# BLOOD, WATER & BATHURST STREET

Navigating an active relationship to land, place, and community through textiles.

by Naomi Daryn Boyd

A thesis presented to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Design in Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design.

Tkaronto, Ontario, Canada, 2023.

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# ABSTRACT

*Blood, Water, & Bathurst Street* is about navigating an active relationship to land, place, and community through textiles. This project began with exploring my family's multi-generational history here in this place now known as Toronto, and the broader Jewish community that has grown here. Beyond blood relations, I have sought to establish further connection and understanding of/with the lands and waters that have shaped these territories. Many Indigenous Peoples have dwelled, gathered, and journeyed through these lands for millennia, yet their stories and ongoing presence have been largely erased from public memory here in the city. The Map, made of an 18-metre-long scroll of wool fabric, encompasses Bathurst Street and its geographic surroundings, from the current shore line of Niigani-Gichigami (Lake Ontario) up to Steeles Avenue (the City of Toronto's northern boundary). It is unequal parts of my family tree, topographic exploration, historical survey, storybook, and material research. The exhibition *Chapter One: A Map is Born*, on from March 8th-12th, 2023, served as the Map's introduction to the public, where folks were invited to contribute their own narratives and knowledge, expressed through a variety of materials.


*Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/08/2023.*

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# WELCOME

My name is Naomi Daryn Boyd. I was born and raised in the city now known as Toronto. Some of my ancestors settled here over a century ago, and since then six generations of our big Jewish family have lived, worked, and gathered in this place.

For over 12,000 years these lands have been a cultural crossroads. Many Indigenous Peoples have lived, met in council, and journeyed through these lands for millennia; along the lake shore, and north-south along the river and portage routes to the upper Great Lakes. The three main groups that have cared for these lands have been the Huron-Wendat Confederacy, the Anishinaabek (including the Mississauga of the Credit), and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (including the Seneca). These territories are subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between allied nations of this region to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Five Fresh Water Seas. More recently these lands have been subject to Treaty 13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties. Today Tkaronto is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and beyond.

I am grateful to live, work, and create on these lands, and am actively striving to become a better citizen of these territories and treaty partner. I acknowledge the ongoing nature of this work and seek to actively implement decolonial practices and methodologies in my everyday life and work. I look forward to many years of continued learning with/about/from these lands.

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Where are you from?

This question may be grounded in physical geography, but the true nature of such a query is certainly more complicated than just the location where one emerged into the waking world. The place(s) in which each person grows and lives profoundly informs their worldview. The ecological landscape itself has particular influences, as well as the surrounding communities, infrastructure, geo-political landscape, climate, etc., not to mention differing experiences based on the identities one might claim. All aspects of a place contribute to one's notion of self and others, an infinitely complex and ongoing relationship. As an artist, designer, researcher, or person practicing in and with community, it is even more important to recognize and contextualize one's own perspective in relation to others and the place that you are working.

Within Indigenous methodologies, the individual experience is inextricably linked to the epistemology and ethics of community; it is the responsibility of the researcher to do the necessary preparation and clarify (for themselves and others) the purpose and intent of the work.[1] Margaret Kovach, author of *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, discusses methods of self-situating in Chapter Six of the book, titled 'Preparations: Situating Self, Culture, and Purpose in Indigenous Methodologies.' This chapter in particular has provided invaluable insight, a source which I have been returning to throughout this research. Kovach uses narrative examples and other dialogic methods to demonstrate possibilities for understanding and describing one's role in relation. The text generously offers a number of questions and rhetorical tools that may seem obvious but remain some of the most significant issues to address: 'What is your purpose for this research? Why and how does this research give back to the community? How did you arrive at this research curiosity? What is your story? What is your connection to your culture?'[2]

Over the past couple of years, I have drafted many versions of my own prologue statement, a protocol intended to act as a self-introduction that situates the researcher in relation to the community and to the research itself.[3] I have yet to develop a version that feels sufficient; indeed, the process of trying to summarize my own subjectivity inspired a number of new questions and ultimately emerged as the main theme for this thesis project. It became obvious that there was a lot more work I needed to do myself to better understand what it means to live, work, and create on these lands and in community. Kovach recognizes that 'self-location connects the personal, cultural, and social aspects of the self,'[4] further revealing and informing the purpose of the work, which is bound to community relevance.[5] Thus, the purpose of this research has been to situate myself, in this place, on these lands, and in relation to the various communities that exist here. I have sought to redefine my own understanding of this place that I have always called home but frankly known so little about.

