later, by the organization responsible for OCAD U's creation. Karuhanga uses the hallway's naturally transitory nature and its particular location within The Grange to question whose history, or path, has been privileged within the institution.

For Karuhanga, visual access to the architecture of the Grange and backside of OCAD University (both of which feature aspects of an architectural style known as

English Country Manor, popular among the landed gentry of the nineteenth century) is imperative (Litvak 1988: 1). The artist's presence challenges not only the presumed whiteness of institutional space, but also the notion that her body does not physically, emotionally, or psychologically "fit" within institutionally sanctioned Canadian history. For example, a photograph of the Ontario College of Art from 1922 depicts then-professors Arthur Lismer, Fred S. Haines, J.E.H. MacDonald, F.H. Varley, and Herbert S. Palmer dispersed amongst approximately two-dozen white, female students and two unidentified black children (fig. 12).¹⁶ There is no mention of the children in the accompanying text—they are, quite literally, lost in a sea of whiteness. Feminist and postcolonial scholar Sara Ahmed has written at length about the nature of black bodies within white spaces. She insists that black bodies have a "queering" effect in public spaces constructed around whiteness: "the proximity of such bodies makes familiar spaces seem strange," as these sites inherently negate black bodies and experiences (2006: 135). Ahmed's examination of the ways in which public spaces are oriented phenomenologically exposes whiteness as a "form of public comfort *by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape*":

Those spaces are lived as being comfortable as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies [...]. So spaces extend bodies and bodies extend spaces; the impressions acquired by surfaces function as traces of such extensions. The surfaces of social as well as bodily space 'record' the repetition of acts, and the 'passing by' of some and not others (2006: 135).

Karuhanga echoes this sentiment when she states, "I think all black bodies are queered in space because of the way they are dehumanized" (2015: 25). As an educational

institution, OCAD University is oriented towards whiteness, both literally (in its design) and historically (in its creation); Karuhanga critiques the ways in which black bodies are made to feel out of place within the academy by *intentionally* queering its spaces with her body and her gestures. Climbing into a window well at the end of the hallway, the artist disappears from view—quite literally pressing, or imprinting, herself into the institution (fig. 13). As the performance continues, her repetitious actions obscure the whiteness of the space, impressing upon the University a racial, gendered, and queer orientation.

When Karuhanga does become visible, headphones afford her a level of privacy that further prohibits total audience awareness. The impenetrable nature of *ground and cover me* indicates that the artist's body and movements cannot be consumed by the viewer; they exist outside the realm of entertainment, affording Karuhanga agency by not only distorting the viewers' perspective (asking them to blink, and look again), but also by moving to an internalized rhythm inaccessible to those watching. However, while existential phenomenology tends to focus on, as Ahmed says, the “tactile, vestibular, kinaesthetic, and visual character of embodied reality” (Ahmed 2006: 110), postcolonial scholar Frantz Fanon asks us to think also of the “historic-racial schema” that exists “below the corporeal” (Fanon qtd. in Ahmed 2006: 110).¹⁷ Karuhanga's bodily response to OCAD University and The Grange, coupled with her refusal to remain in sight at all times, tends to the historic-racial component of her embodied reality by drawing attention to the ways in which black bodies move through institutional space—slowly and deliberately, always aware of how they might be (negatively) perceived. Karuhanga

challenges the notion that these spaces are, or ever were, neutral. What is more, her actions force us to question whether watching her perform is a neutral act (fig. 14).

Karuhanga's strange movements and slowness force viewers to pay close attention to both her performative gestures and the space, stretching the limits of spectatorial attention. Crary has argued that the suspension of perception—of a “looking and listening so rapt that it is an exemption from ordinary conditions”—becomes a “cancellation or interruption [...] a disturbance, even a negation, of perception itself,” affecting viewers' ability to pay attention to the event in front of them (2001: 10). As visual perception is fatigued, the body loses its sense of temporality while simultaneously becoming aware of its position within space: time slips away as necks twist and crane in order to glimpse Karuhanga's actions. The forced perspective of the performance and the artist's purposeful negation of didactic visibility frustrates viewer expectations, shifting their relationship to the visual field and necessitating, instead, a reliance on the body. This type of embodied looking produces changes in consciousness—audience members are able to make free associations between Karuhanga's movements, the objects located outside the windows, the architecture, and the space itself.

People of colour must remain aware of how they ‘fit’ or do not ‘fit’ within institutional “sea[s] of whiteness”—their gestures always carefully considered; by contrast, bodies that are at home in the world rarely have to think about their movements, especially within places they feel they implicitly belong (Ahmed 2006: 111). Spaces of transit or function are sites where habitual movements are performed subconsciously, and yet our repetitious actions only go unnoticed so long as they conform to the institutional

line.¹⁸ Within institutional space, racialized bodies, by their very nature of being *not white*, deviate from that line; but they also expose it, calling out its historical rootedness. Karughanga's performative gestures open up the interstices between architecture and experience, reminding audiences that building up and out does not efface the institution's normalizing spatial and architectural impetuses.

Conclusion: The Sensing Body Within The Interstices

By making OCAD University's architectural space the exhibition's organizational and binding element, *WARNING! Mind The Gap* prioritised space as much as audience and artist. Performances and installations that encouraged slowness and embodiment ensured that spectators decelerated, inhabiting the institution's spaces as opposed to simply passing through them. The architecturally abstracted yet paradoxically fixed spatiality of OCAD University turns habiting bodies into objects among other objects—as disembodied subjects with disembodied sight move through the academy's hallways to encounter living or animated materials (petals, seeds, fluttering flags), they become aware of space and their auxiliary senses. Taking the time to slow down and observe the quotidian can be difficult, particularly within transitory spaces that encourage quick passage. The artist's ask that more attention be paid, not to their work, necessarily, but to how bodies connect to their own interiority, the material objects around them, and each other. Though the artworks themselves are ultimately impermanent, each left behind traces of their materiality: ephemera that point to the ability to shift the ways in which we understand knowledge production through the body and senses.

Live performances and multi-sensorial artworks involve the senses in ways that transgress visual and linguistic boundaries.¹⁹ Artist Maya Roth has described performance as a form of “sensorial dissent” (Roth 2007: 3): La Rocque’s introduction of lush materiality into quotidian spaces highlights and transgresses the spatial and intellectual boundaries of the institution; Karuganga’s decision to position herself so close to The Grange and OCAD University’s original entrance identifies the academy’s architectural and historic alignment, and creates a responsive historic-sensory gesture; and Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh’s flags act as a visual reminder that bodies passing through the institution have the ability to reinscribe its space with their gestures and presence. The social conventions that dictate how subjects produce knowledge—including moving rapidly and ignoring ‘gut’ responses to situations—are subverted through performative gestures that incorporate the sensorium and the material body. They are, indeed, a form of sensorial dissent.

Certainly, my embodied knowledge, which informs my understanding of the world, is mediated by the myriad institutions that surround me on a daily basis, ones that impose particular ways of moving and sensing within the world. Upon closer inspection, the family video that appears to show me wandering haplessly through a ‘natural’ environment indicates, in actuality, that my body was only ever partially, as Banes and Lepecki state, the “subject of its own desires and agency” (2007: 4). Being surveilled through the lens of my father’s video camera requires, at the very least, an awareness of the gaze, and the densely forested ravine I temporarily inhabit is shaped through housing developments and maintained by the city—as are all metropolitan spaces. These urban

pathways orient bodies towards a common goal. In moving subjects in a similar direction, or having them ‘face’ the same way, hallways, stairwells, walking trails, subterranean tunnels, sidewalks—even well-worn paths that deviate from those dictated by city planners—physically, psychologically, and socially imprint upon subjects particular movements and senses. Places of circulation are thus sites where bodies and senses disappear, suppressed or ignored in the haste of getting to a final destination, of moving with the crowd towards what Jean Baudrillard has called the world’s “interactive storage spaces” (2014: 20). Activating the senses within spaces of transit brings awareness back to the body, if only for a moment.

The audience’s emotional connectivity with the artworks and performances indicates the potential built environments have to foster affective encounters. Performative gestures require that disembodied vision be cast aside for an embodied eye in alignment with our ‘secondary’ sense perceptions: tactile, gustatory, kinaesthetic, olfactory, and auditory. The interstitial zones created by the artists’ gestures, materials, and bodies implicate students, faculty, staff, and (invited) audience members to mindfully partake in the production of the academy’s spaces. The interstices also, however, make room for alternative knowledges to be embedded within each individual’s sensing body—opening up new spaces of possibility and understanding, and chances for connectivity beyond our own, individuated conception of being in the world.

Support Paper

Introduction

This support paper outlines the theoretical frameworks that informed my curatorial practice: a literature review establishes ideological precedents and demonstrates how *WARNING! Mind The Gap* creates linkages between several disciplines; an exhibition review situates the project within local and international lineages of performance and interventionist art; a methodology section provides an overview of the diverse research approaches applied to this project; and a section on exhibition design serves to clarify my curatorial decisions. This paper thus substantiates and supports the premise that embodied and sensorial art practices are best poised to interrogate institutional space and social forms of hegemony.

WARNING! Mind The Gap explores the potential for multi-sensorial and performance-based artworks to force a reconsideration of institutional space by creating liminal experiences within the quotidian. It is grounded on the premise that built environments influence the ways in which subjects produce knowledge by limiting their ability to connect with their embodied experiences, and it argues that an increase in spectacular architecture numbs the sensorium at the same time that it paradoxically induces a bodily response. I understand transitory and utilitarian spaces as holding the most potential for spatial and sensorial disruption, precisely because they are moved through repetitively and, occasionally, unconsciously. I contend that activating these secondary spaces subverts the spectacle by bringing embodied awareness to everyday spaces, moments, and gestures, un-settling the institution in the process.

Literature Review

This project is interdisciplinary and includes critiques of space and architecture from scholars utilizing Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, and phenomenological theoretical frameworks. These distinctions enable me to form a more comprehensive conception of institutional space and embodiment from multiple, sometimes conflicting perspectives, and form the backbone of my curatorial project.

Critiques about space and architecture are integral to unpacking the importance of quotidian space and the effect that both architecture (which demarcates space) and space (which buttresses architecture) have on the body and senses. Before the nineteenth century, space was understood as concrete, inscribed by buildings, pathways, bodies, and memories (Lefebvre 2003). During the industrial revolution, however, space became abstracted—transformed first through mathematics and geometry and later by capitalism (Vidler 2000). The changing nature of space, art production, and architecture during and after this time prompted philosopher Walter Benjamin (1968) to carefully examine the shifting spatial realities of nineteenth-century Paris, a project that culminated in his unfinished *Das Passagen-Werk*, or Arcades Project (Buck-Morss 1991). While Benjamin's writing loosely took up aspects of space and architecture, it was French theorist Henri Lefebvre's close examination of urban space through the lens of Hegel and Marx's *concrete universal* and *concrete abstract* that illuminated space's separate (yet overlapping) spheres—physical, mental, and social, all of which are constantly (re)produced by habiting bodies. From here, Lefebvre and the artists of the Situationist

International (Bishop 2012) formed the notion that interventions into space should be transitory and fleeting (Lefebvre 1991, 2003).

