



2014

## Sketch

Diamond, Sara, Andrew, Suzanne Alyssa, Buck, Naomi, Moorehead, Christopher and Vermond, Kira

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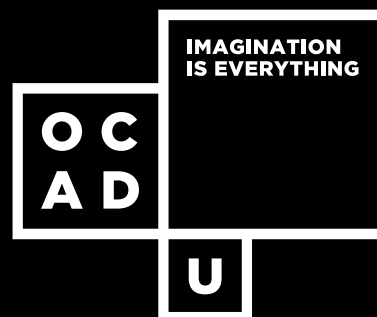
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**Winter 2014**



# SKETCH



## SKETCH

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**Row 6** (L-R) Design Dean Gayle Nicoll, Development & Alumni Relations VP Jill Birch and Assistant Professor Gary Taxali  
Photos by Christina Gagic, Angela Griffith and Martin Iskander

# President's Message

## Our second decade as a university



**OCAD University has been a member of the university sector for 12 years**, evoking a process of continual transformation that has brought many opportunities to students and faculty and allowed us to play a special role in the world. Our contemporary studio learning brings together embodied making, learning by doing, the studio critique, contextual and historical knowledge and engagement with a wide range of technologies and materials. In programs, minors and streams, the university has extended the studio to become the studio-laboratory, merging the methodologies of scientific and theoretical investigation with the rigorous practices of art and design. OCAD University has developed liberal arts and science programs and curriculum that ground studio learning in theoretical frameworks and business studies. It has brought the physical and digital face-to-face and extended the studio beyond the walls of the campus — through internships and work study, service-based learning, co-curricular and study-abroad activities, and business-development opportunities in our Imagination Catalyst.

This issue of *Sketch* features a pull-out centrefold infographic — our 2012/13 annual report, Creativity Counts. It documents our international reach and research funding (which included, for the first time, a Tier One and Tier Two Canada Research Chair), events and awards highlights, as well as our financial status. Visual analytics and data visualization are growing fields that help consumers, public policy analysts, medical researchers, urban planners, business and government understand the complex world of big data. We teach these skills at OCAD University and are delighted to share with readers our evolution in images and numbers.

As part of our maturation as a university, we are adding breadth to the kinds of degrees students can pursue and, in turn, the kinds of students who will choose OCAD University as their undergraduate place of learning. We're poised to deliver our first BA — a Bachelor's of Art in Visual and Critical Studies with an Art History specialization, which begins with

a strong foundation in studio learning and then provides a rich exposure to theory and history. A welcome addition to our offerings, it engages our significant faculty strength in global and Canadian art, design and media history.

Our success stories and strong external community support are of particular importance this spring, as OCAD University negotiates its three-year Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) with the Province of Ontario. The SMA focuses on three key areas: further enriching experiential learning, and building on our ongoing leadership in technology-enabled learning; smart and strategic undergraduate and graduate growth in fields that contribute to economic, social and cultural prosperity; and continuing to provide leadership in city and community building through the creation of new physical infrastructure, a gallery system and fruitful partnerships.

As readers know, OCAD University is a flagship institution — a jewel in the Ontario post-secondary crown. Although small and specialized, the university's approaches to experiential and technology-enabled learning, diversity, undergraduate and graduate education and creative city building have extraordinary reach. In 2014, it is our hope that the provincial government recognizes that importance and supports us effectively as we continue our evolution as the University of the Imagination. □

### **Dr. Sara Diamond**

President and Vice-Chancellor, OCAD University,  
O. of Ont., RCA

**Above**  
Photo by  
Tom Sandler



## CAMPUS NEWS



**Left** Installation by Julie Nagam.  
Photo courtesy of Julie Nagam

**Below left** Still from *Orientations* (1985), film by Richard Fung.  
Image courtesy of Richard Fung

**Below right** Ukukus dancers, Peru.  
Part of the QUIPUCAMAYOC project.  
Photo by David McIntosh



### SSHRC funding for David McIntosh, Richard Fung and Julie Nagam

Three OCAD U professors received major research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in 2013. David McIntosh, an associate professor, Liberal Studies at OCAD U, is leading QUIPUCAMAYOC, a transmedia, translocal digital game that will be played simultaneously within two Andean communities: Cusco, Peru and Buenos Aires, Argentina. McIntosh and his team of researchers will be working with Peruvian and Argentinian musicians, choreographers, performers and anthropologists to bring the two communities together and engage in their shared history.

In his project RE:ORIENTATIONS, Richard Fung, a video artist and associate professor in OCAD U's Faculty of Art, is revisiting interview subjects from his groundbreaking 30-year-old documentary film, *Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Asians* (1985) and examining important shifts both in the community and internationally. Fung is working with a creative and academic team to develop and present the new film, a website, scholarly essays and a book.

Julie Nagam, an emerging artist, curator and assistant professor in OCAD U's Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the Indigenous Visual Culture program, is launching The Kanata Indigenous Performance, New and Digital Media Art Project, a landmark collaborative effort to map and identify Canadian Indigenous performance, digital and new media art. The project will culminate in an inclusive, interactive website archive for researchers and the Indigenous community.

### Wendy Coburn receives first BLG Faculty Equity Award

The new Borden Ladner Gervais (BLG) Faculty Equity Award recognizes leadership, development of initiatives and innovative teaching practices in furthering a diverse and inclusive academic environment at OCAD U. The first-ever recipient of this honour is Faculty of Art associate professor Wendy Coburn. Coburn, who teaches first-year sculpture and interdisciplinary courses, was selected for her dedication to equity advocacy throughout her teaching; her popular course, Making Gender: LGBTQ Studio; her contributions to the university's equity committees and hiring policies; and her leadership in the development of the Art & Social Change minor. The university is a more welcoming community as a result of Coburn's initiatives.

### Vladimir Spicanovic named Chair, Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans

At its annual conference in October, the Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans (CAFAD) elected Vladimir Spicanovic, dean of the Faculty of Art at OCAD U, as its new chair. Spicanovic, who assumed the position of dean at OCAD U in 2010, initially became a director on the CAFAD executive in 2011. Spicanovic assumes the position of chair from Catherine Wild, dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University, who stepped down after four years in the leadership role. Spicanovic, who said he is looking forward to "expanding the capacity and outreach of CAFAD," will be working with an executive team of directors representing fine arts deans from universities and colleges across Canada, including Schulich School of Music, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, University of British Columbia, Mount Allison University and Grant MacEwan College.

### **OCAD U debuts at the Toronto International Art Fair**

For the first time, OCAD U appeared at Art Toronto: Toronto International Art Fair held annually in October at the Metro Convention Centre. Michael Prokopow, OCAD U's interim associate dean, Graduate Studies, and Barbara Rauch, director for the Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Art, Media and Design, co-curated the university's exhibition at the fair, which featured six prominent OCAD U alumni: sculptor Nicholas Crombach (BFA, 2012), multimedia artist Barr Gilmore (MDes, 2011), jewelry designer Alexandra Haagaard (MDes, 2013) portrait artist Erin Loree (BFA, 2012), painter Vanessa Maltese (BFA, 2012) and multimedia artist and performer Marc De Pape (MDes, 2013). Art Toronto is Canada's only modern and contemporary art fair and showcases more than 2,200 artworks every year, from 100 select galleries complemented by special projects and exhibits. During the fair OCAD U hosted a hands-on digital painting tour for VIPs featuring Digital Atelier Artist-In-Residence Alex McLeod and Luke Painter, artist and OCAD U chair, Contemporary Painting and Print Media.