Kovach also introduces the work of Susan Strega and Leslie Brown, two anti-oppressive researchers working specifically at this issue of self-locating in connection with knowledge production. Strega and Brown state that '[critical reflexive research] requires that we intentionally, consciously, and repeatedly bring our awareness to the question of what influences our perceptions, conceptions, and responses (internal and external).'[6] This mode of self-locating is a cyclical and continuous practice that should inform all stages of research, from identifying one's purpose and motivation for the work to the eventual mode of dissemination.[7] For me, this paper has become a site for documentation and reflection of this process of self-locating, a process that I know will never really end.

One of the overt intentions of this work is to recognize and further understand the history of my own family here in Toronto, as well as the broader Jewish community, and their connection to these lands.

That being said, I have personally seen this work, and the Map in particular, as a tool for bridging perceived gaps across communities or identities, as a means to recognize that we indeed share similar connections to sites and stories that may be considered unremarkable to the larger public. As settlers in what is now known as Canada, it is important to recognize the deep Indigenous histories embedded in these lands and actively reclaim these sites and names, understanding that the 'urban' development of this area does not detract or limit its value as a sacred site.

So, what does it mean when I say I am from Toronto? And how does this lived experience impact my work? These were two of the central questions driving this research. Many folks might say they are from Toronto, each alluding to a unique interpretation of this place. Ultimately, I decided to focus on Bathurst Street as the most relevant site to my own personal and familial history here in the city. And not only the buildings literally along Bathurst, but the areas that have sprung up alongside this artery and continue to transform in relation. The scope of investigation for this project is rooted in geographic place, striving to uncover and incorporate various stories and memories that are tied to this arbitrarily rectilinear section of the earth. The project as a whole seeks to critique and expand understandings of community, migration, and development, honouring the land as a witness and participant in these cycles of change since time immemorial. The Map, made of an 18-metre-long scroll of wool fabric, encompasses Bathurst Street and its geographic surroundings, from the current shore line of Niigani-Gichigami (Lake Ontario) up to Steeles Avenue (the City of Toronto's northern boundary). It is unequal parts family tree, topographic exploration, historical survey, storybook, and material research.

I hope to disrupt common expectations folks might have when they think of a map. This Map is not white paper, not a blank slate for writing, and I have chosen to explore unconventional methods for naming and citing sources of information. It is huge and strangely long, tactile, messy, and definitely not completely 'accurate.' The scale is not nearly as vast as a wholesale history of Toronto would think itself to be, but still covers a grander scale than many of the projects I have been delighted to come across while researching this area.

Focused, community-oriented history projects can provide a much more poignant interpretation of experience, such as *Welcome to Blackhurst: An Iconic Toronto Neighbourhood.* This book was released in 2022 by A Different Publisher, 'the publishing company of A Different Booklist, which has been part of this iconic Bathurst neighbourhood for the last 27 years.'[8] The volume's chapters chronicle various individuals who have lived and worked in the community, sharing narratives of place and connection that persist to this day. It is also a fundraising initiative to support the programs and operating costs of the Blackhurst Cultural Centre at Bloor and Bathurst.[9] This approach to documenting history is not as geographically focused as the Tollkeeper's Cottage Museum (Community History Project), or any

other single place/landmark. What does an intense, detailed look at the land through the lens of craft labour produce? And what connections can be found across such a heterogenous stretch of land? One named for a white dude who never set foot on these lands! What does really happen on Bathurst Street, according to the way folks experience it?