Other French social theorists, notably Guy Debord (1994) and Jean Baudrillard (2014), also studied Lefebvre and provided insight into the ways in which architecture and spectacle affect bodies and knowledge. Though my project is not concerned with architecture as a discipline, it does examine architects and architectural theorists influenced by Lefebvre (Jones 2011; Macleod 2005; Tschumi 1996) as well as those that utilize feminist and postcolonial readings of architecture to examine the body (Bloomer and Moore 1977; Brown, Izenour and Venturi 2001; Franck and Lepori 2007; Pallasmaa 2005), race (Wilson 1998), and gender (Grosz 1998). Postcolonial theorists also argue that a purely Marxist reading of space ignores the ways in which race and ethnicity affect spatial practice (Bhabha 1994), while geographical theorists examine how human beings conceive of space and place differently based on their individual life experiences (Tuan 2008).

Studying the body and the senses enabled me to think critically about OCAD University's architectural space and how it affects the sensorium and the body. Early accounts of embodiment are situated within a transcendental phenomenological discourse until the works of Martin Heidegger (2007, 2010) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962). Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's brand of existential phenomenology attempted to bridge the divide between epistemology (mind) and ontology (body) by closely studying perception and psychology to develop a theory of 'being in the world.' Their methods often neglected, however, socio-economic aspects of embodiment. As a means to reclaim

this social dimension, theorist Sarah Ahmed examines phenomenology, and particularly Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'orientation,' through a feminist, queer and postcolonial lens (Ahmed 1996). Ahmed juxtaposes Merleau-Ponty with postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon (1967), who used his lived experience as a black man residing within predominantly white France to argue that his blackness incites certain patterns of behaviour and social interaction. Fanon and Ahmed thus use phenomenological principles to anchor identity in both the sensing and social body.

Performative interventions into public and private spaces that foreground the senses have a long history within Europe and North America and are integral to understanding performance-based and multi-sensorial artworks as a form of societal critique. The Dadaist excursion to Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre (1921) is an early example of a performance staged within public space. Hindered by bad weather, the experiment was exceptional in that it was not, unlike many other Dadaist performances, a spectacular event; rather, artist André Breton directed the crowd towards an utterly banal, decrepit church in the middle of Paris and endeavoured spectators to create meaningful experiences within quotidian space (Haladyn 2015). The Lettrist International (1952 – 1956) closely followed the Dadaists, as did the Situationist International (1957 – 1972). Both groups pioneered the para-discipline of 'psychogeography' —the close examination of individual behaviour that psychogeography afforded led members to criticize the dehumanizing effects of modernist architecture (Bishop 2012; Kaufman 2008).

As the decades after World War II wore on, performance work shifted to include feminist perspectives and approaches that were more phenomenological than

psychoanalytic. In the 1960s, artists Valie Export and Peter Weibel debuted *Tapp und Tastkino* (1968), a performance that subverted static, hyper-sexualized images of women in film and advertising by enabling spectators to touch Export's breasts through a cardboard box. Art historian and curator Jennifer Fisher emphasizes that concealing Export's breasts enabled the artist to "interrogate technologies of vision," making female bodies tangible and human through touch (2007: 168). In the 1980s, *Sea of Forms* (1986 – 1989) at Omaha Magic Theatre (OMT) encouraged full-bodied, sensory engagement by changing the environment of the exhibitory space. The artists utilized atmospheric lighting and sound effects, created textured walls, and installed Styrofoam objects throughout the room (Roth 2007). Fisher notes that Export, Weibel, and OMT's performances present feminist responses to public space by encouraging the use of auxiliary sense perceptions, "decenter[ing] sight from the eyes" and rooting it, instead, within the body (2007:167).

Since this time, performative interventions have become ubiquitous *within* institutional spaces, to the extent that many welcome artist critiques (Bishop 2012). These performances often engage with aspects of the building's architecture, drawing attention to its form through the body. Andrea Fraser's stealthy *Little Frank and His Carp* (2001) at the Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain, saw Fraser strategically intervene into the museum's space by engaging physically with its limestone pillars, interrogating the institution's (and by extension architect Frank Gehry's) complicity in urban gentrification. Yet her gestures, especially those expressing pleasure, implicate Fraser within the very system she is attempting to criticize, exposing the ambiguous nature of

contemporary art practice (Malone 2007). Fraser also, however, experiences the Guggenheim's architecture through the body. Her performance echoes Nigel Charnock's *Fever* (2001), in which the artist threw his dis-eased body across the Mainz Kleines Haus Theatre stage, creating a visceral spectacle that contrasted with the theatre's architectural passivity (Hannah 2007). Meanwhile, Vienna-based artist collective Gelatin's performance *Balcony* (2000), which saw the group install a cantilevered balcony on the ninety-first floor of the World Trade Centre's Tower One, engaged with the building's smooth, glass surface by enabling fleshy, soft human bodies to occupy its exterior (Fisher 2007). The actions taken by Fraser, Charnock, and Gelatin bring sensorial embodiment to the smooth surface of postmodern architecture and blur the boundaries between bodies and built environments or forms.

Exhibition Review

WARNING! Mind The Gap is indebted to myriad interventionist and performance-based exhibitions and artists. The citywide project *off\site@toronto* (1998) and a survey of *Nuit Blanche* (2004 – Present) present examples of socially engaged curatorial programming within the public and private sphere, while *are you experienced?*, curated by Melissa Bennett, provides an example of curating multi-sensorial installations within institutional space. Each example illuminates the capacity artistic and curatorial gestures have to subvert space(s).

In the fall of 1998, Toronto experienced a series of interventions by nineteen artists whose projects surreptitiously intervened into the city's urban spaces. Curator Kym Pruesse outlines the curatorial challenges inherent in such an undertaking, notably that curatorial intervention might mitigate the "magic" of spectators encountering these works "without brackets" (1999: 9). Although Pruesse disseminated maps indicating where the work was located and who authored it, the project was widely dispersed across the city with many of the artworks traveling to different locations as the month wore on. This tactic ultimately enabled the public to experience the exhibition 'without brackets.'

By contrast, the one-night-only *Nuit Blanche* is hyper-advertised. Art historian Heather Diack critically examines the neoliberalization of art-making and viewing through the lens of *Nuit Blanche*'s encouraged sleeplessness, theorizing that 'white' nights expand the "indefinable limits of labour" by transforming attention into a commodity (2012: 10). As a means of subverting the tendency to display flashy projects, artists and curators have encouraged works that require patience. Rebecca Belmore's

twelve-hour performance during Toronto's 2016 *Nuit Blanche* is one such example: held in the AGO's Walker Court, Belmore slowly covered the length of the atrium's granite floor with red clay. At the 2010 *Nuit Blanche*, artist Chris Shepherd manually moved fifteen tons of concrete cinder blocks from one location on Toronto's Victoria Street to another and back again, illuminating, as Diack says, the "invisible and unproductive waste" encouraged by the all-night "art extravaganza" (2012: 18). Lastly, Algerian-born, Paris-based artist Faycal Baghriche's installation within Paris' Hotel d'Albert, *SNOOZE* (2004 – 2010), was comprised of three hundred digital alarm clocks set to the same time. Each performance and installation exposes *Nuit Blanche* as a neoliberal entity.

Melissa Bennett's *are you experienced?* (2015, Art Gallery of Hamilton), on the other hand, consists of multi-sensorial installations as opposed to performance. Bennett sought to create a space that was affective, wherein audience members would be able to understand the artwork based on their sensorial and embodied reactions to it (Bennett 2016). The artwork of Nadia Belerique, Jessica Eaton, Olafur Eliasson, Dorian FitzGerald, Hadley + Maxwell, and Do Ho Suh activated the gallery's white-cube spaces, problematizing how visitors understand their sensing body within institutional space (Bennett 2015). Hadley + Maxwell's *The Queen still falls to you* (2014) and *Ritual for an Untimely Life* (2009) participate in what curators Jim Drobnick and Jennifer Fisher call the "phantasmagoric turn in contemporary art," creating full-bodied experiences through immersive lights, sounds, vibrant colours, and psychedelic video projections (Drobnick and Fisher 2015: 24). Meanwhile, artists Do Ho Suh and Nadia Belerique provide quieter, introspective responses to the body and space. Their work's materiality and composition

capture fleeting emotions and buried childhood memories to provoke open-ended questions (Bennett 2015). In this way, spectators connect with and form relationships to their own, sensing bodies, which, Bennett hopes, enables them to create collective moments of empathy and understanding (Bennett 2015).

Methodology

WARNING! Mind The Gap combined primary sources, including interviews with artists (Akhbari 2016; Karuhanga 2016; La Rocque 2016, 2017; Safaei-Sooreh 2016) and curators (Bennett 2016; Devine 2016), with secondary literary sources and archival material pertaining to the Grange House and property, and the formation of the Ontario College of Art (OCA), from the Art Gallery of Ontario. I conducted research across a range of disciplines, from spatial theory, phenomenology and the senses, boredom studies, and architectural theory and history. This mixed methodological approach foregrounded my ability to actively subvert and critique spectacular architecture and institutional space through the body and the senses.

Regarding my own curatorial practice, inhabiting OCAD University allowed me to observe the ways in which subjects moved through the institution's spaces. I was also able to tap into my embodied experiences, meticulously recording the sensations I felt (or did not feel), and later cross-referencing them with archived press releases and newspaper articles from OCAD U's Dorothy Hoover Library. This embodied curatorial approach informed me as to which areas of the University were best suited for interventionist projects. I was able to give Akhbari, Safaei-Sooreh, Karuhnaga, and La Rocque greater

insight into how I envisioned activating the space, an important detail as I commissioned new work from them. In addition, my own practice of walking through the city of Toronto framed the ways in which I approached curating *WARNING! Mind The Gap*. I was able to gain a greater understanding of Toronto's affective potential, hidden, not only within its less traversed spaces but also its ubiquitous sites of passage and transit. Embodied curating, therefore, informed the direction of my project and the subsequent research that I undertook.

Installation Plan

My installation plan endeavoured to interrogate the experience of the building of 100 McCaul. The Art Gallery of Ontario's First Thursday programming, which seeks to engage the AGO's more static exhibition spaces through performance, music, interactive installations, and guest speakers, influenced my concept of a one-day, durational exhibitory experience. Held in the evening on the last Thursday of every month, First Thursday runs for approximately four hours. The program exists as an entertaining spectacle, devised so that as many people as possible see each artist, speaker, or musician—there is little overlap and events are kept relatively short, which means that, generally, loud, large, and imposing artworks are chosen. In contrast to this, *WARNING! Mind The Gap* was installed and programmed so as to prompt spectators to slow down and engage with the artwork in addition to the design of OCAD U's spaces. To encourage decelerated looking, the program took up the better part of a day, running from 9 am to 4 pm for a total of seven hours.

I installed *Top Seven* above the entryway where harried students and staff enter and exit the institution—actions that are exacerbated by the professionalization of its degrees (which diminishes time and space for leisure activities) and the stationing of security personnel next to the 100 McCaul entrance. Juxtaposed with Alsop’s towering Sharp Centre and the building’s atrium, *Top Seven* introduces students and faculty to the exhibition: its out-of-place-ness prompting them to take a brochure and browse through the iPad stationed at the entrance, set to display the exhibition’s website.

Faith La Rocque’s installation and performance, *Sumac*, was located on the second floor, while Jessica Karuhanga’s *ground and cover me* was situated on the third, meaning that spectators ascended higher and deeper into the institution as the program progressed. The position of the installation work and performances also meant that the audience moved from the front of the University, where the façade is most visible, to the back, demonstrating how the academy has obscured its original structure through continual renovations. The placement of Karuhanga’s performance at the back of the building, in the Nora E. Vaughan Wing, meant that the audience enacts the movement students, staff, and faculty perform on a daily basis. Visual associations between the University and The Grange’s historic, English Manor architecture are also made apparent through the third-floor hallway’s windows, which face Grange Park and OCAD U’s original entrance. As audiences’ make their way back towards *Sumac* and the Anniversary Gallery, they once again become implicated within the building’s architectural typology that, through its rectilinear formations and starkness, demands bodies and artworks remain visible and legible.