### **OCAD U faculty and students contribute to The Cronenberg Project**

OCAD U partnered with the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Higher Learning Digital Resource Hub, York University and Sheridan College to create David Cronenberg: Virtual Exhibition, an in-depth online educational resource companion to TIFF's major international touring exhibition, The Cronenberg Project. Caroline Langill, interim dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences and School of Interdisciplinary Studies at OCAD U, Natalie Waldburger, assistant professor, Drawing & Painting, and a team of OCAD U students contributed illustrated essays, interactive maps, lesson plans and 3D images to the Virtual Exhibition. The Virtual Exhibition also features rare behind-the-scenes footage and interviews. "We are thrilled to share a piece of our legacy with one of the world's greatest living filmmakers," said Piers Handling, director and chief executive officer of TIFF. Cronenberg spoke at OCAD U in conversation with Handling in January as part of the President's Speaker Series. For more details visit [tiff.net/cronenberg](http://tiff.net/cronenberg).

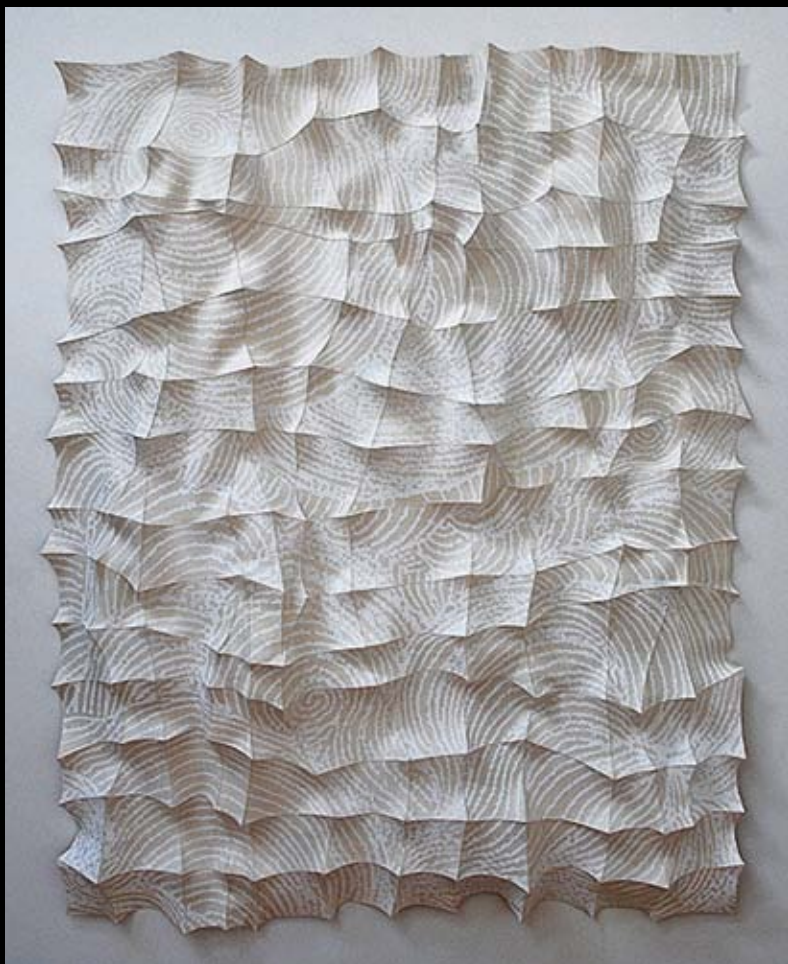
### **Biological Urbanism exhibit merges design and fine art at Onsite gallery**

What do future cities look like? How can we manage urban population growth? Can megacities become sustainable, healthy places to live? Onsite [at] OCAD U acting curator Lisa Deanne Smith brought Terreform ONE [Open Network Ecology] to the university gallery for a major fall/winter exhibition, lecture and workshop series exploring these ideas. Terreform ONE, a New York City non-profit architecture group for smart city design, ecological planning and public art, presented a provocative collection of 3D works: *Bio City Map*, a new work shown publicly for the first time at OCAD U, uses backlit petri dishes of bacteria and bacteriography (bacterial photography) to forecast world population growth and distribution over the next 100 years; *Rapid Re(f)use* models the 38,000 tons of waste New York City produces daily; and *Urbaneering Brooklyn* imagines a self-sustaining city in 2110. "It's important to bring these ideas into the public purview and widen the discussion," says Terreform ONE's director of innovation, Nurhan Gokturk.



**Right** Terreform ONE *Bio City Map* (2013), installation. Photo courtesy of Terreform ONE





**Left Chung-Im Kim, *baekya*.**  
Cheongju International Craft  
Biennale Award winner.  
Image courtesy of Chung-Im Kim

## OCAD U RECOGNIZES A SELECTION OF AWARD-WINNING STUDENTS AND FACULTY:

**Director Jutta  
Treviranus, Inclusive  
Design Research Centre  
(IDRC)**

*International Electro-  
technical Commission  
1906 Award*

Awarded for advancing  
international standards for  
all electronic technologies.

**Students Junghyun Yoo,  
Seung Min Park,  
Gi Woong Choi  
(Environmental Design),  
Hyo Shik Kim (Adver-  
tising) and Bo Mi Min  
(Graphic Design)**

*OCAD U Faculty of  
Design Competition Prize*  
Team Zoom's project  
won the annual competi-  
tion, which focused  
this year on the ecology  
of wellness.

**Students Yi Jiang and  
Philippe Harbec  
(Industrial Design)**

*Sustainable  
Design Awards*  
Jiang's urban washing/  
drying machine won top  
prize in the product  
category and Harbec's  
sustainable transporta-  
tion system won in the  
blue sky category.

**Hector Herrera and  
Pazit Cahlon,  
Illustration instructors**  
*International Motion Art*

*Award by American  
Illustration and American  
Photography*  
Awarded for *Typesetter  
Blues*, a three-minute  
animated short about a  
monster in love.

**Student Min Gyo (Daniel)  
Chung (Illustration),  
Vickie Fu and  
Isrene Shao (Graphic  
Design, 2013)**

*Finalists in the Adobe  
Design Achievement  
Awards*

Chung was selected in  
the illustration category  
for *Ethnomöbius: The  
Paradox of Culture*, while  
Fu and Shao were  
named in the packaging  
category for their  
redesign of GE lightbulb  
packages.

**Chung-Im Kim,  
Material Art & Design  
associate professor**

*Bronze Award,  
2013 Cheongju  
International Craft  
Biennale, South Korea*  
Awarded for the work  
*baekya* on exhibition at  
the biennale for the  
theme "something old,  
something new."

**Student Cody Kullman  
(Material Art & Design)**

*2013 Georg Jensen  
Damask Design Prize  
and 2014 IKEA internship  
in Älmhult, Sweden*  
Awarded for his outdoor  
textile collection and  
selected for his portfolio  
out of an international  
pool of applicants.



### **Bill Shannon skateboards into our hearts as a President's Speaker**

Brooklyn-based artist, performer and choreographer Bill Shannon spoke at OCAD U in the fall as part of the President's Speaker Series. Shannon, who performs and choreographs around the world, both as a solo artist and collaborator on productions for organizations such as Cirque du Soleil, is a recipient of the Foundation for Contemporary Art Award and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Born with a degenerative hip condition, Shannon developed a unique movement vocabulary and style using his iconic skateboard and crutches.

Shannon, a natural storyteller working in the medium of body language, is known for his bold experimentation. "I've learned that in all contrasting and conflicting energies, balance is possible in the most unexpected ways," he says. In addition to dance and choreography, he also uses drawings, sculpture, video, writing, performance, acting, clowning and skating to express his ideas. He got his start performing in hip-hop and house dance movements in New York and followed a highly iterative process, consistently pushing past perceived fears and limitations. "Failure happens," he said. "My greatest accomplishment as an artist is to stay true to the process and listen closely to what is whispering into my soul."