~

This project needed some (rough) boundaries in terms of scope. How much of Bathurst Street should I cover? How far north does it actually go? It turns out that it is exactly 18 kilometres from Lake Ontario to Steeles Avenue via Bathurst. In other words, 18 km from the lake to my Grandma Sue's house on Steeles Ave. Eighteen is an important number in Jewish culture. Hebrew letters are used as numbers, their order in the alphabet dictating their value (e.g. Aleph = 1, Bet = 2). The number 18 is represented by the letters het (8) and yud (10), written יח and pronounced (c)hai. יח also means 'life' in Hebrew. Therefore, 18 = life. So 18km, given that it was also the nicely contained height/length of the city, felt like a very appropriate (if daunting) amount of land to cover. Thinking through the construction of the Map itself informed many of my decisions as to the limitations of the geographic area I would be working with. In terms of scale, my goal was to try and make conversion calculations as simple for my metric-system-educated-mind to manage. Hence the 1:1000 scale, where 10 metres of the land would be represented by 1 centimetre on the textile Map. The scope was also dictated by the width of available fabric. In this case the bolts of wool were 1.5 metres wide, giving me approximately one additional major street on either side of Bathurst, roughly bounded by Spadina and Strachan/Christie.

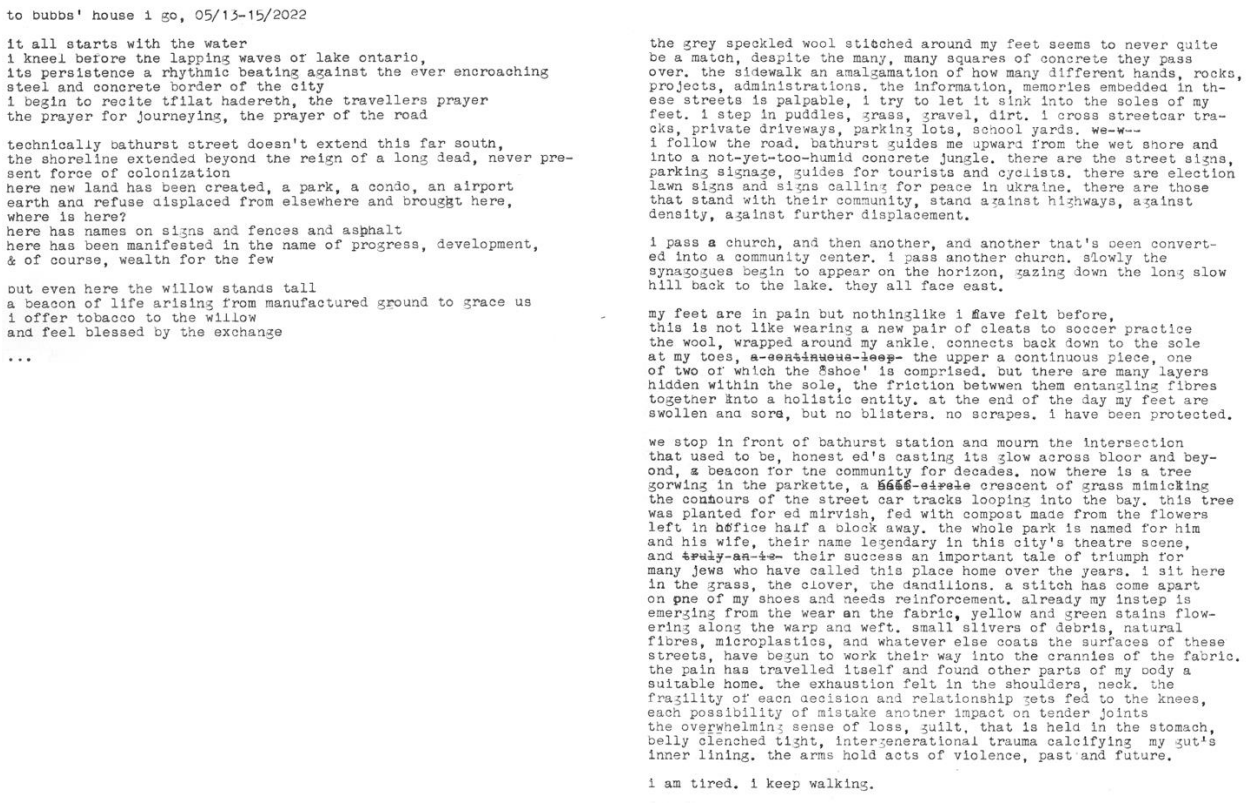
*To Bubbs' House I Go* marked the semi-official beginning of the work on this project. It was challenging to figure out how to find a fresh start, a new chapter in this relationship that I have with this land. I grew up in this city with very little awareness of the settler-colonial systems that actually shape this environment. I knew that my ancestors had fled Eastern Europe to seek refuge here on Turtle Island; I did not know anything about the communities, cultures, and stories that had been displaced in the process. In the summer of 2021 I moved back to Toronto after living on the west coast for four years as an uninvited guest in the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations (Vancouver, BC). This was the first time I was living on my own in Toronto and the perfect opportunity to consciously reconsider my relationship to this place. It was important for me to reintroduce myself, with new awareness, (mis)understanding, and curiosity; to begin the work towards becoming a better treaty partner here in Tkaronto/Toronto.