Conclusion

The artworks presented in the exhibition intervened into OCAD U's architectural space as a way to question how built environments influence our sensory-somatic experiences and knowledge production . Their ephemeral, somatic, and sensorial features create interstitial experiences, disrupting the academy's reliance on the purely visual. Activating seemingly secondary spaces (such as hallways) draws attention to the ways in which social and intellectual forms of hegemony obscure themselves; in these areas of circulation and transit, bodies are made invisible. Thus, the exhibition was an attempt to engage unsuspecting people passing through the institution—very little notice was given to the public, and the program was not widely advertised online or in print. Instead, two videographers documented it for an online platform (www.warningmindthegap.ca), which provides an intervention into the space of the World Wide Web, creates an archive of the program, and ultimately enables a larger audience to view the work.

Endnotes

¹ See for example Stephen Johnstone (2008) and Ti-Fu Tuan (2008).

² See Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002) and Juhani Pallasmaa (2005).

³ For more information on Toronto's neoliberalisation see Julie-Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil and Douglas Young (2009).

⁴ See Guy Debord (1994). See also Jonathan Crary's (2001) account of the similarities between Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1994) and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) in the production of docile bodies.

⁵ The peppiness of the slogans slowly slips away when they are read consecutively, revealing themselves as vulpine interlopers. The phrases implicate, not only the current students at OCADU for contributing and perpetuating the academy's neoliberalization, but also Akhbari and Safaei-Sooreh themselves (as they are graduates of OCAD University). Students, staff, and alumni are asked to sit with the uncomfortable contradiction of perpetuating a potentially unjust system through their financial contributions to the school. The phrase "Smart. Money" not only gestures towards Bell Kearns' CEO Helen Kearns and the company's donations to the University, it also furtively questions how the board of governors and president of the academy are spending those donations. Furthermore, it implicates students in that process, as they have chosen to buy into (literally and figuratively) a degree from OCAD U.

⁶ For example, Helen Kearns was appointed to OCAD University's board of governors by the Ontario Government in February of 2008, In addition to acting as President and CEO of Bell Kearns & Associates Ltd., she is recognized as one of the top investors in the

country— according to Kearns’ profile on OCAD U’s website, from 2001 to 2004 she was President of NASDAQ, “the worlds largest electronic stock market,” and since 2015 has sat on the board of the Alberta Investment Management Company (AIMCo), one of Canada’s “largest and most diversified investment managers [with assets totalling CAD \$75 billion]” (Board of Governors n.d.).

⁷ In 1999 Premier Mike Harris established the Ontario SuperBuild Growth Fund: totalling \$20 billion over a five-year period (\$10 billion in government funding to be supplemented by \$10 billion from the private sector), the Ontario government funded large-scale infrastructure projects across the province through public-private partnerships (Ross 2006). At least \$300 million of the \$10 billion budget was funnelled towards the creative sector, part of an economic strategy aimed at attracting knowledge driver economies and an expanding creative (and capitalist) class (Ross 2006). Thus, many of Toronto’s cultural institutions, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Royal Conservatory of Music have been architecturally and spatially transformed through public-private partnerships—indicating that the neoliberalization of OCAD U is part of an accelerated economic strategy meant to transform Toronto’s quotidian spaces through branded, iconic architecture.

⁸ For more information about the Sharp Cente for Design, see OCAD University (n.d.), and for more information regarding Ontario’s Superbuild Growth Fund see Ontario SuperBuild (2001).

⁹ For more information on spatial codes see Henri Lefebvre (1991, 2003), and for a discussion on the sociological impact of architecture on society see Susan MacLeod (2005) and Bernard Tschumi (1996).

¹⁰ It should be noted that the University has hired Two Row Architects of Six Nations Reserve to work alongside Morphosis Architects (Southern California) and the Toronto firm Teeple Architects (Bozikovic 2017). The official website for Two Row architects states that their design goals include a “blend of indoor and outdoor space [...] facilitate flexible use of space [...] sustain the land, the water, and the air [and] incorporate and reintroduce Indigenous plants” (Two Row Architect, *Our Approach*, <http://www.tworow.com/ourapproach.html>. Accessed 13 March 2017).

¹¹ The phrase ‘troubling good intentions’ is a reference to Sarah de Leeuw, Margo Greenwood, and Nicole Lindsay’s article by the same name, published in *Settler Colonial Studies* (2013). Their article is referenced in the academic plan, as well, and summarized by the academic planning committee as follows: “[the authors] urge their readers to acknowledge that policies intended to amend the impacts of colonialism in universities and beyond will always to some extent reenact those impacts, and that consequently universities must remember to look in the mirror as they undertake this process” (Academic Plan 2017: 8).

¹² The concept of ‘settler futurity’ is explained fully by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012). The idea of settler futurity is bound up within what they call “moves to innocence,” which includes the “metaphorization” of terms like decolonization.

¹³ For a discussion on the carnal body, see Vivian Sobchack (2004).

¹⁴ For example, the policy of ‘carding’ in Toronto has led to much distrust between racialized communities and the police. British Columbia Senator Mobina Jaffer (2014) delved into the Canadian criminal justice system to expose instances of systemic racism. Carding is one such example, as it disproportionately targets black and brown citizens over their white counterparts. Jaffer likens Toronto’s carding system to New York City’s “stop and frisk” program, which was ruled unconstitutional by the United States’ Supreme Court in 2014.

¹⁵ The Boulton’s gardener, John Gray, named a geranium he developed after the Boulton family: *Pelargonium Boultonianum* (*History of the Grange* 2011).

¹⁶ Dr. Andrea Fatona is in the process of researching photographs of black children within postsecondary educational spaces. Her research is forthcoming.

¹⁷ Below is distinctive from above. ‘Below,’ like behind on the human body, is considered profane; by contrast, ‘above’ signals rational thought, gesturing to the ‘mind’ and the ‘eye’ (Tuan 2001).

¹⁸ Sara Ahmed (2006) speaks of all institutions as possessing a certain straight line that must be followed. Deviation from those lines ensures that the body is singled out and, in some cases, forced to conform.

¹⁹ For a discussion on the benefits of live performance, see Maya Roth (2007).

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Appendix A – Artist Biographies, Statements and CV

Rouzbeh Akhbari

Akhbari is an Iranian installation and video artist whose practice is research-driven, often interventionist in approach and situated at the interdisciplinary nexus of postcolonial theory, political economies, and critical architecture. Akhbari's projects have appeared in journals such as *Scapegoat*, *SHIFT*, and *Prefix Photo*. He has recently co-authored a chapter on Casablanca's iconic slaughterhouse for the *Unsettling Colonial Modernity* edited volume to be published by Cambridge scholars. His work has been exhibited locally and internationally at la Fabrique Culturelle des Abattoirs (Casablanca), SiShang Art Museum (Beijing), Le Cube (Rabat), Birch Contemporary (Toronto), 8-eleven (Toronto), Justina M. Barnicke (Toronto), Art Mur (Montreal), and Art Museum of Nanjing University (Nanjing). He is currently an MVS fellow at University of Toronto's Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design.

Artist Statement for Project (Written in Conjunction with Sona Safaei-Sooreh)

Top Seven is an attempt to critically engage with the typically celebratory lexicon of institutional success. Growing provincial and federal reliance on neoliberal market strategies necessitates that our post-secondary institutions increasingly rely upon private fundraising campaigns to sustain their operations, prompting unprecedented ecological changes within the institution in the process. Under these circumstances, universities function within a much more complex political arena. Thus the shift toward de-centered funding schemes (that largely depend on donor-actors) manifest in both explicit and

implicit alterations to the physical morphology of post-secondary institutions. This re-imagining of public and private space is observable in many instances: from shifts in tone, including equating success with quantifiable measures of progress, to a clear compartmentalization and demarcation of pedagogical space modelled after the university's external funding bodies. *Top Seven* embodies this increasingly hegemonic visual language, one associated with a gathering of multiple state or corporate actors in a formal setting. The text, derived from the mission and mandate statements of some of OCAD University's largest and most active donors, is both literally and figuratively elevated within the University itself, creating a point of entry for conversations around the complexities involved in the new terrain of institutional interdependencies.

Artist CV

EDUCATION:

- 2018** MFA University of Toronto, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design (ongoing)
- 2016** BFA Visual Studies OCAD University, Sculpture and Installation

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS:

- 2016-18** University of Toronto, Daniels Faculty of Architecture Graduate Fellowship
- 2016-17** Ontario Graduate Scholarship (University of Toronto, OGS)
- 2016** David Buller Memorial Award
- 2016** OCAD University Medal Sculpture/Installation
- 2016** BMO 1st Art Award (Ontario)
- 2016** Project 31 Sculpture/Installation Award
- 2016** A & M Green Award
- 2016** Nora E. Vaughn Award
- 2016** FCR Sculpture and Installation Award
- 2016** Spoke Club Prize
- 2016** Diversity and Equity Excellence Award
- 2016** Gallery 76 Award
- 2014-15** Women's Art Association of Canada Mary E. Dignam Scholarship

2013 Owen W. Wilson Memorial Scholarship

2013 Sully Corth Memorial Fund

SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS:

2017 Tides of Sand and Steel, Si shang Museum, Beijing [with ADL]

2016 Spoliation, Birch Contemporary, Toronto [Solo]

Land Also Moves, Independent Art Spaces Festival, Beijing (with ADL)

2015 DDDD. 8 eleven, Toronto. [With Chris Lang]

Peace of Mind. Priscilla Queen of the Medina, Marrakech. [Solo, curated by Ash Moniz] Burden/Unburden, La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs, Casablanca. [With Felix Kalmenson]

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC DISPLAYS:

2016 (BMO 1st Art winners show case) Justina M. Barnicke, Toronto

Fresh Paint / New Construction, Art Mur, Montreal

21st Annual Juried Exhibition, Canadian Sculpture Society, Toronto

Silk Road International, AMNUA, Art Museum of Nanjing

Future 33, YTB Gallery, Toronto

Augmented Film Festival, Royal Cinema, Toronto

GradEx 101 (Medal Winner), OCAD University, Toronto

Xpace annual fundraiser, Xpace, Toronto

2015 *Scratching Where It's Itching*, YTB Gallery, Toronto

Swing Lounge, Toronto Pride

Order & Progress, Old Arts Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton

Spatial Stabilizer, Westaim Corp. headquarters, Toronto

Spearhead of Development, FCR public sculpture at Rutherford Mall, Vaughan

2014 *FORMAL ISM*, staged performance at MoMA, New York City

Counter-spectacle for the Second Boer War Monument, City of Toronto

Supporting Walls, Sheraton Centre, Toronto

Peace of Mind, Priscilla Queen of the Medina, Marrakech

Burden/Unburden, La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs, Casablanca

Video Night, Le Cube, Rabat

Institutional Stabilizer, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Figure Show, OCAD University Great Hall, Toronto

360, Brinks Building, Toronto

2013 *SPACEMATTER*, BDRM Gallery, Toronto Art Show Upstairs, the Opera House

RESIDENCIES:

2017 Si Shang Musuem Artist-in-residence, Beijing, China

2016 China Residencies Collaborative, Beijing/Yinchuan/HongSibu, China

2016 University of Windsor Research Residency, Windsor/Detroit, Canada/USA

2014 Boxes, Zones and Quarters, Casablanca/Marrakesh/Rabat, Morocco

2013 Roundtable Residency, Dragon Academy, Toronto, Canada (in collaboration with Sona Safaei-Sooreh)

PRESS & PUBLICATIONS:

- 2016** Order & Progress: Burden, PREFIX Photo 33 [print]
2016 Le paysage artistique de demain, le Journal de Montreal [Print]
2016 Spoliation at Birch Contemporary, Canadian Art, Must-sees [online]
2016 Institutional Stabilizers, Zhmagazine [online]
2016 Rouzbeh Akhbari and Felix Kalmenson “From Protectorate to Neoliberal Polis-Reading Casablanca through Order & Progress.” *Unsettling Colonial Modernity: Islamicate Contexts in Focus*, (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) [print]
2016 “Quick Nod to the Current State of Affairs” Shift, [online & print]
2014 *Institutional Stabilizer* (Publishers&: Toronto) ISBN# 978-1-304-97282-8 [print]
2013 *A Thousand Words Is 600’285 Characters* (Publishers&: Toronto) ISBN# 978-1-304-53266-4 [print]
2014 Interview with Studio Beat [online]

TALKS, PANELS AND CONFERENCES:

- 2016** “Lectures for End of the World(s),” *In/Future*, Ontario Place, Toronto
2016 “Anatomy of Paranoid Urbanism” *Artcite Inc.* Artist-Run-Centre, Windsor
2016 “Spoliation: From Plinths to Capital” *Intersections/ Cross-Sections Conference*, Ryerson University, Toronto
2015 “From Protectorate to Neoliberal Casablanca- an Overview of Order & Progress” *Politics of Space and Place, Unsettling Colonial Modernity Conference*, University of Alberta, Edmonton
2015 “Function 06,” *Panel on Politics of Sanitation in Built and Social Architecture*, OCAD University, Toronto
2014 “Boxes, Zones and Quarters,” Artist Talk, Casablanca American School, Casablanca
2014 “Prelude. Self-immolation in the Arab spring and the Iranian Green Revolution.” *Anciens Abattoirs*, Casablanca
2014 Artist talk for the course: Site and Time, OCAD University, Toronto

Jessica Karuhanga

Karuhanga is based in Toronto. She has presented her work at various galleries, museums and artist- run-centres including The Royal Conservatory, Trinity Square Video, Art Gallery of Ontario, The Drake Hotel (Toronto), Deluge Contemporary Art (Victoria), Art Mûr, Studio 303 (Montreal), and Goldsmiths (London, UK). Upcoming projects include

an exhibition at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery. Her writing has been published by C Magazine and 7a*11d International Performance Festival. She has lectured for Soho House, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Royal Ontario Museum, as well as Harvard University and Tisch School of the Arts at NYU's Black Portraits Series. Karuhanga is a sessional lecturer at University of Toronto and OCAD University. She holds degrees from Western University and University of Victoria.

Artist Statement for Project

This work is titled *ground and cover me*—these four words evoke a directive to bend, anchor, and conceal. The choreography's form is two-fold. A body moves. A hand grasps petals. This work speaks to the site, its infra-structure and accumulation of strata. Slow progressive movements that draw attention to the wall and windows revealing what lies before the frame outside. The potential audience can witness from either side of this partition. Each sight-line is different. I want to draw from the Grange, conjure its layers, and see it as the garden existing before these institutions existed as structures.

Geraniums were a significant flower in this garden so much so the family gardener even named a species of genus after the Boulton family [Pelargonium Boultonianum].

Artist CV

EDUCATION:

2010 BFA, Honors specialization in Studio Arts; Western University, London ON
2012 MFA, University of Victoria, Victoria BC

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2017** Inhale, Exhale, repeat (until done), curated by Jenn Goodwin, JMB Gallery, Toronto ON
- 2016** Poster Virus for AIDS ACTION NOW! organized by Alex McClelland and Jessica Whitbread, Toronto ON and Montreal QC
- 2016** Pixelation, curated by Zviko Mhakayakora, OCAD University, Toronto ON
- 2016** Finishing Lines: One-Day Performance Festival, curated by Jenna Faye-Powell, Forest City Gallery and McIntosh Gallery, London ON
- 2015** 25 Multiples Toward a Past and Future, Deluge Contemporary Art, Victoria BC
- 2015** Truth be Told, curated by Humboldt Magnussen and Alison Cooley, Younger Than Beyoncé Gallery, Toronto ON
- 2014** Open House, curated by Sandra Brewster, 182 Symmington Avenue, Toronto ON
- 2014** 11:45, FADO Emerging Artist Series, curated by Kate Barry, Xspace Cultural Centre, Toronto ON
- 2014** It wasn't Supposed to be this way, curated by Amber Landgraff, Videofag, Toronto ON

PERFORMANCES:

- 2017** *through a brass channel*, Inhale, Exhale, repeat (until done), curated by Jenn Goodwin, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto ON
- 2017** *ground and cover me*, Mind the Gap: The Interstices Between Architecture and Experience, curated by Justine Hartieb-Power, OCAD University, Toronto ON
- 2016** (Performer) Ame Henderson + Evan Webber's performance encyclopedia, Toronto: Tributes + Tributaries, 1971-1989 Performance Series, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON
- 2016** *Carefree & On*, ASSEMBLÉE, curated by WIVES Collective, Studio 303, Montreal QC
- 2016** *#Carefree*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON
- 2016** *Carefree, Fine and Mellow*, Trinity Square Video, curated by cheyanne turions, Big on Bloor Festival, Toronto ON
- 2016** *A Still Cling To Fading Blossoms*, organized by Chandra Frank, Archives Matter Conference, Goldsmiths, London UK
- 2016** (Performer) Christof Migone's *Mixer*, The Royal Conservatory, Toronto ON
- 2016** *Boom Aura*, DOORED 24, Double Double Land, Toronto ON
- 2016** *Shade Shadow Spectre*, Finishing Lines, curated by Jenna Faye-Powell, Forest City Gallery, London ON
- 2015** *A Still Cling To Fading Blossoms*, featured in The Artist Newsstand, curated by Jess Dobkin, Chester Subway Station, Toronto ON
- 2014** *Bone Black Dust and Sky Lickers*, curated by Rea McNamara, The Drake Hotel, Toronto ON
- 2014** *A Still Cling To Fading Blossoms*, curated by Chris Worden, Electric Eclectics Festival, Meaford ON
- 2014** BEAT PIECE, only Ono: a Fundraiser for Musicworks, Toronto ON
- 2014** *The trip, and the fall, and the lost heap of longing*, 11:45, curated by Kate Barry,

- FADO Emerging Artist Series, Xspace Cultural Centre, Toronto ON
2014 (Performer) Brendan Fernandes' *Closing Line*, In Practice: Chance Motives, Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES:

- 2017** Moderator: *The Un-Othered Body*, curated by Esmaa Mohammed (OCAD University, Toronto ON)
2015 Presenter: *In Conversation: Her Hustle*, moderated by Ariella Starkman (Soho House, Toronto ON)
2015 Lecturer: *Worn Dialogues: Gallery Conversations* (The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto ON)
2015 Presenter: *Worn Dialogues: Exploring Black Feminine Identity*, moderated by Andrea Fatona with Sylvia D. Hamilton (The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto ON)
2015 Presenter: *Locating the Black Female Body in Canada*, Black Portraitures Conference Series (Harvard University and Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, Florence IT)
2015 Presenter: *Critical Ethnic Studies Conference* (York University, Toronto ON)
2015 Lecturer: *Sunday Scene Series* (The Power Plant, Toronto ON)
2015 Lecturer: *Basquiat Idea Bar: Justice* (Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto ON)
2014 Presenter: *Emerging Arts Practices*, CARFAC National Annual Conference, moderated by Ella Cooper (Artscape Youngplace, Toronto ON)
2014 Presenter: *What Happens After Midnight*, FADO Emerging Artist Series, moderated by Tanya Mars (Xspace Cultural Centre, Toronto ON)
2014 Presenter: *Free Think Tank*, The Centre For Incidental Activisms, moderated by Maggie Flynn, Art Gallery of York University (York University, Toronto ON)

SELECTED WRITINGS:

- 2016** Review, Simone Leigh: *The Waiting Room*, New Museum, C Magazine: Issue 132
2016 Column, Artefact: Francisco-Fernando Granados, C Magazine: Issue 130

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2016** Review, *The Artists Newsstand*, Emily Fitzpatrick, C Magazine: Issue 131
2016 Interview, *A Complex Magic with Jessica*, interview with Karen Campos Castillo, Heartbeats, Toronto ON
2015 Interview, *Tribal Dances of a Female Black Body*, interview with Kofi Fosu Forson, Armseye Magazine, edited by Kathryn Drury, Los Angeles CA

Faith La Rocque

La Rocque is a visual artist currently living in Toronto and exhibiting internationally. Recent group exhibitions include *All this Time* at the Jackman Humanities Institute, University of Toronto (2016-2017); *Present* at Erin Stump Projects, Toronto (2016); and *Imitation of Life* at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (2016). Solo shows include *Medium, Sister, Brooklyn* (2015); *chisel to carve light thoughts* at De Luca Fine Art, Toronto (2014); and *High Acceptance*, YYZ Artists' Outlet, Toronto (2013). In 2016 La Rocque completed a residency at Skafffell Centre for Visual Arts in Seydisfjordur, Iceland. She has received numerous grants and awards, including the Joseph S. Stauffer Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts.

Artist Statement for Project

Visual artist Faith La Rocque will be present in the Anniversary Gallery working with staghorn sumac as material. In considering its various uses and generative potential, La Rocque will investigate time, engagement, and transformation through a series of simple actions, spanning over the course of the day. She will then endeavour to place components of the sumac, including the seeds, in the cracks and seams of the institution.

Artist CV

EDUCATION:

- 2006** Master of Fine Art – Tapestry, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
- 2003** Bachelor of Fine Art – Art History & Studio Art, Concordia University, Montréal

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2015** *Medium, Sister, Brooklyn*, New York
The Divers, G Gallery, Toronto, collaboration with Jaimie Henthorn

- 2014** chisel to carve light thoughts, De Luca Fine Art, Toronto
- 2013** High Acceptance, YYZ Artists' Outlet, Toronto
- 2009** Lost in Contemplum, Board of Directors, Toronto

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2016** All this Time, Jackman Humanities Institute, University of Toronto, Toronto
PRESENT, Erin Stump Projects, Toronto
Imitation of Life, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta
- 2015** Imitation of Life, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario
- 2013** December's Letters, Orgy Park, Brooklyn, New York
To Get Off to a Flying Start, Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Toronto
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, De Luca Fine Art, Toronto
- 2012** Echo Dell, Narwhal, Toronto
- 2011** Ineffable Plasticity: the experience of being human, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto
Star Project, Minokamo Woodland Gallery, Minokamo, Japan. Collaboration with Jaimie Henthorn
- 2009** Arcade Park (1978-1985), Brooklyn Fire Proof, Brooklyn, New York
- 2008** Darkling Eclipse, Kunstverein Das Weisse Haus, Vienna, Austria
- 2006** Do Something for Wildness and Make the Mountains Glad, DeMarco Skateraw Project, Dunbar, Scotland

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- Hare, Anastasia. "Ineffable Plasticity: the experience of being human/Nature." C Magazine. Issue 113, Spring 2012: 52-53.
- Whyte, Murray. "Review: MOCCA's Ineffable Plasticity." The Toronto Star. 21 December 2011.
- Vaughan, R.M. "Gimme shelter – or at least a great fish tank." The Globe and Mail. 10 December 2011: R14.