**Above Bill Shannon, *Falling Style*.**  
Photo courtesy of Bill Shannon

**Right Nina Könnemann, *Holzminen* (2003), still from video.**  
Photo courtesy of Nina Könnemann

### **Candice Breitz leads studio workshop at OCAD U as part of Nomadic Residency**

OCAD U's Nomadic Residents program brings artists and thinkers from around the world to the university to join the local to global and the provisional to the permanent. The Nomadic Resident for 2013/2014 is Candice Breitz, a South African artist based in Berlin who shows her moving image installations internationally. Breitz works on location around the world with local crews, focusing on how local contexts relate to the broader global one and questioning issues of travel, mobility, displacement, identity, mass media and the instability of modern life. She also teaches fine art at the Braunschweig University of Art. During her week-long residency at OCAD U in the fall, Breitz collaborated with students on *Being Ourselves + Others*, a studio workshop on coalescing societal contexts and ideas.

### **Nina Könnemann offers critiques and workshops as InterMedia Artist-in-Residence**

Renowned Berlin video artist Nina Könnemann, whose work examines themes of time, urbanism, globalism, exclusion, public excess and public spaces, is known for the destabilizing and disorienting effect her videos have on viewers. Her work, which often makes viewers question the sense of realism they may take for granted in video, captures imaginations and attentions around the world. She shows regularly in both smaller galleries and high-profile solo exhibitions, including at MoMA in New York and the Camden Centre in London. Könnemann was named as the 2013 InterMedia Artist-in-Residence by a partnership collaboration among OCAD U, Goethe-Institute and the University of Toronto's Visual Studies at Daniels. She worked with Integrated Media students at OCAD U and appeared at a series of public events in November, including a screening, artist talk and culture talk.







## David Pellettier's sculpture of Jack Layton unveiled

A bronze memorial sculpture honouring the legacy of Toronto politician and federal New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton was installed at the newly named Jack Layton Ferry Terminal on Toronto's waterfront in late August.

*Jack's Got Your back. Stronger Together: The Layton Memorial* was created by David Pellettier, a professor in OCAD U's Faculty of Art and the former chair of the Sculpture/Installation program. The life-sized sculpture of Layton on the back of the tandem bicycle he often rode with his wife Olivia Chow (pictured second from right) was placed near a donor wall inscribed with Layton's final message to Canadians: "So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world."

Chow, also a federal politician as Member of Parliament representing Trinity-Spadina, is a trained sculptor, former student and Honorary Fellow of OCAD U. After Layton's death she made her own memorial sculpture for him for his gravesite. Chow credits Toronto Island residents for the initial idea for the ferry terminal sculpture. She worked closely with Pellettier in the process of its creation. "Right from the beginning she was a big part of this," said Pellettier. "She had far more intimate knowledge of Jack as far as getting his presence fully there." The sculpture was funded by the Ontario Federation of Labour and the City of Toronto donated the land.

**Above left** David Pellettier, *Jack's Got Your Back* (2013), sculpture unveiling. Photo by Martin Iskander

**Above right** Kenneth Foster, Kym Priesse Speaker Series guest. Photo by Mike Kepka



## Art Creates Change welcomes speakers Emily Jacir and Kenneth J. Foster

Art Creates Change: The Kym Priesse Speaker Series brought multidisciplinary artist Emily Jacir and renowned arts leadership specialist Kenneth J. Foster to the university in the fall.

Jacir, a professor at the vanguard International Academy of Art in Palestine, is recognized internationally for her groundbreaking, diverse work in film, photography, social interventions, installation, performance, video, writing and sound. Her work is shown throughout Europe, the Americas and the Middle East, with recent solo exhibitions at the Beirut Art Centre, the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Venice Biennale. Her artist talk was co-sponsored by the Toronto Palestinian Film Festival.

Foster, director of the Arts Leadership Program in the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, talked about his experience as an arts leader for more than 30 years and the importance of nurturing and developing new arts leaders. On the challenges faced by arts organizations today, Foster said, "This is not a time to scale back. I believe that both the artist and society are much better off for the active and engaged participation of artists in civic society."

Art Creates Change commemorates the work of Kym Priesse, a cross-disciplinary artist, educator, writer, design activist, popular culture expert and theorist who taught at OCAD U in the Faculty of Art and the Faculty of Liberal Studies. Priesse passed away in 2009.



# Honour bound

By Kira Vermond

Prospective student Hanna Schacter with Professor Dot Tuer, BA program chair, and Jan Sage, Director, Admissions & Recruitment.  
Photo by Christina Gopic, 2013

**OCAD U WILL LAUNCH AN HONOURS BA  
IN VISUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES IN  
SEPTEMBER 2014. WELCOME TO OUR NEXT  
ACADEMIC PHASE**



“Students are quite loyal to OCAD U so if we can find a place for them that is more suitable to their strengths and desire to work in art, but perhaps in a different way, then that’s great.”

— Camille Isaacs, assistant professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**On October 26, 2013**, Dr. Dot Tuer was mingling with high school students and parents at Look Inside, OCAD U’s annual open house, discussing a topic she knows inside and out: the university’s soon-to-launch Honours Bachelor of Arts in Visual and Critical Studies with an Art History specialization.

“In a regular Bachelor of Fine Art or Bachelor of Design, it’s 25 per cent academic and 75 per cent studio,” she told Hanna Schacter, a 17-year-old Bishop Strachan School student from Toronto.

“But with our new BA, it’s reversed. It’s 75 per cent academic and 25 per cent studio, so it’s a great option if you love art — and writing.”

OCAD U’s new BA does open a world of opportunity for students like Schacter, who have a passion for art and design and expect to work within that creative world, but don’t necessarily want to pursue a studio or practice-based career. Instead, they see themselves as future curators, art writers, digital media managers, publishers and critics, among many other possibilities. The new Honours BA gives them the chance to explore their academic side, but from within the walls of a world-class art school.

No wonder Schacter seemed excited by the picture Tuer painted. Schacter always wanted to study art, but worried her limited portfolio and studio experience meant OCAD U would never accept her, despite her interest. “I didn’t think there would be a program here for me, but there is,” she said that day.

### Flexibility and choice

It’s the kind of reaction that Tuer, who is the chair of the BA program (as well as an award-winning writer, cultural historian and curator — most recently for the Art Gallery of Ontario’s exhibition on Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera), has been hearing since she began working to bring the innovative BA to fruition.

The program is set to launch in the 2014/2015 academic year and will emphasize modern and contemporary art history, which includes design, photography, architecture, performance and new media, as well as painting and sculpture. While all BA students must take a small selection of studio courses as part of their core base of study, the majority of courses are more academic.

There’s flexibility too — with more than 90 visual culture courses on offer and 80 breadth courses in English, humanities, social sciences and science/technology to choose from.

“Students who have a great love of the visual are immersed in an environment where they can take those talents and apply them to art history here,” says Tuer.

Sagan MacIsaac (BFA, Criticism & Curatorial Practice, 2012) has been visiting high schools and travelling around Toronto as an OCAD U recruiter and liaison officer. Like Tuer, she also has had positive feedback from prospective students drawn to the new BA. Not that it’s a hard sell. She’s convinced the Honours Bachelor is one of the most unique of its kind, due in part to where it’s being offered. The campus sits next to the Art Gallery of Ontario, in the cultural capital of Canada. Few other universities can give students this level of immersive experience — merging art history and the artists themselves.

“Because we’re a specialized university, you are really embedded in this creative, collaborative community,” she says. “So everywhere you turn, you’re going to be interacting with people who are working in studios. If you’re an arts writer, someday you’ll be going to the art shows of people you went to school with. It’s a nice, direct link.”