Before starting work on the Map, I needed to walk the land. The objective of this endeavour was to walk the 18km stretch of Bathurst Street between the shore of Lake Ontario and my Grandma Sue's

house on Steeles Avenue. I split the (entirely uphill) journey into three 6km sections, beginning on Friday, May 13th, 2022, my birthday, and finishing on Sunday, May 15th, my grandmother's birthday. Grandma Sue, aka 'Bubbs' or 'Cookie,' is herself an accomplished textile artist/maker. For this walk I chose to make my own footwear out of the grey wool fabric that is also the base of the map. The shape and sole design were based on a pair of knit socks I had made for myself the year before. The slippers that emerged from this making experiment were certainly not the most ideal footwear for a long urban trek but allowed me to bring much more intention into this practice of walking, both mentally and materially. The form of the slippers required me to be particularly careful in terms of where I was stepping, and not only to avoid puncturing debris. Journeying along the route, it became increasingly clear that the surfaces upon which I stepped were having a direct and immediate impact on my body. Concrete sidewalks are not the most forgiving of surfaces. It was much easier on my knees and hip joints to move over grass or dirt, and soon I found myself automatically drifting towards routes through narrow boulevards and other strips of softer ground that appeared along Bathurst Street. It was not easy to find paths that did not include cement in one form or another.

The intention of this work was to learn anew how to walk softly on the land, with gratitude and sensitivity to the earth below me. A white cotton jumpsuit* and head wrap completed the rest of the outfit, which allowed trace amounts of the land to mark the fabric along the walk. The shoes and the jumpsuit act as documentation for this journey, complete with dirt and dandelion stains, in addition to photo and video (see Images Appendix for photos). I am grateful to mihyun maria kim and Jerry Yang for accompanying me on various legs of this journey. Their documentation skills are keen, and they did not complain despite many hours of walking uphill in the sun. After recovering physically from the effort, and allowing myself to digest some of what I had experienced, I did some reflective writing on the journey using Bubbs' typewriter. These are some excerpts from my reflections:

* I bought this jumpsuit from Kotn (754 Queen St W), a Toronto/Egypt based clothing and home goods company who work directly with cotton farmers in the Nile Delta to grow their material. Kotn is a certified B Corporation, completely transparent about their supply chain and operations, and they also fund education initiatives in the communities where their cotton is farmed. It is tradition to wear new clothing on Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, as a symbol of a fresh start. Thus, it felt pertinent to find a new clean, undyed, utilitarian outfit to wear for this walk, and even better that it came from within the Map's boundaries.



to bubbs' house i go, 05/13-15/2022

it all starts with the water
i kneel before the lapping waves of lake ontario,
its persistence a rhythmic beating against the ever encroaching
steel and concrete border of the city
i begin to recite tfilat hadereth, the travellers prayer
the prayer for journeying, the prayer of the road

technically bathurst street doesn't extend this far south,
the shoreline extended beyond the reign of a long dead, never pre-
sent force of colonization
here new land has been created, a park, a condo, an airport
earth and refuse displaced from elsewhere and brought here,
where is here?
here has names on signs and fences and asphalt
here has been manifested in the name of progress, development,
& of course, wealth for the few

but even here the willow stands tall
a beacon of life arising from manufactured ground to grace us
i offer tobacco to the willow
and feel blessed by the exchange

...