SELECTED GRANTS & AWARDS:

- 2016** Visual Arts Project Grant, Canada Council for the Arts
Visual Arts Project Grant, Ontario Arts Council
- 2010** Joseph S. Stauffer Prize, Canada Council for the Arts
Visual Arts Project Grant, Canada Council for the Arts
- 2008** Bess Winspear Memorial Scholarship, Banff Centre for the Arts

RESIDENCIES:

- 2016** Skaftfell Centre for Visual Arts, Seydisfjordur, Iceland
- 2008** Cosmic Ray Research thematic residency, Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta
- 2004** Cove Park, Roseneath, Scotland

Sona Safaei-Sooreh

Safaei-Sooreh is an interdisciplinary Iranian artist based in Toronto. She holds BFA's from Azad University in Tehran and OCAD University in Toronto, Ontario. She is currently a candidate for MVS program at the University of Toronto. Safaei has received several awards and recognitions, such as SSRCH Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate scholarship (2016), University of Toronto fellowship (2015), David Buller Memorial Scholarship (2015), OAC Exhibition assistance Grant (Assignments 2014), OAC Exhibition assistance Grant (Reworking the Common knowledge 2014), Project 31 Sculpture/Installation Award (2013), Honourable Mentions: 401 Richmond Career-Launcher Prize (2013), Wayne Lum Memorial Scholarship (2012), and Sully Corth Memorial Fund Scholarship (2011).

Artist Statement for Project

*Please see artist statement listed under Rouzbeh Akhbari

Artist CV

EDUCATION:

- 2017** MVS University of Toronto (in progress)
- 2013** BFA OCADU Major: Sculpture/Installation
- 2006** BA Islamic Azad University Major: Painting

GRANTS AND AWARDS:

- 2016** SSHRC Joseph Armand Bombardier Graduate Scholarships (Provided by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council)
- 2015** David Buller Memorial Scholarship, University of Toronto
- 2015 - 17** Fellowship Award for Master of Visual Studies program, University of Toronto
- 2014** Short listed for MOP CAP 2015 award
- 2014** Ontario Arts Council Exhibition Assistance grant (For solo exhibition@ Artspace)
- 2014** Visual Art Project Grant: Toronto Arts Council (with NoYo residency program)

- 2014** Ontario Arts Council Exhibition Assistance grant (For performance/workshop @Akin Collective)
- 2013** Project 31 Sculpture/Installation Award
- 2013** Honourable Mentions: 401 Richmond Career-Launcher Prize
- 2012** Wayne Lum Memorial Scholarship
- 2011** Sully Corth Memorial Fund Sculpture Scholarship

SOLO AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITS:

- 2014** V+1 (multiple mug project), Solo Exhibition, 8-11
- 2014** ASSIGNMENTS, Solo Exhibition, Artspace, Peterborough, Canada
- 2014** PERPETUUM MOBILE: This Text is a Sculpture, Hamilton Public Library
- 2013** ONE: THE FORMS, TWO: THE PLURAL TENSE, Lanie Chalmers and Sona Safaei @ Narwhal Art Projects
- 2012** DECENTER: PERFORMANCE + INSTALLATION, Parkingallery, Tehran
- 2011** SOMETIMES Y, Adam David Brown and Sona Safaei @ Al Green Gallery, Toronto

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2017** Mind the Gap (in collaboration with Rouzbeh Akhbari), OCAD University
- 2016** Art Athina Platform Projects represented by Parkingallery
- 2015** MOP CAP 2015 shortlisted exhibition
- 2014** TADAEX, Mohsen Gallery, Tehran
- 2014** BREATH FROM A WARM LOCALE, Croxhapox, Gent, Belgium
- 2014** A REVIEW OF A DECADE OF VIDEO ART IN IRAN, Iranian Artists Forum, Tehran
- 2013** THE THIRD SPACE, Harbourfront Centre, main Gallery, Toronto
- 2013** REMEMBERING THE THINGS PAST/THINGS I HAVE NOT DONE, Dragon Academy, Toronto
- 2013** HAZELTON LANES ARTS FESTIVAL, Oval Square, Hazelton Lanes Mall, Toronto
- 2013** AUGMENTED CINEMA FILM FESTIVAL, The Royal Cinema, Toronto
- 2013** (B)ORDERS, ORDERS, (DIS)ORDERS, dna projects, Sydney, Australia
- 2013** Video series curated by Jennifer Simaitis, Xspace (External Space), Toronto
- 2013** LIMITED ACCESS FOUR, Aaran Gallery, Tehran
- 2012** TALKING TO OTHER PEOPLE (IN A REALLY LOUD ROOM), Xspace Cultural Center, Toronto
- 2012** (B)ORDERS, ORDERS, (DIS)ORDERS, Raf Projects, Tehran
- 2012** SCRIPTURE, De Bond, Bruges
- 2012** IRANIAN PULSE, Sesc Vila Mariana, Sao Paulo
- 2012** PART OF ME, Cité internationale des Arts, Paris
- 2012** IN OTHER WORDS (THE BLACK MARKET OF TRANSLATIONS), NGBK & Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin
- 2011** IRAN VIA VIDEO CURRENT, Thomas Erben Gallery, NY
- 2011** IRANIAN PULSE, Oi Futuro, Rio de Janeiro

- 2011** TVDINNER, IM International, NY
- 2011** IRAN INC., GALERIE ANNIE GENTILS, Bruges
- 2010** IRAN & CO, La Bourgeoise, Bruges
- 2010** ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, The Factory Media Arts Centre, Hamilton
- 2010** TWITTER/ART + SOCIAL MEDIA, Diane Farris Gallery, Vancouver
- 2006** 4TH BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTING OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD, Saba Cultural Centre, Tehran
- 2006** DEEPER DEPRESSION, Abtin Gallery, Tehran

PUBLICATIONS:

- 2015** V+1 (exhibition reviewed by Alison Snowball), Journal of Curatorial Studies, Volume 4 Number 1
- 2014** ASSIGNMENTS, Shift 7: Exchanges, OCAD U Student Press
- 2014** ASSIGNMENTS, Exhibition essay written by Jacob Wren @Artspace
- 2013** WRITTEN ON THE BODY/ POLITICS OF POETRY: Iranian Artists & the Power of Script, Mixed Bag Mag (online publication)
- 2013** LIMITED ACCESS FOUR, Exhibition Catalogue, Published by Parkingallery, Tehran
- 2012** CONVERSATIES-CONVERSATIONS (part I), Published by The Cultural Centre Bruges, Exhibition Catalogue from 1995-2012
- 2012** PROJECT 35 VOLUME II, Published by Independent Curators International (ICI), New York, DVD
- 2012** IN OTHER WORDS (THE BLACK MARKET OF TRANSLATIONS), Exhibition Catalogue, published by NGBK: Berlin ISBN: 978-3-938515-46-4
- 2011** LIMITED ACCESS III, Exhibition Catalogue, Published by Parkingallery, Tehran

Appendix B – Figures



Figure 1a. William Alsop Architects in partnership with Robbie/Young + Wright, Sharp Centre for Design (2004). Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 1b. William Alsop Architects in partnership with Robbie/Young + Wright, OCAD University façade (2004). Photo: Justine Kohleal.

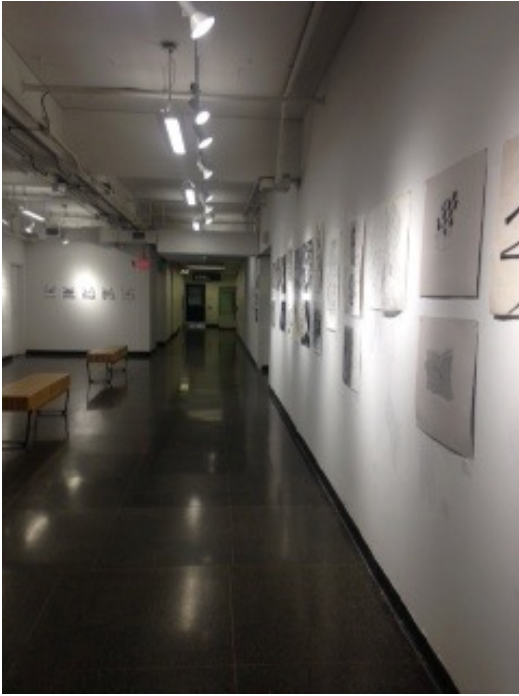


Figure 1c. OCAD University interior (2004). Photo: Justine Kohleal.

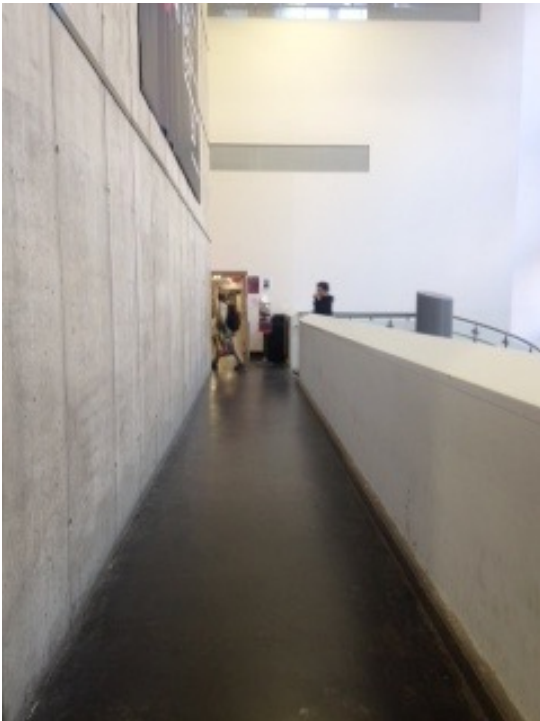


Figure 1d. OCAD University interior (2004). Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 1e. OCAD University interior (2004). Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 2a. Rouzbeh Akbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Seven Flags* (2017), installation view. Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 2b. Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Top Seven* (2017), installation view, screen-printed fabric and metal, 36" x 52". Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 2c. Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Top Seven* (2017), installation view, screen-printed fabric and metal, 36" x 52". Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 2d. Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Top Seven* (2017), installation view, screen-printed fabric and metal, 36" x 52". Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 2e. Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Top Seven* (2017), installation view, screen-printed fabric and metal, 36" x 52". Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 2f. Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh, *Top Seven* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 3. Gordon Peteran, *Inbox* (2009), installation view. Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 4. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anousahpour.



Figure 5. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anousahpour.



Figure 6. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 7. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 8. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9a. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9b. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9c. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9d. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9e. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 9f. Faith La Rocque, *Sumac* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 10. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 11a. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 11b. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 12. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. The Art Gallery of Ontario and The Grange can be seen to the right. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anoushahpour.



Figure 13. Ontario College of Art Teacher's Summer School (1922). Art Gallery of Ontario (1977), *100 Years: Evolution of the Ontario College of Art*, Toronto, p. 17.



Figure 14. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. Photo: Justine Kohleal.



Figure 15. Jessica Karuhanga, *ground and cover me* (2017), installation view. Photo: still from video documentation by Ryan Ferko and Parastoo Anousahpour.