### A new conversation

Ryan Whyte, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences, agrees that OCAD U’s BA is in a league of its own. He should know. In his own professional life, he has merged the academic with art.



**Left** Students at work in painting studio. Photo by Christina Gagic, 2013

**Opposite page** Criticism & Curatorial Practice alumna Sagan MacIsaac. Photo by Christina Gagic, 2013



Although Whyte started his career as a painter, he found himself drawn to art criticism and studying the history of his medium. Eventually he went to graduate school for art history and landed at OCAD U in 2011 as a professor. His current research focuses on the legacy of 18th century art and culture. Part of what drew him to the university? Its reputation as a leading research institution, combined with a 137-year history of studio excellence.

“We have a huge art and design faculty, the ‘who’s who’ of the Canadian scene,” he says. “So you come here to do an art history degree, but can choose to do a strong studio minor taught by this enormous and dynamic faculty who are far beyond the scope of what your typical university fine art program can offer.”

With its 1:3 ratio between studio and academic courses and inherent interdisciplinarity, the BA encourages students to think about art and history in new ways. Rather than simply explore how history shapes studio practice, OCAD U’s new BA students will study side-by-side with artists and designers. They’ll be privy to a different point of view.

“This BA aims to get the conversation going the other way,” says Whyte. “How can an understanding of studio practice shape what an art historian does?”

#### **Writing-intensive study**

The vast selection of required and elective breadth courses also helps give students new insight into the world, whether they’re taking History of Modern Art; Dada and Surrealism; Art & Fashion; Urban Life: Art, Design and City; Contemporary East Asian Art;

or Car Culture (a look at the automobile’s impact in the 20th century in terms of mobility, design, sustainability and the car’s effect on natural and built environments).

Add writing, English and literature to the list. The BA in Visual and Critical Studies places emphasis on creative thinking and writing about art as an historical and contemporary practice, with prospective students required to submit written work before being accepted. There’s also a major research project in fourth year. Camille Isaacs, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences, teaches English and can’t wait to meet her new BA students.

“Students opting into the BA know they’re going into a writing-intensive program. These are often students who are already good writers to begin with. What English professor wouldn’t want to teach them?” she says, laughing.

It won’t just be first-year students she’ll be seeing next year, however. The BA also welcomes second-year students who want to transfer out of the studio-based programs at OCAD U or other universities. It’s a brilliant solution for current students who love OCAD U and want to stay, but are rethinking practice work, says Isaacs. The BA may be better suited to them.

“Students are quite loyal to OCAD U,” she says. “So if we can find a place for them that is more suitable to their strengths and desire to work in art, but perhaps in a different way, then that’s great.”

Back at October’s Look Inside event (see page 12), Hannah De Lumban, a 17-year-old Northview Heights Secondary School student from Toronto, was eager to explore the university’s new offering in Visual and Critical Studies. She hopes to learn more about curatorial practice and even became an Art Gallery of Ontario volunteer to get her feet wet.

“I’ve heard a lot about it,” she said, of the new BA. “I never thought OCAD would have something more academic. I like that because I like writing, a lot.” □

“We have a huge art and design faculty, the ‘who’s who’ of the Canadian scene.”

— Ryan Whyte, assistant professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

With more than 1,000 articles under her belt, Canadians across the country have read Kira Vermond’s columns for the *Globe and Mail* and *Chatelaine*, and listened to her career advice on CBC Radio weekday mornings. She has published three non-fiction books with one more to be released in 2014.



# Look Inside!



More than 2,000 visitors had the opportunity on October 26 to enter our world of art, design and media. Over three hours, prospective students and their parents participated in studio tours, watched student demos, spoke with faculty and staff, explored graduate-degree programs and learned about the university's new BA. Throughout, OCAD U faculty, staff and students were on hand to chat about emerging trends in practice and pedagogy, offering a truly "inside" look at our brilliant community.

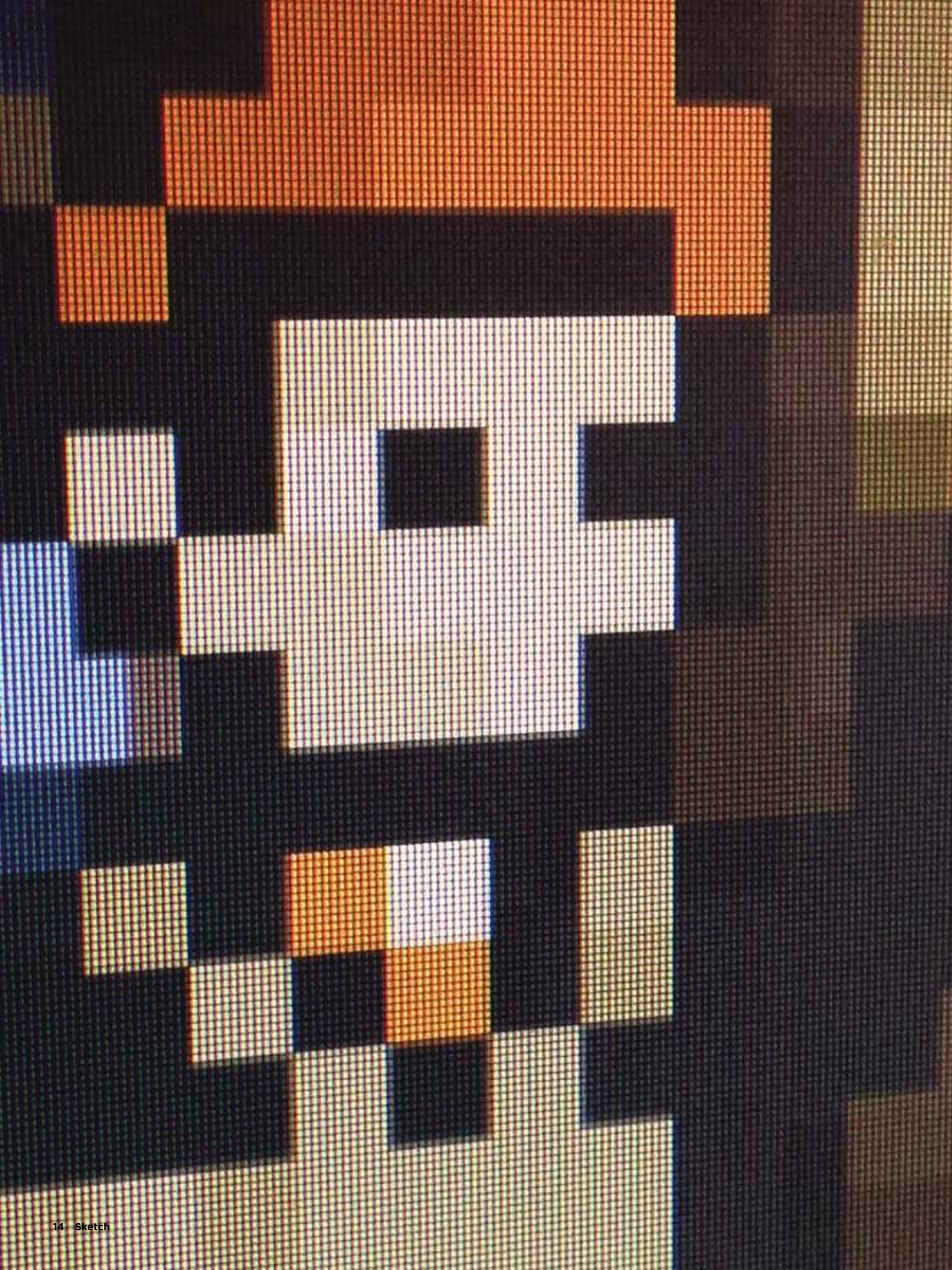
All photos by Christina Gapic





# OCCAD University's Annual Open House







# World of Warcraft: Game design and incubation at OCAD U

By Suzanne Alyssa Andrew

## GAME PLAYERS: Diverse and connected

It's a cool Sunday afternoon in November. In a chic industrial loft on Richmond Street West in Toronto, 25 women of various ages and backgrounds are huddled over laptops racing to finish videogame prototypes for an end-of-day presentation. Their efforts are the culmination of a week's worth of work that began with a series of talks by key players in the Toronto gaming community, including OCAD University's Emma Westecott, an assistant professor of Games Design in Digital Futures. The teams of two and three spent their week planning and came together to develop their games over the course of the jam weekend.