the grey speckled wool stitched around my feet seems to never quite
be a match, despite the many, many squares of concrete they pass
over. the sidewalk an amalgamation of how many different hands, rocks,
projects, administrations. the information, memories embedded in th-
ese streets is palpable, i try to let it sink into the soles of my
feet. i step in puddles, grass, gravel, dirt. i cross streetcar tra-
cks, private driveways, parking lots, school yards. we-w--
i follow the road. bathurst guides me upward from the wet shore and
into a not-yet-too-humid concrete jungle. there are the street signs,
parking signage, guides for tourists and cyclists. there are election
lawn signs and signs calling for peace in ukraine. there are those
that stand with their community, stand against highways, against
density, against further displacement.

i pass a church, and then another, and another that's been convert-
ed into a community center. i pass another church. slowly the
synagogues begin to appear on the horizon, gazing down the long slow
hill back to the lake. they all face east.

my feet are in pain but nothinglike i have felt before,
this is not like wearing a new pair of cleats to soccer practice
the wool, wrapped around my ankle, connects back down to the sole
at my toes, ~~a continuous loop~~ the upper a continuous piece, one
of two of which the 'shoe' is comprised. but there are many layers
hidden within the sole, the friction betwwen them entangling fibres
together into a holistic entity. at the end of the day my feet are
swollen and sore, but no blisters. no scrapes. i have been protected.

we stop in front of bathurst station and mourn the intersection
that used to be, honest ed's casting its glow across bloor and bey-
ond, a beacon for the community for decades. now there is a tree
gorwing in the parkette, a ~~fake circle~~ crescent of grass mimicking
the contours of the street car tracks looping into the bay. this tree
was planted for ed mirvish, fed with compost made from the flowers
left in office half a block away. the whole park is named for him
and his wife, their name legendary in this city's theatre scene,
and ~~truly an icon~~ their success an important tale of triumph for
many jews who have called this place home over the years. i sit here
in the grass, the clover, the dandilions. a stitch has come apart
on one of my shoes and needs reinforcement. already my instep is
emerging from the wear on the fabric, yellow and green stains flow-
ering along the warp and weft. small slivers of debris, natural
fibres, microplastics, and whatever else coats the surfaces of these
streets, have begun to work their way into the crannies of the fabric.
the pain has travelled itself and found other parts of my body a
suitable home. the exhaustion felt in the shoulders, neck. the
fragility of each decision and relationship gets fed to the knees,
each possibility of mistake another impact on tender joints
the overwhelming sense of loss, guilt, that is held in the stomach,
belly clenched tight, intergenerational trauma calcifying my gut's
inner lining. the arms hold acts of violence, past and future.

i am tired. i keep walking.

*Figure 1: Excerpts typed with Grandma Sue's typewriter, ca 1950s, reflecting on To Bubbs' House I Go.*

I have tried to take these teachings and apply them to my daily life on this land. What aspects of these streets and sidewalks does my attention drift towards? How can I better attune myself to the other lives, beyond the human, that occupy these territories? Today I try to walk this path with a humble heart, curious eyes, and open ears. I have no expectations of finding the 'right' way or reaching a particular conclusion; I would simply like to dedicate the time, my mind, and body, to being present in this patch of earth and receiving, with gratitude, whatever it has to share. My connection to this land is an active relationship. This is not the end of this work but the beginning of an ongoing journey of adapting to this hybrid ecosystem and developing my place in relation.

Much of this process in re-learning the land has involved the simple acts of walking and noticing. Walking and listening. Dedicating time to observe and understand sometimes small or unassuming places. Stopping to read that plaque I have walked by 200 times before. (And who wrote this plaque anyways? What else was here and not deemed worthy of a plaque?) Paying attention to the layers and clues of what may lie below. Reading and reading again to gain a fuller understanding. Listening to the stories that other folks have generously collected and shared of their knowledge and experience. Reading and writing about the thing being read, then transforming comprehension into active knowing and learning.

This work in no way seeks to represent a singular, coherent 'identity' or community. I consider myself, mostly by way of my familial relations, a part of the Jewish community in Toronto, but there are many towards the Ultra-Orthodox end of the Judaism spectrum who might look upon this work (and this mode of thinking) with disdain. Each aspect of my own personal identity connects me to other realms of community and expression. These connections are also often contradictory, resulting in a hybrid formation of one's self across various value systems.