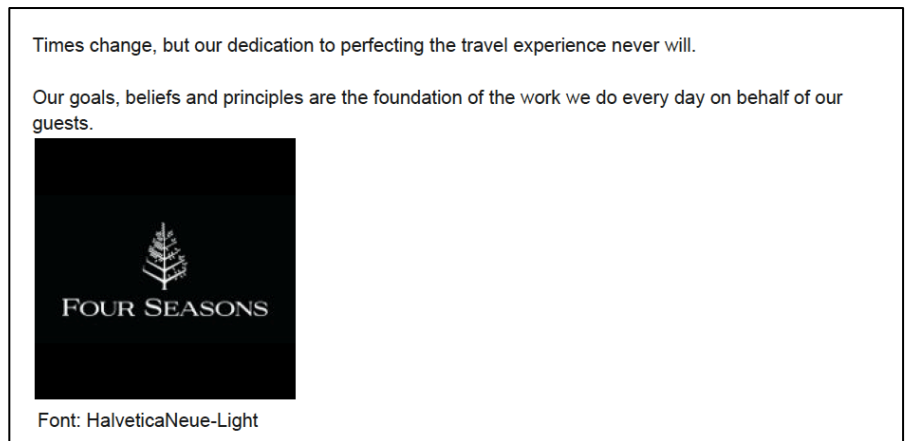
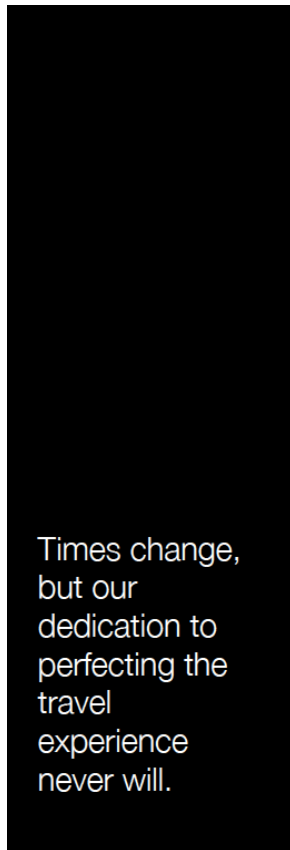
Appendix C – OCAD University Board of Governors and Top Donors for *Top Seven*

The Four Seasons: Rosalie and Isadore Sharp

Rosalie & Isadore Sharp

Long time benefactors Rosalie (AOCA, 1969) and Isadore Sharp, founders of the Four Seasons Hotel chain, have pledged \$3-million to OCAD University to create a dramatic new façade on the Rosalie Sharp Pavilion at 115 McCaul, and to transform the building into the OCAD University Centre for Experiential Learning. This student-focused centre is dedicated to studio-based learning across the university's program areas, partnerships with community and industry, and training in professional and business skills. Bortolotto Architects have been selected to transform the Pavilion into a striking landmark that will anchor the university's creative city campus along McCaul St.

"We funded the creation of the Sharp Centre for Design at a time when the institution was literally and figuratively being lifted to a new level," said Rosalie Sharp. "With this donation, we are helping build another artistic landmark that solidifies OCAD U's place as a hub of innovation in Toronto."



Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to The Four Season's mandate and logo, (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for donors www.ocadu.ca/ignite/donors.htm; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

Delaney Capital Management: Catherine (Kiki) Delaney, Internal Member, Board of Governors

Fundamental,
bottom-up
investing.



Catherine (Kiki) A. Delaney, CM LLD, CFA, DHumL

Chancellor, OCAD University

Kiki Delaney is President of C.A. Delaney Capital Management Ltd., the investment counselling firm that she founded in October 1992.

Delaney Capital Management is one of the leading investment counselling firms in Canada and one of the most recognized in capital markets in this country. Highly regarded in the field of private client wealth management, the firm is equally well respected for the calibre of its research and the quality of its people.

Kiki has been Chancellor of OCAD University since 2011. In addition, she serves on the Board of Trustees of the Hospital for Sick Children, is Chair of the Investment and Pension Committee at the Hospital for Sick Children and is a member of the Leadership Council of the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. As well, she serves on the Investment Committee of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Fundamental, bottom-up investing | Emphasis on North America but with a global perspective | Dedication to independent research and ideas

To preserve and grow capital by delivering strong, long-term returns with below-average risk



Font: Arial

Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to Delaney Capital Management's mandate and logo, (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for board of governors <http://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/board-of-governors/catherine-delaney.htm>; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

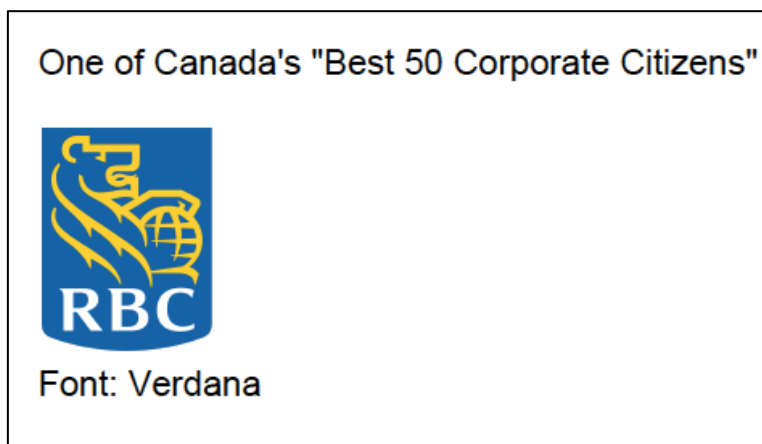
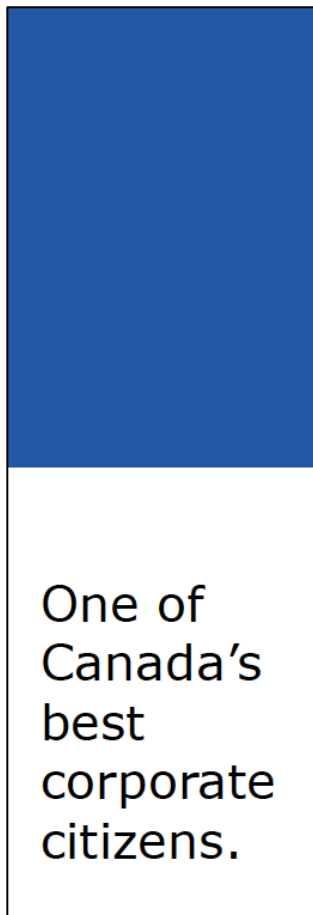
Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Foundation

RBC Foundation

Thanks to a generous gift of \$200,000 from the RBC Foundation, OCAD University will be able to launch the RBC Institute for Emerging Artists & Designers – a flagship suite of programs that will include a slate of expanded co-curricular programs and services, offered free of charge, to help students transition from graduation to creative careers.

The RBC Institute will offer OCAD U students more depth on the essentials of business planning, financial literacy, leadership skills, marketing and networking, and will enable students to access a wider range of frequent seminars, workshops and clinics covering topics from portfolio development to crowd-funding.

"As a longstanding supporter of the arts, we recognize the importance of providing opportunities for promising artists. We are confident that the RBC Institute will help creative and talented design students develop their careers and transition into the professional world and we are proud to support this initiative."



Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to the Royal Bank of Canada's mandate and logo (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for donors www.ocadu.ca/ignite/donors.htm; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

Relay Ventures: John Albright, External Member Elected by Board of Governors

Mobile.
From
sensor to
the cloud.



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

John Albright

Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Relay Ventures

John is Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Relay Ventures, an early stage venture fund exclusively focused on mobile connectivity. During his tenure in the venture capital business, John has gained extensive experience assisting entrepreneurs shape their vision and capital plans into successful long term growth programs which typically involved an aggressive financing strategy. John has a history of assisting entrepreneurial companies through significant growth and eventually to the public markets. His ability to work with and advise senior management of investee companies, as well as his skills in filling supporting roles where existing management lack the experience or skill set, has been vital to the success of past investments.

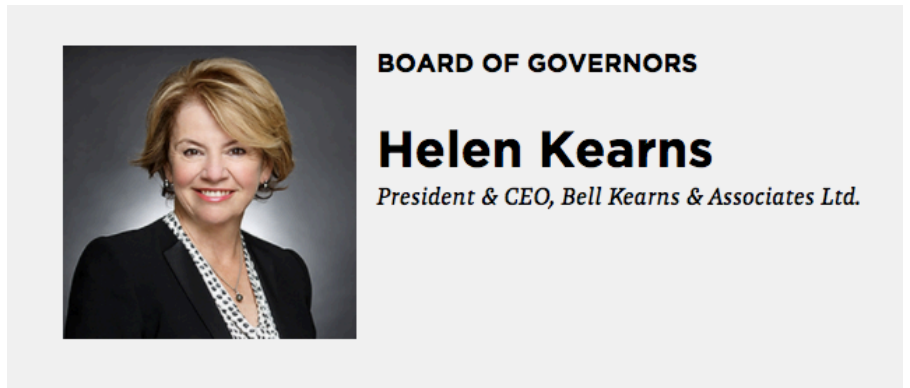
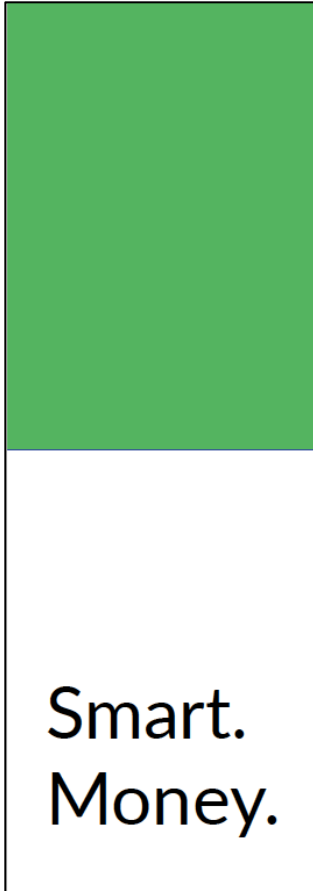
Venture Capital With a Point of View. Mobile. From the sensor to the cloud.



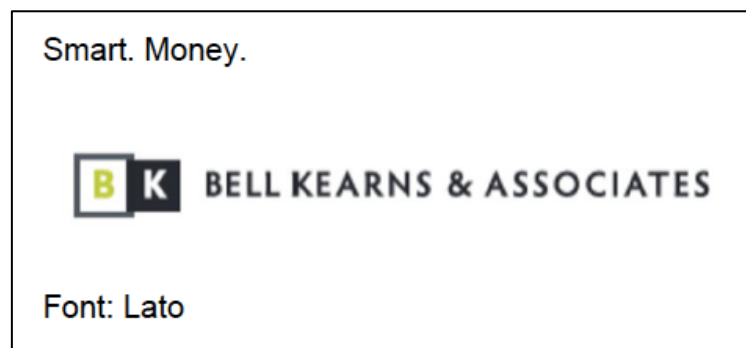
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Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to Relay Venture's mandate and logo (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for board of governors http://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/board-of-governors/john_albright.htm; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

Bell Kearns and Associates, Ltd.




Helen Kearns is the President & CEO of Bell Kearns & Associates Ltd. and is a leader in capital markets in Canada with more than 30 years' experience as a senior executive and entrepreneur in the investment industry and corporate director. She was named President and Chief Executive Officer of Bell Kearns & Associates Ltd. in February 2008. Bell Kearns & Associates provides extensive investment advisory services to families, corporations, estates and foundations on total portfolio governance, portfolio construction and performance measurement.