If you're involved in the close-knit indie gaming community in Toronto you'll recognize the venue is Bento Miso, a collaborative workspace and events venue for designers, developers and game makers. Bento Miso regularly brings gamers together for hack days, tech meet-ups and game jams. You'll also recognize the event organizers, who are everywhere at once, troubleshooting and offering advice and encouragement: they are Cecily Carver and Jennie Faber, co-directors from Dames Making Games Toronto (DMG), an inclusive non-profit, educational feminist organization dedicated to supporting game making.

Then too you may recognize Alex Leitch, another DMG director, and a technical lead at OCAD U's Digital Futures' game:play lab. She designed the software the game developers are using. It's called screenPerfect, and it's a research project Leitch is working on as a grad student under the supervision of Westecott. In fact, Leitch is user testing it during the game jam, which is why this particular event is called "No Jam 2: VideoVideo" — Leitch's software is a storytelling engine for video and film-based games.

The jam participants are professionals working in film, photography, illustration, graphic design, digital media and other creative professions. There are a handful of keen OCAD U students as well. And their games, although still considered working prototypes, are both visually impressive and playable. There's Grimoire, an interactive, visual novel. There's Kill, Marry, F\*\*\*, a tongue-firmly-in-cheek feminist choice game about evaluating different male personas. There's even a feminist porn game, in which the goal is to satisfy the computer (wry hint: the computer does not like the same things you do).

This is not the development of the next Grand Theft Auto V or World of Warcraft. The industry has changed and diversified, and OCAD U is positioning itself at the fore, educating students and emerging as a leader in the community for a new wave of gaming.

"The indie game community, especially here in Toronto, is one of the most innovative spaces for game-making there is," said Westecott. "Centring on indie, art and DIY game-making is in line with the traditions of an art and design university while engaging with one of the most exciting aspects of digital games in the contemporary climate."

## GAME OBJECTIVE: Design good games

In the early 2000s Montreal put itself on the global gaming map with Ubisoft, as did Vancouver with Electronic Arts — big companies producing big-budget AAA console games. What differentiates Toronto in the world market for game entertainment today is its inclusive community, resource sharing, and supportive non-profit indie gaming organizations such as DMG. The small boutique firms emerging out of these efforts in Toronto are part of a growing industry.

In May 2013, the Entertainment Software Association of Canada released new industry statistics: videogame development provides 16,500 full-time jobs across Canada and generates \$2.3 billion annually towards the GDP. Its job growth, at five per cent, outpaces overall trends. And of 329 video game studios reporting, 96 are located in Ontario.

"Toronto has one of the most productive and fertile independent gaming scenes in North America, and there's a lot of permeability between OCAD U and the local scene, so education becomes part of connecting to it," said Jeff Watson, an assistant professor who teaches game design in Digital Futures with Westecott and runs the game atelier, in which students make new game prototypes every week. "To participate in a renaissance moment for games you need to be part of the community. It's inherently collaborative. It's like being in a band."

**Opposite** Detail from Home (2012), Design instructor Ben Rivers' retro survival horror game. Home's illustrative pixel style and story-based format puts users in the centre of a murder mystery, showing them only what is visible by the beam of their own flashlight



**Top** Visitors to Ontario Science Centre enjoying Teamwave

**Bottom** Jessica Knox and Mark Thoburn, Teamwave game developed in Unity, 2013

Game developers in Toronto are connected and nimble and it's the latter quality in an era of ever-changing technology that will continue to fuel development.

Think about this shift: 10 years ago if you were a game developer you worked for a large company like Ubisoft. Now, in addition to console and PC development, 84 per cent of videogame studios develop for mobile devices, 46 per cent build games for the web and 29 per cent create social networking games.

"Games are a 5,000-year-old form and videogames are a new part of it," said Watson. "A good game provides us with a set of rules that generates problems and challenges we can solve creatively. These sorts of things have always been at the heart of game design though there is, of course, a lot more technology involved now. We want students to think about games in a really expansive way; not only about game forms today, but also possible forms."

In other words, it's all about discovering what good games are and setting out to make them — lots of them across every platform. "This is not a class for proposing ideas; it's for making finished things. The games have to be playable," said Watson.

Ultimately the goal is to not only learn how to make good games but also sell them. Like many of the participants at the DMG event, Digital Futures students making games in the atelier at OCAD U will go on to spend time polishing their best games. They'll apply to showcase them at the Vector Game + Art Convergence Festival in Toronto in February. And eventually, if they persevere, they'll sell their games on the iTunes App Store or Steam, a popular — and rapidly growing — game-distribution company. Some of them may even go on to start gaming companies of their own.

“Toronto has one of the most productive and fertile independent gaming scenes in North America, and there’s a lot of permeability between OCAD U and the local scene, so education becomes part of connecting to the scene.”

— Jeff Watson, assistant professor, Digital Futures

#### **GAME RULES: Bring whatever skills you’ve got**

The DF program is only one pathway to a gaming career at OCAD U. Game design courses are also available to OCAD U students as electives. Benjamin Rivers, a sessional instructor at OCAD U who teaches alongside Westecott and Watson, worked as an illustrator and graphic designer before he shifted into making games full time with his own company.

Rivers both epitomizes and teaches the entrepreneurial spirit driving game-making at OCAD U. His mini-game *Snow*, which evolved into a computer-based adventure game and then a graphic novel, is now a feature film to be released in 2014. *Home*, his narrative-focused horror game for iOS, was also a critical and commercial hit.

“Rather than tell the story to the player, the game asks the player to recount their version of what happened,” said Rivers about the unique, participatory narrative of *Home*. “The kinds of experiences you can design for a player have really opened up. The appeal of gaming is the same as any other art form: connection — with other players, with a story, with a skill or perhaps even with oneself.”

As an instructor at OCAD U, Rivers shows students the myriad of possibilities of what games can be. “It’s neat to see someone come into a class, never having made a game before, churn out a spectacular game in a few weeks and realize this is what they want to do with their lives,” he said. “Students bring a lot of passion and we want to support their ideas and prepare them for a competitive industry. The rules change constantly but anything is possible.”

#### **GAMEPLAY: Play, test, incubate and take it to market**

On a warm, sunny day in March 2013, OCAD U DFI alumna Jessica Knox presented her game, *Teamwave*, at a DMG speakers social at Bento Miso. Developed in Unity, an advanced game engine for 3D graphics and animation, *Teamwave* looks stunning. Picture a sailboat drifting through crystalline seas and fiery orange-red sunsets. What makes it remarkable, however, are its controls: it uses EEG headsets and biofeedback. It’s designed to help players increase focus, reduce stress and gain mental strength, and Knox and her business partner, fellow DFI alum Mark Thoburn, are busy developing the game as a company through OCAD U’s business incubator, Imagination Catalyst.

Prior to enrolling in the Digital Futures program, Knox had no idea she’d end up working in the gaming industry or become an entrepreneur. “I knew some basic gaming principles and then I took Westecott’s class, and I learned how we can use games in valuable ways,” she said. The other key driver of the game’s business development? Feedback from users in the community. “We’re doing something new and the design process has been very iterative,” Knox said.

“I believe strongly in the power of mutual benefit,” explained Westecott of the indie game development process she teaches. “The Toronto game community offers a wealth of creativity, innovation and opportunity. Whether in the academy, in the gallery, or in the community, game culture is being built around us, and there is a real opportunity for the gamers amongst us to engage.” □

Suzanne Alyssa Andrew is a writer who specializes in digital copywriting, strategy and storytelling. She’s written extensively for websites, games, apps and cross-platform television projects, including the award-winning *Total Drama Online* and *THE DEFECTOR*. Her work has also appeared in print in *Taddle Creek* and the *Toronto Star*. Andrew currently shares the position of managing editor at OCAD U.



**Left:** Tablet user playing *Home* by Ben Rivers

**Below:** Collaborators and developers at work at Bento Miso in Toronto





# ALUMNI NEWS



## Design grads recognized everywhere

A sampling:

**Matthew Alexander Cherkas** and **Vincent Joseph Monastero** (BDes, Industrial Design, 2013 and 2010) won the Design Exchange Emerging Designer Competition: Caesarstone People's Choice Award for TREATY, a new furniture design company dedicated to daring and original work.

**Braeden Watts** (BDes, Graphic Design, 2011) won the Idea Couture's Imaginator of the Year Award for creative ideas in strategy and global innovation.

**Mauricio Affonso** (BDes, Industrial Design, 2007) won the SustainRCA Visionary Processes Award for Luffa Lab, a project exploring new applications for materials made from the luffa plant.

**Heba Kandil, Filipa Pimentel** and **Annie Tung** (BDes, Material Art & Design, 2013, 2008, 2007) and **Meghan Price**, Material Art & Design instructor, were honoured by the Ontario Craft Council (OCC) with scholarships and grants awarded at the Craft Awards Ceremony.

**Hanah Smit** (BDes, Advertising, 2009), **Tegan Mierle** and **Yousuf Afridi** (BDes, Graphic Design, 2008) were among *Marketing Magazine's* "30 under Thirty" for 2013. (Read our profile Afridi on page 22.)

## OCAD U a winning presence at Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition

Several OCAD University alumni and one student also took home awards at last year's Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, held annually at Nathan Philips Square: **Ibrahim Abusitta** (BFA, Photography, 2013) for Best in Exhibition – Student and Best of Photography – Honorable Mention; **Adam Chapman** (BFA, Drawing & Painting, 2013) for Mayor's Purchase Award and Best of Painting – Student; **Caitlin Doherty** (BFA, Drawing & Painting, 2012) for Best of Mixed Media – Honourable Mention; **Theresa Duong** (BDes, Material Art & Design, 2012) for Best of Jewellery; **Michelle Mendlowitz** (BDes, Material Art & Design, 2005) for Best of Ceramics; **Agata Plocinski** (BFA, Drawing & Painting, 2013) for Best of Painting – Honourable Student Mention; and Fourth-year Drawing & Painting student **Michael Rennick** for Gladstone Hotel Summer Studio Award.

**Above Heba Kandil,**  
*Miscommunication: Responsive*  
*Resistance*. Ontario Crafts  
Council Award winner.  
Image courtesy of Heba Kandil

**Below Krista Arnold,** *Hold*, 2013.  
Oil on canvas, 36" x 48"



## Seven alumni named untapped emerging artist finalists

The Artist Project (TAP) contemporary art fair recently announced this year's crop of Untapped Emerging Artist finalists, which included seven OCAD University alumni: Drawing & Painting BFA grads **Krista Arnold**, **Claire Scherzinger** and **Niki Sehmbi** (2013); **Tonya Corkey** (2012); and **Alea Drain** (2011); as well as **Joanna Schleimer** (BDes, Material Art & Design, 2011). Finalists receive a free booth in the show — connecting them with 12,000 visitors, dealers and collectors — and are entered into a People's Choice competition. **Keita Morimoto** (BFA, 2012) was the 2012 past People's Choice award winner.

# PROJECT 31

An auction of works from faculty, supporting OCAD University students



TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.OCADU.CA/PROJECT 31](http://WWW.OCADU.CA/PROJECT31) / ARTWORK PREVIEW ONLINE STARTING MARCH 1, 2014

Thursday, March 27, 2014  
6 p.m. Art Preview & Reception  
7:30 p.m. Live Auction

**Adrian Forrow**, *Vessel Sinks*, 2013  
12" by 12", Ink, Acrylic Gouache and Graphite  
Courtesy of the artist  
Estimate: \$2,000 to \$3,000

Photo Credit: Melissa Jean Clark, Visual Resources at OCAD U

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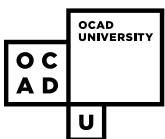
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\*No purchase is required. There is one (1) prize to be won. The winner may choose between an amount of \$60,000 CAD to build a dream kitchen of his/her choosing or \$60,000 CAD cash. The winner will be responsible for choosing a supplier and for coordinating all of the required work. The contest is organized by Security National Insurance Company and Primum Insurance Company and is open to members, employees and other eligible persons who reside in Canada and belong to an employer, professional or alumni group which has entered into an agreement with the organizers and is entitled to receive group rates from the organizers. The contest ends on October 31, 2014. The draw will be held on November 21, 2014. A skill-testing question is required. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. The complete contest rules are available at [melochemonnex.com/contest](http://melochemonnex.com/contest).

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## History of Toronto waterfront explored in Shore Lunch

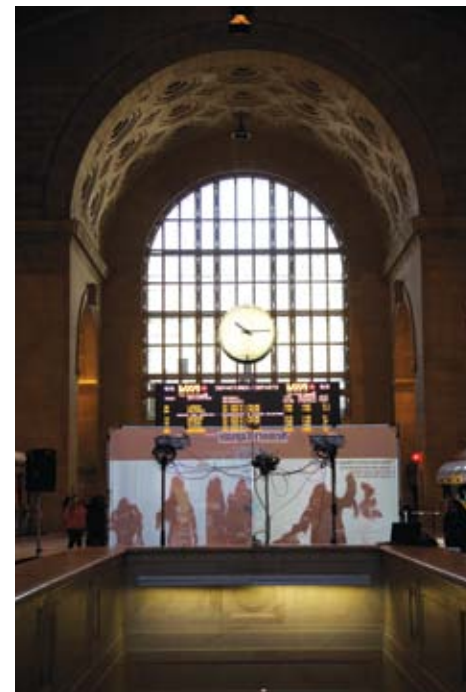
Taking the form of a mobile food cart, **Lisa Myers'** Shore Lunch will speak to the transformation and history of the Toronto waterfront. The Criticism and Curatorial Practice alumna (MFA, 2011) brings this collaborative work to Harbourfront Centre in May and June, enlisting a number of artists to explore Indigenous settlements and trade routes, colonial settlers and gentrification, as well as the demolition of industrial architecture and its link to food production and distribution.

Myers is an independent curator, writer and artist, with what she calls "a keen interest in interdisciplinary collaboration." This is evident everywhere in her bio — from the years she spent cooking at Enaahitig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre to her MFA research, which investigated cultural agency and the encoding of food from diverse Indigenous perspectives. Today, Myers exhibits regularly in venues as varied as Definitely Superior (Thunder Bay) and the Art Gallery of Ontario. She returned to OCAD U in late 2013 to take up the newly created position of Writing and Learning Consultant, Aboriginal Student Support, providing one-to-one tutoring and support via initiatives such as "Bead and Read" — a Thursday craft circle that explores connections between ideas and art practices.