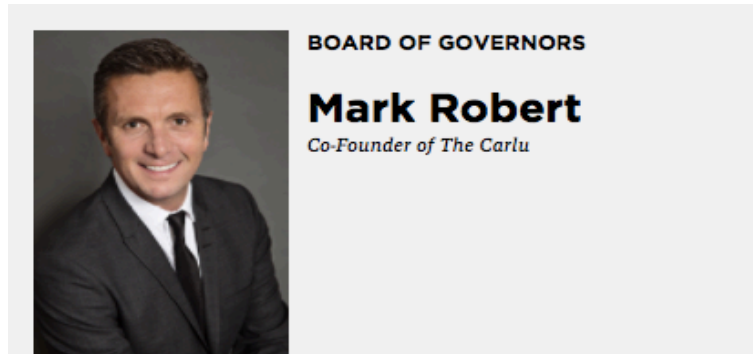


Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to Bell Kearns' mandate and logo (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for board of governors http://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/board-of-governors/helen_kearns.htm; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

The Carlu Corporation Limited: Mark Robert, External Member Appointed by Ontario Government



Commitment to the ultimate in sophistication and service.



As Co-Founder and Managing Partner of The Carlu Corporation Limited, Mark restored and operated The Carlu, a National Historic Site that would become the premiere special events venue in Toronto. Concurrently, Mark also started, operated then sold Eventals Inc., a luxury event rentals business.

Prior to The Carlu, Mark was Chief Operating Officer a The Art Vault Limited, a publicly traded global e-commerce internet art site. Earlier in his career, he spent a decade in commercial real estate, most notably with the Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited.

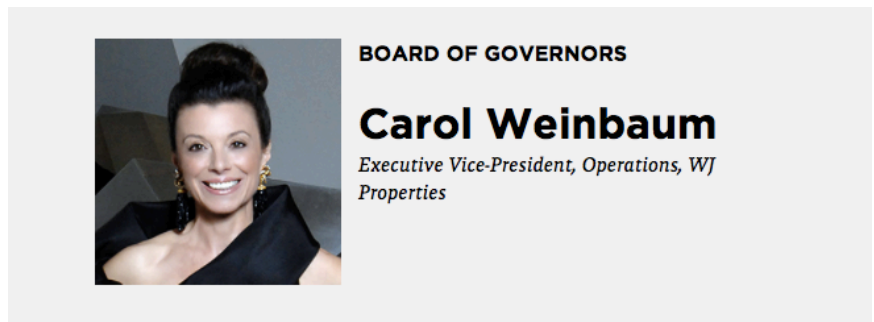
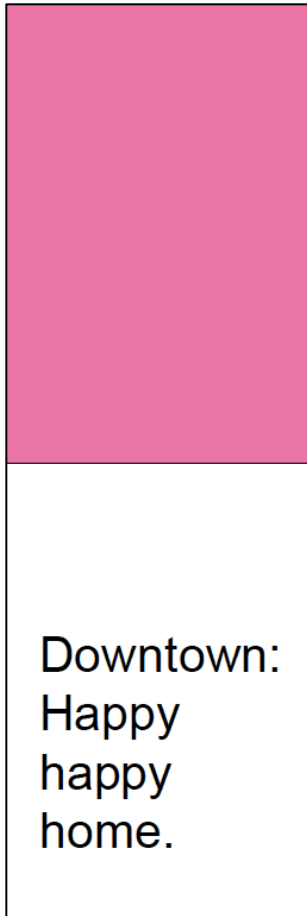
Mark has also been an active member of the community with involvement in numerous charitable and cultural organizations, including the Board of Heritage Toronto and Casey House, where he was co-chair for three years for its primary fundraiser: Art with Heart. In addition, Mark was selected to be on the Leadership Team for the creation of Toronto's Creative City Strategy ("Imagine a Toronto"), which became a guiding document for Toronto's economic development plan.

commitment to the ultimate in sophistication and service
<http://www.thecarlu.com/>

Font: tahoma

Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to The Carlu Corporation's mandate and logo (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for board of governors <http://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/board-of-governors/mark-robert.htm>; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

W. J. Properties: Carol Weinbaum, External Member Elected by Board of Governors

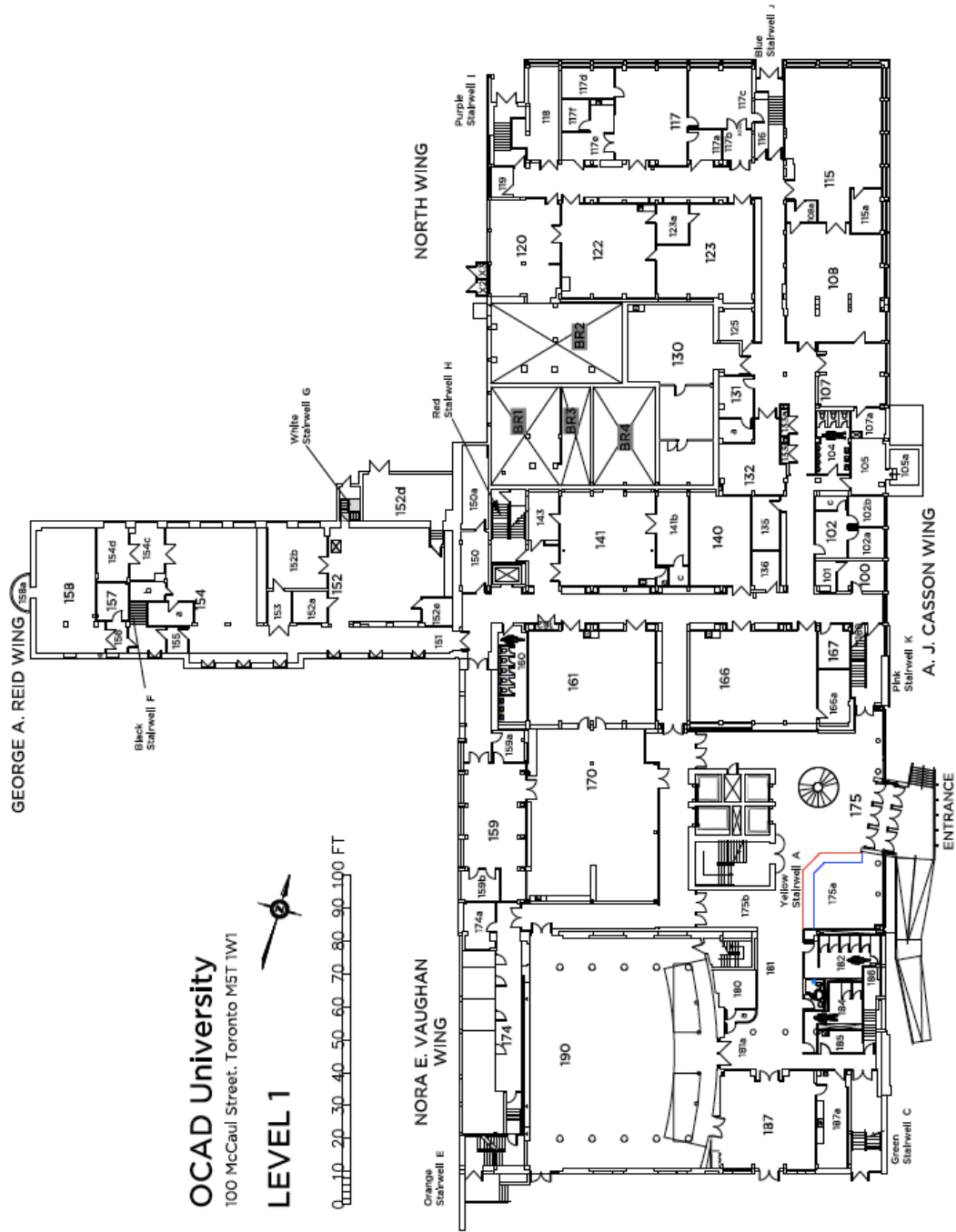


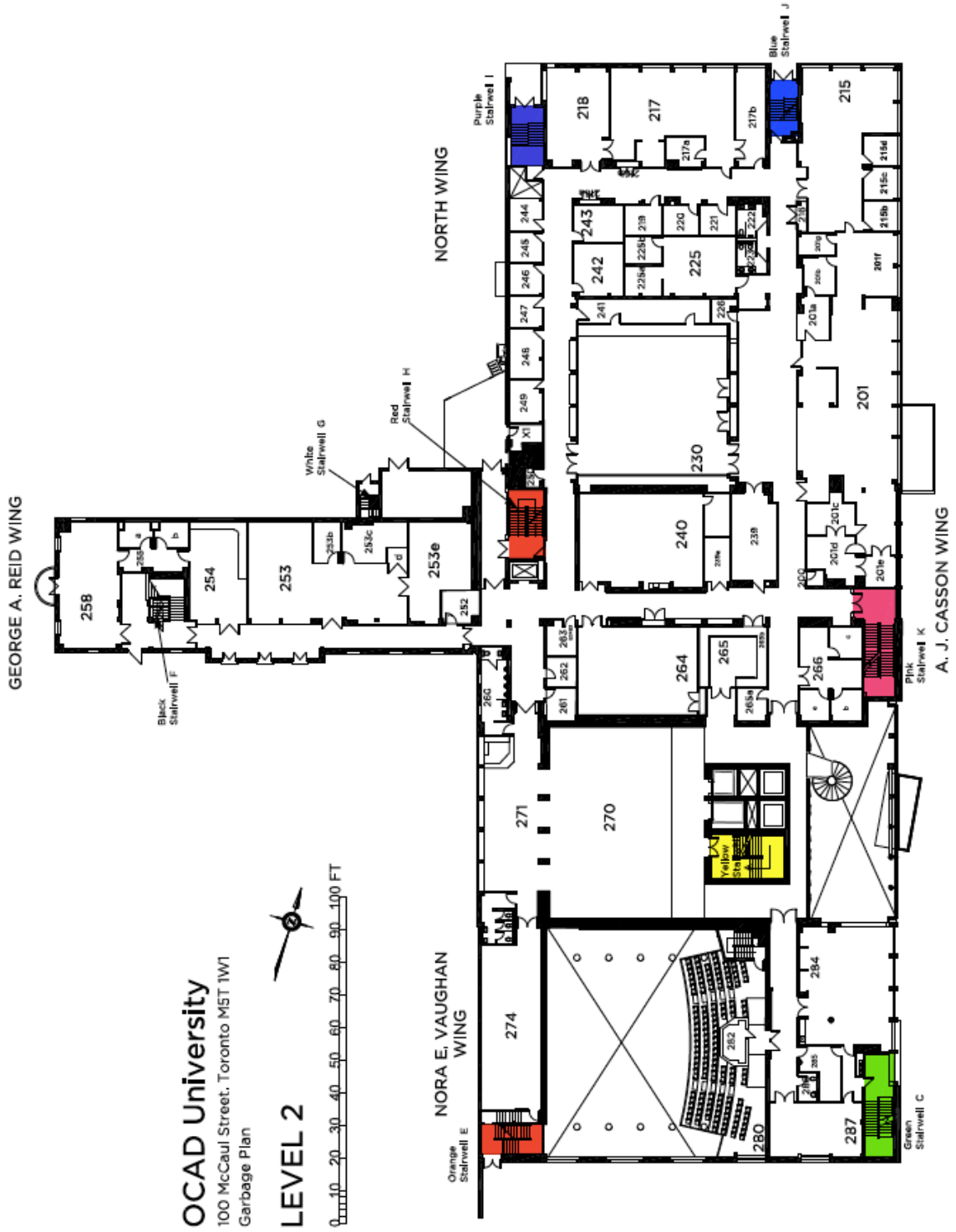
Carol Weinbaum is a founding member of Partners in Art, a non-profit group that aims to promote the visual arts in Canada through collaborative contemporary art projects and through an active education program. Partners in Art has raised over \$1 million for arts institutions and programs and has supported projects such as Ai Weiwei's Snake Ceiling at the AGO, Ryerson University's Image Centre and annual international photography symposium, the Artist-in-Residence Program at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Geoffrey Farmer's 'A Light in the Moon' exhibition at Mercer Union. Carol currently serves on the Board of Directors at the Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art (MOCCA), where she is a Founding Director. In the past, she has served as a Board Member on the Board of Directors of the Baycrest Foundation and the OCAD University Foundation Board. Carol is an owner and the Executive Vice President, Operations of WJ Properties, a property management company.