**Above left** Lisa Myers, *surface tension*, 2013. Still from 8-minute digital media file. Image courtesy of Lisa Myers

**Above right** Che Yan, *Memory Capsule*, 2014. Interactive installation at Union Station. Photo by Sarah Mulholland



## Exhibit asks commuters to reminisce about Union Station

Until March 21, the City of Toronto, in partnership with OCAD U, will be hosting an interactive installation by Digital Futures graduate **Che Yan** (MFA, 2013) in Union Station's historic Great Hall. *Memory Capsule* asks a different question of travellers and commuters daily — with the goal being the creation of a repository of memories and stories. To participate in the exhibit, passengers submit their response to a posted question via Twitter, with the hashtag #unionstationTO, and then press a button on the installation to create a freeze-frame silhouette of their shadow. The artwork "reads" the tweet and imprints it almost instantly on the silhouette — which appears on a large screen for others in the station to see. The interactive installation pays tribute to this historic public space, which is currently undergoing a major revitalization and which is a hub for more than 250,000 passengers daily.

## CCP grad to curate for OCAD U in city's biggest art event

**Stefan Hancherow**, another esteemed Criticism and Curatorial Practice grad (MFA, 2013), has signed on to create the university's offering in this year's Scotiabank Nuit Blanche. Hancherow is an arts administrator, a scholar, a politician, a contemporary art collector and, naturally, a curator. He has been involved in exhibitions at artist-run centres, university and commercial galleries, and public museums across Canada, and is currently the assistant curator for the Sobey Art Award.



# Alumni Profile: Yousuf Afridi

By Naomi Buck

### It wouldn't have been a dream

weekend for every child but it was for Yousuf Afridi. Growing up in Dubai, the young Afridi loved nothing more than to accompany his brother-in-law to the Pepsi headquarters, where he worked in marketing, to sit in a boardroom, watching television ads or studying product packaging. Afridi's brother-in-law was happy to take the boy along and not only because of his enthusiasm. As the story goes, 10-year-old Afridi was a great help.

"I had idea overload!" Afridi recalls today. "I was so excited to see these things before they hit the market. Once my brother-in-law gave me a little blue book to jot down my ideas and it was full a couple of days later."

Afridi, who graduated from OCAD U's Graphic Design program in 2008, is a born entrepreneur. Combined with his enthusiasm for technology, this has made him, at 27, a force to be reckoned with. *Marketing Magazine* placed him on their "30 Under Thirty" list in August 2013. Then in November, Afridi became one of five finalists for the Marketing Hall of Legends' "Marketer on the rise" — a designation, according to "Legends" criteria, reserved for "rising stars who have had a significant impact on the marketing industry and are on track to becoming true leaders in their profession."



Left Yousuf Afridi.  
Photo by Mike Ford, 2013

When Afridi was 13, he and his family moved from Dubai to Toronto, where he attended North Toronto Collegiate Institute. There, he took the yearbook program as an opportunity to digitize the annual school publication. And he set up a web design company, his first client being a real estate agent who then helped his parents sell their home.

Somewhat sheepishly, he admits that what drew him to OCAD U was a girlfriend. But he says he "blossomed" at the university and not because of the relationship, which ended within the first month. Rather, because "people make the place. And that place is full of incredible people."

Not one to relish paint, chalk and charcoal, Afridi found the foundation year in Graphic Design "a challenge." But as soon as the program moved into conceptualization, technology and speech, he hit his stride. "It wasn't just about learning the skills to produce work. We were really challenged to think about the world around us."

Afridi took this challenge to heart. In his fourth year, he decided to travel to his family's native Pakistan to take a closer look at the problem of gender inequality. Equipped with a camera, he wanted to conduct interviews and collect footage that would form the basis of a thesis on "how design principles can be used to communicate catastrophe and entice solutions."

He couldn't have known that in the midst of his visit, on December 27, 2007, then-opposition candidate Benazir Bhutto would be assassinated. In the chaos that ensued, as "everyone was locking their doors and shutting their windows," Afridi persuaded his aunt to drive him around Karachi to film the riots. He ended up reporting live from the scene for Toronto cable news channel CP24.

Since graduating from OCAD U, Afridi admits that he hasn't maintained this "activity level" on issues of global

and social justice. Instead, his focus has shifted somewhat from the design to the business side of the industry. In his stints at Compass 360 Brand Architects and, later, The Hive, he worked on major projects for Coors Light International and NOS Energy Drink, in addition to helping expand the agencies' business relations into Dubai and Turkey.

Having tried his hand with several start-ups where he worked on branding, client expansion and project design, Afridi landed as an account manager at TAXI 2. The social campaigns he developed for their Capital One account brought the credit card company's Facebook following from 30,000 to 200,000. Currently assigned to Taxi's Koodo Mobile account, he's working on multi-media projects at the national level. He's also helping to organize an education program at Taxi that brings in guest speakers who "challenge convention and keep everyone on their toes."

Afridi still considers himself "a sponge," soaking up knowledge of how companies and consumers work. He's not planning an immediate career move in an industry that is "changing incredibly fast."

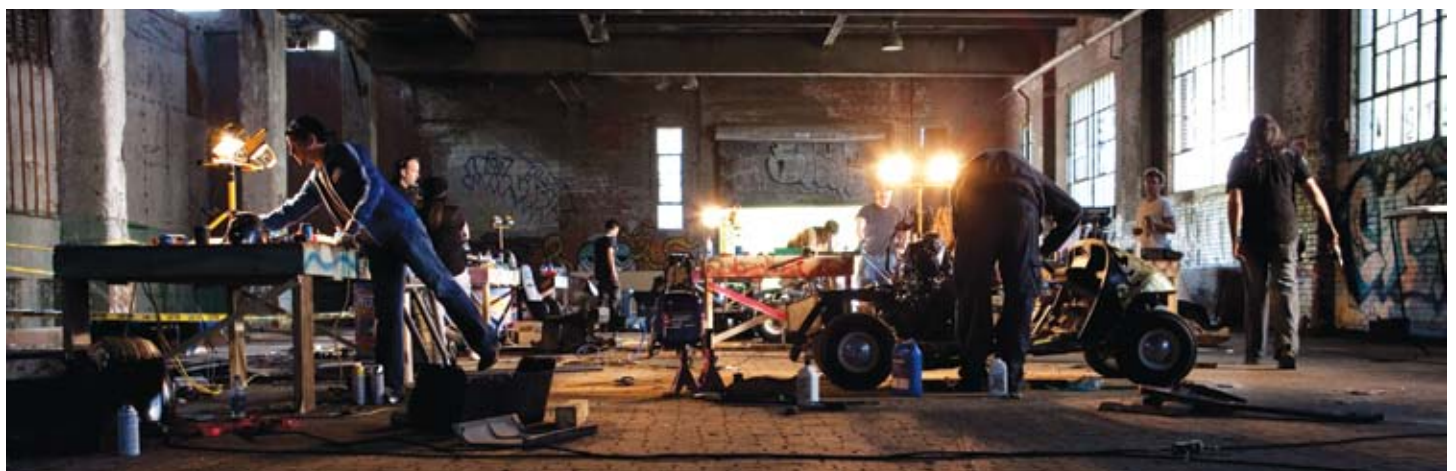
In retrospect, what he appreciates most about his OCAD U experience is the breadth of learning and the mentorships. "I talk with pride about having gone to OCAD U. Our education was anything but narrow. Without the mentorships I had there, I would be quite average." □

Toronto-born Naomi Buck is a freelance journalist who writes for various media in Canada and Germany, where she has spent much of her adult life. With an academic background in social anthropology, her interests are broad and people-based.

**Top** Afridi in Pakistan to film documentary/thesis, 2007

**Centre** Afridi delivering lecture on T-Shaped Personalities at Umbra Toronto, 2013

**Bottom** Afridi on set producing the NOS Energy Drink social media video series project







## Homeless Jesus sculpture blessed by Pope

The story that captured world attention featured a life-sized sculpture of a homeless Jesus, which itself was rendered homeless after twice being rejected by prominent cathedrals. But the sculpture created by **Timothy Schmalz**, who studied at OCAD U 25 years ago, and indeed the story weren't nearly done. In November, Schmalz travelled to the Vatican, where he presented the work and where it was eventually blessed by the Pope. Now he is collaborating with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to find the sculpture a permanent home near St. Peter's Square — on the site where a homeless man died.

Schmalz had always hoped to connect with the marginalized. "If you look at Western artwork through the centuries," he says, "one of the most popular images is that of Jesus. The diversity of representation is mind-boggling and yet there is a blind spot." In fact, what was so controversial about the sculpture — its depiction of Jesus as one of the homeless, wrapped in a blanket and sleeping on a bench — is also what Schmalz hopes will "contribute to a new, fresh, powerful perspective, particularly in this time of global economic crisis."

**Above** Pope Francis with Timothy Schmalz's *Jesus the Homeless* in Vatican City, 2013. Photo courtesy of Timothy Schmalz

**Right, top** Alumni Leon Schwartz and Ron Kaplansky at OCAD U reunion. Photo by Angela Griffith

**Right, bottom** Reunion guests enjoy a wood-shop tour. Photo by Angela Griffith

## Reunion celebrates half a century

A chance conversation with an OCAD U administrator in the institution's 135th anniversary year inspired Graphic Design alumnus **Ron Kaplansky** (1963) to enquire about his own 50-year OCAD U reunion. The rest, as they say, was history. Thanks to the assistance of Development & Alumni Relations' Stacy Kelly, Adria Miller and Julie Thompson, the classes of 1962, 1963 and 1964 met on October 18 in the Lambert Lounge at 100 McCaul St. to reminisce, reconnect and fill in a few of the gaps of the intervening 50 years.

Some opted for a guided tour of the building; others poured over a memorabilia table that included a 1963 student manual and a letterhead set created by Communication & Design grads. But the evening was especially significant for Kaplansky, a Toronto-based graphic designer who has dedicated his life to social causes. "For me, the importance of the event was the way it recognized a 50-year period that included developing my design skills and building a family; the many good years and also difficult times. I hope the other grads felt the same."

If you're interested in hosting a reunion for your classmates, write to [alumni@ocadu.ca](mailto:alumni@ocadu.ca).



## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Visit [ocadu.ca/alumni](http://ocadu.ca/alumni) to access the wide array of events, benefits and services that OCAD University offers its alumni community:

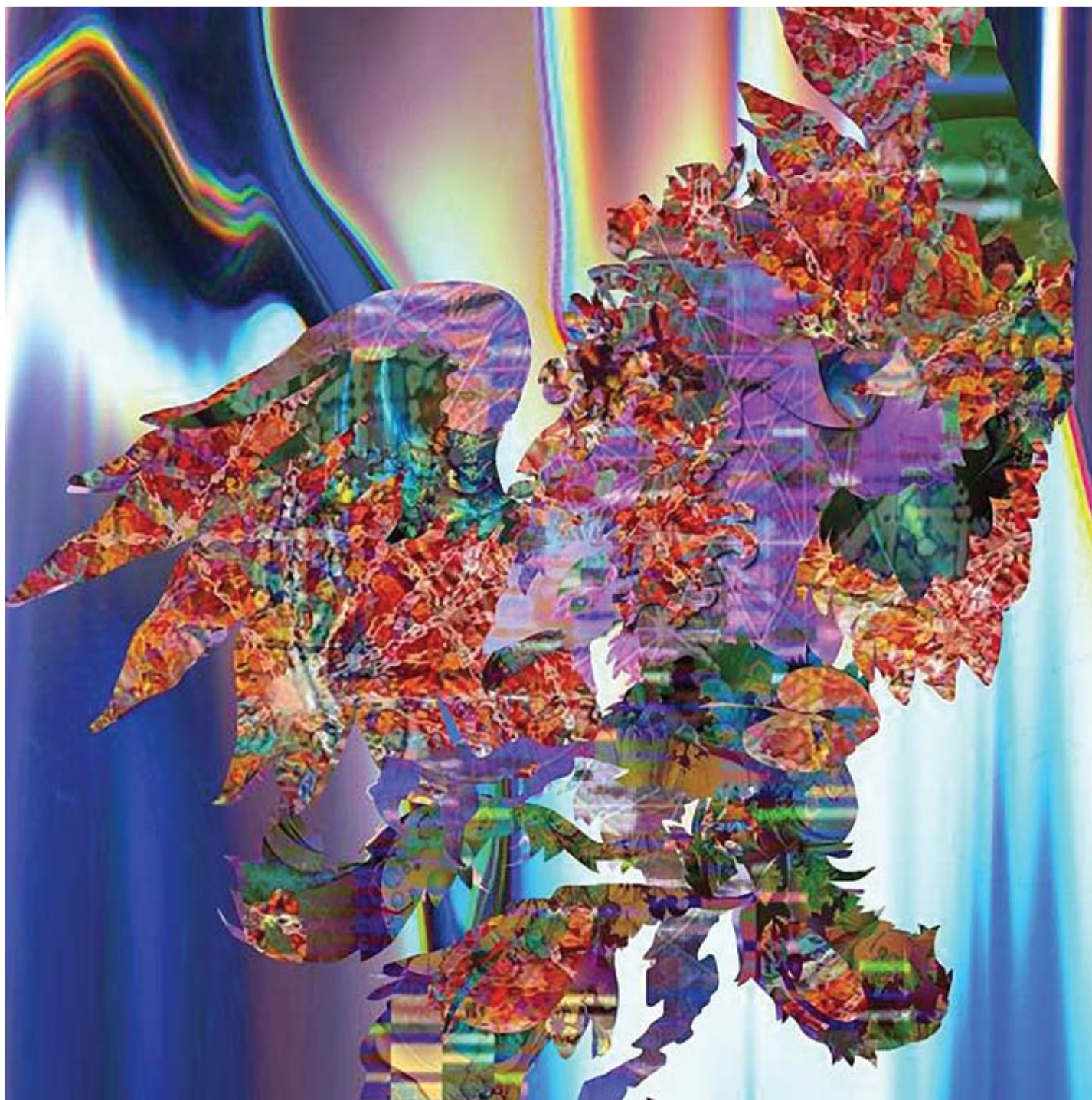
- Preferred discounts
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- A new alumni news page, events calendar and exhibition listings
- Alumni mentoring opportunities
- Dedicated alumni life-drawing sessions
- Opportunities to volunteer with the Alumni Association
- A place to update your address and keep in touch

# Exhibition

## TRUDY ELMORE

Second-year student, Digital Painting and Expanded Animation (DPXA)

*Phoenix and Dragon* emerged out of a Painting & Digital Imaging class Elmore took last semester with Philippe Blanchard, an assistant professor in OCAD U's Faculty of Art. Elmore created the work using glitches (a TextEdit technique that distorts images and creates unpredictable patterns), sacred geometry, fractals and scanner paintings. "Prior to September 2013," she says, "I had never used Photoshop and regarded my computer as a tool for streaming *Game of Thrones* episodes and checking email. The DPXA program has a steep learning curve, but what you take away is invaluable."







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