Images left to right: Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh flag corresponding to WJ Properties' mandate and logo (image provided by the artists); OCAD University webpage for board of governors <http://www.ocadu.ca/about/governance/board-of-governors/carol-weinbaum.htm>; Rouzbeh Akhbari and Sona Safaei-Sooreh documentation of website logo and portion of mandate used, provided by artists.

Appendix D – 100 McCaul Floor Plan

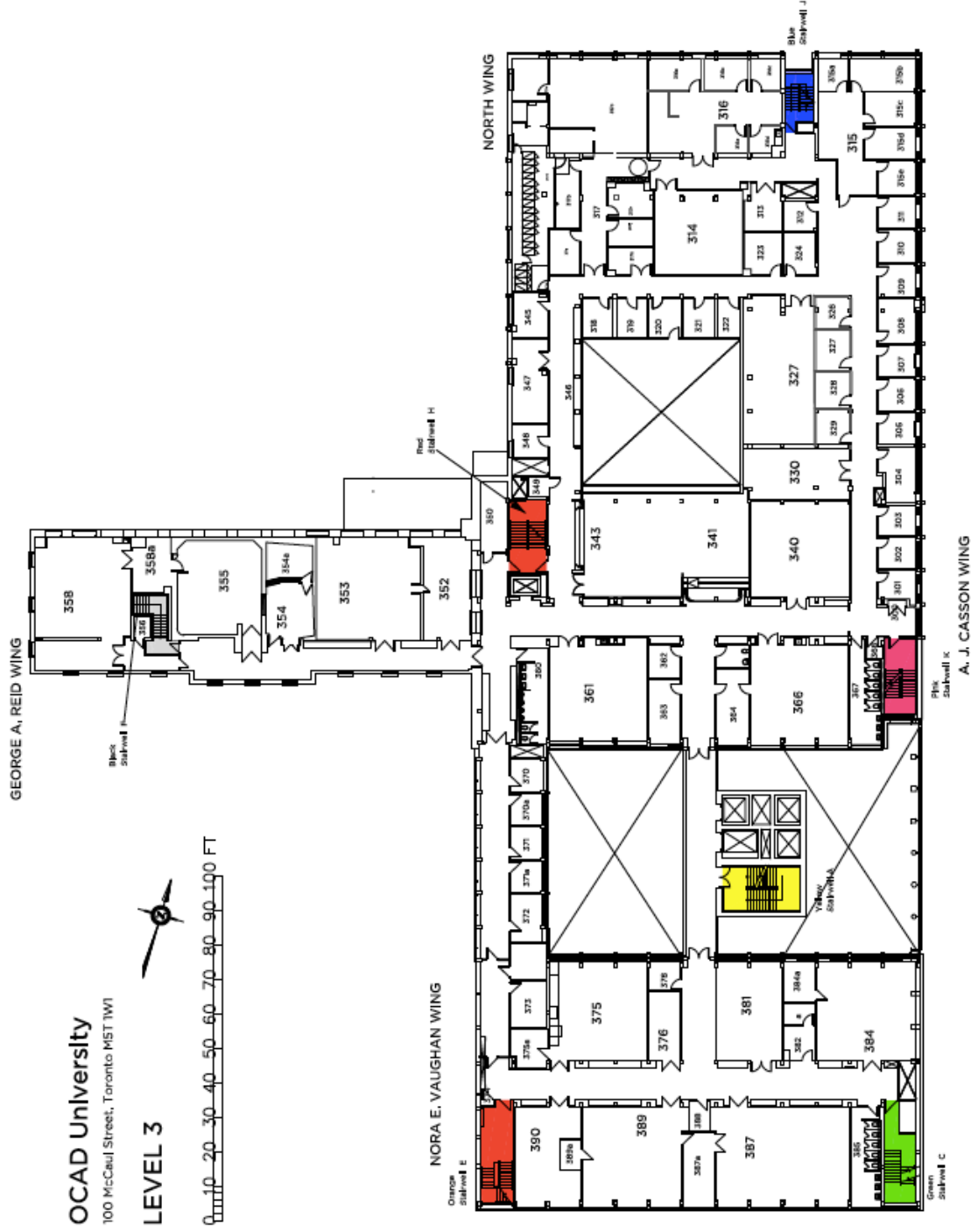




OCAD University
 100 McCaul Street, Toronto M5T 1W1
 Garbage Plan

OCAD University
100 McCaul Street, Toronto M5T 1W1

LEVEL 3



Appendix E – Promotional Material Brochure

Rouzbah Akhbari & Sona Safaei

Top Seven (2017)
Entrance, 1st Floor
9am - 10am Install

February 25 - March 4th

Faith La Rocque

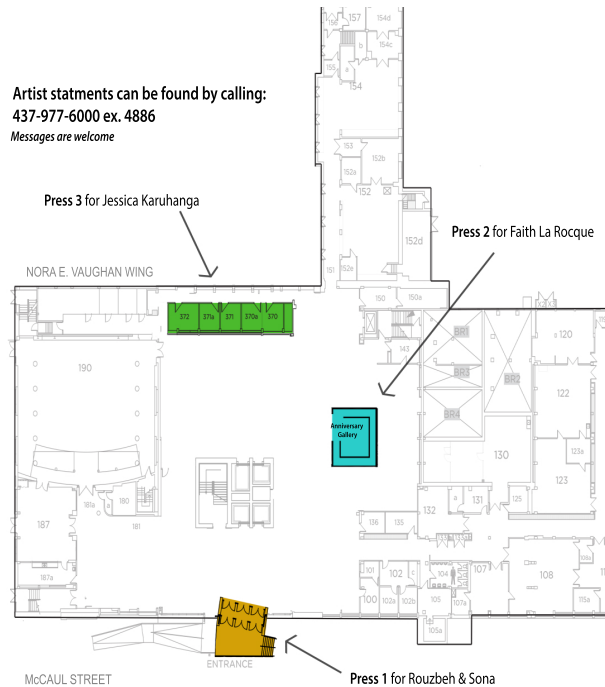
Sumac (2017)
Anniversary Gallery, 2nd Floor
10:30am - 4pm*

*Durational performance; the artist will create objects while in gallery, which will be placed throughout the Northwest wing of 100 McCaul

Jessica Karuhanga

ground and cover me (2017)
Nora E. Vaughan Wing, 3rd Floor
1pm - 2pm

Artist statements can be found by calling:
437-977-6000 ex. 4886
Messages are welcome



There is an old family video of me as a child in which I appear disoriented, babbling to myself as I waddle around in a star-shaped snowsuit. I have been tobogganing with my family, though by the time I enter the screen we must have been readying ourselves to leave. Long shadows mark the passage of time and the world is awash in dying bluish-grey light. My father is filming my meandering from a distance, casually asking me where I think I'm headed. I decline to face him and continue on, pausing here and there to look at snow-covered shrubs and (I can only imagine) little bird footprints, left behind in the powdery snow much like my own. Though he expresses confusion, even mild amusement, at my childish sense of direction, I appear quite calm—confident, even. Children often do not have a sense of the vast space that surrounds them, generally accepting what they see in front of them and feel in the moment at the expense of an entire world that lay *behind and beyond*.

The ability to wander aimlessly—much like Walter Benjamin's flâneur—dissipates as we grow older. We begin, if we are able, to differentiate between right and left, forward and backward, and our paths through life become more proscribed. Authors Sally Banes and André Lepcecki remind us that our bodies "may not be the full property of its subject's desire and agency." In other words, our embodied knowledge, which informs our understanding of the world, is no longer ours alone. It is mediated by the myriad institutions that surround us on a daily basis, ones that impose particular ways of moving and sensing within the world.

Not only do institutions demand certain actions, their design features also privilege sight above all other sense organs. Subjects thus become disconnected from their bodies, numb to the world around them. *WARNING! Mind the Gap* situates itself within the context of the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U) to problematize how subjects move through institutional space. Visual artists Jessica Karuhanga, Faith La Rocque, and Rouzbah Akhbari and Sona Safaei create performance-based or multi-sensorial artworks that disrupt OCAD U's spatial fixity, in particular within locations that are normally understood as being merely functional or transitory—such as stairwells, hallways, and entryways. Bringing embodied awareness into sites that typically lie outside of the regular channels of negotiation allows for dialectical exchanges to be embedded within the very fabric of the institution. In this way, the banality of OCAD U's interior is activated to advance a plurality of narratives, un-settling the institution in the process.

Justine Kohleal Hartlieb-Power
Curator

**WA
RN
ING!**
Mind The Gap

02.25.2017

9am - 4pm
Main Campus
100 McCaul Street

www.warningmindthegap.ca

Top: inside of brochure – Bottom: front and back of brochure

Instagram

Instagram

Search

warning_mindthegap Edit Profile ...

15 posts 24 followers 5 following

WARNING! Mind The Gap Thesis exhibition curated by MFA candidate Justine Kohleal @ OCAD University, Toronto. warningmindthegap.ca

The image displays a grid of 15 Instagram posts from the account 'warning_mindthegap'. The posts are arranged in a 5x3 grid. The first row shows a red warning sign, a window ledge with red petals, and a person in a hallway. The second row shows a long hallway with a bench, a brick building exterior, and a person filming with a camera. The third row shows a person sitting on the floor, a person at a podium, and a person at a podium. The fourth row shows a hallway with posters, a hallway with yellow caution tape, and a hallway with posters and a ladder. The fifth row shows a person crouching, a person at a podium, and a display with posters and a sign that says 'FREE NOW'.

WARNING! Mind The Gap

[About](#) • [Interventions](#) • [ground and cover me](#) • [Sumac](#) • [Top Seven](#) • [Contact & Acknowledgements](#) • [Bio](#)



Share

WARNING! Mind The Gap takes as its starting point the physical and psychic disconnect between the spectacular architectural facade of the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCADU) and its lived, felt experience. It asks: how can performative, multi-sensorial artworks force a reconsideration of the experience of space and, in doing so, embed alternative ways of being into our built environments?

The tension created between OCADU's monumental exterior and the banality of its interior spaces points to an insidious gap between the ways in which members of the student body interact with and move through its spaces, and how the institution brands itself publically. Implemented as a series of site-specific interventions, the exhibition troubles the ease with which OCADU has become a monument to imagination and creativity. Featuring artwork by [Jessica Karuhanga](#), [Faith La Rocque](#) and [Rouzbeh Akhbari](#) and [Sona Safaei](#), *WARNING! Mind The Gap* activates transitory or seemingly secondary sites (such as hallways, stairwells and entryways), drawing attention to the ways in which institutional hegemony obscures itself spatially and architecturally. This project insists that interstitial spaces can become sites of anti-colonial and institutional resistance through the creation of liminal experiences, which disrupt the institution's 'spatial fixity.' Though these sites may appear to be secondary in importance, making room for embodied responses within spaces that typically lie outside of the regular channels of negotiation allows for democratic, dialectical exchanges between the institution and those that inhabit it. This thesis project thus encourages open-ended dialogue, un-settingtling the institution by privileging embodied responses within alternative spaces.