Discussions of this type of work are necessarily abound with somewhat abstract concepts such as 'community,' 'place,' and 'site.' While I have not arrived at any particularly concrete definitions for these terms, I am indebted to Miwon Kwon and her 2002 book *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* for helping navigate these conversations. The text employs a myriad of examples to critically examine how the relationship between 'art,' 'artist,' and 'site' has shifted over time, unfortunately leading to many instances of misinterpretation and exploitation of vulnerable communities. Kwon acknowledges that 'site-specific art can lead to the unearthing of repressed histories, help provide greater visibility to marginalized groups and issues, and initiate the re(dis)covery of "minor" places so far ignored by the dominant culture.'[10] At the same time readers are warned to consider who exactly is conducting these projects and what their long-term impact might be. 'Inasmuch as the current socioeconomic order thrives on the (artificial) production and (mass) consumption of difference (for difference sake), the siting of art in "real" places can also be a means to *extract* the social and historical dimensions of these places,' most often to the benefit of the artist themselves and the institutions that continue to hold the power—museums, galleries, universities, and governments (emphasis original).[11]

Speaking to the question of a unified collective identity, Chapter 5 of Kwon's *One Place After Another*, 'The (Un)Sitings of Community' asserts that '"coherent" communities are *more* susceptible to appropriation by artists and art institutions' because they can be more easily be labelled and fit into a certain box.[12] This understanding of identity-formation on a collective scale can certainly be effective for institutions or organizations looking to fulfil a diversity quota. It is a system dependent on false claims of authenticity and highly subjective demarcations of 'community' within discrete temporal and spatial formations.[13] As opposed to this approach to 'community-based art,' Kwon suggests a new term, 'collective artistic praxis,' that is an inherently '*projective* enterprise.'[14] Through this lens, 'a coherent representation of the group's identity is always out of grasp. [...] Such a praxis also involves a questioning of the exclusions that fortify yet threaten the group's own identity.'[15]

Within the context of *Blood, Water & Bathurst Street*, I have resisted certain definitions of place and community knowing that it is the unexpected connections between disparate figures or sites which

shed light on the most exciting knowledge. Kensington Market may have been established as a Jewish neighbourhood, but it has continued to develop as a bustling cultural enclave because of the waves of various migrant groups that have settled there since. This is just one example in Tkaronto of an ongoing, hybrid relationship formed between landscape, people, stories, materials, and other beings that this project seeks to explore, not define.

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This investigative work is rooted in the practice of research-creation, described by Natalie Loveless as 'a hybrid formation, part research, part creation, part experiment that focuses on the output of the research.'[16] Loveless' Manifesto for Research-Creation, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, seeks to define and explore the often-debated terminology surrounding the field of research-creation and interrelated practices, such as practice-led research. I have been particularly drawn to Loveless' description of research-creation as a curiosity-driven practice, a give and take between the practices of learning and making, a cyclical process of uncovering knowledge, interpretation, abstraction, and continually returning to investigation as new questions emerge. Considering the highly personal nature of this research, there are sometimes moments of unexplainable clarity on certain matters, as well as frustrating instances of uncertainty and confusion.

Research-creation, as described by Loveless, embraces this space of unknowing as a key part of the process. 'Rather than moving from ignorance to knowledge, [...] the uncanny asserts that feeling displaced (ignorant) at the moment one feels one should be at home (knowledgeable) *is the condition of knowledge making at its best*, the condition that drives curiosity (as a drive to *aim* rather than to *attain*), and a condition that cannot be predicted.'[17] This element of curiosity also arises in Loveless' discussion of 'polydisciplinamory,' a concept that brings together practices of interdisciplinarity and queer theory into practice to develop a relational, disruptive, and curiosity-driven process.[18] The creation side of this work is deeply interdisciplinary, exploring a variety of making practices in response to the subject matter rather than deciding on a particular method or technique prior to the work beginning. It has been a welcome opportunity to bring together somewhat disparate materials into conversation with each other, including natural fibres like Daylily (harvested at Beverley St and Grange Ave in October 2021), and mixed-acrylic yarns gifted to me by various grandmothers.

Textiles have long been a component of my creative practice, and through this project I was able to further expand and experiment with new media and techniques. A major theme that has emerged from this work has surrounded the question of seen and unseen labour, of the value of certain types of labour and skills over others, particularly when it comes to my feminine ancestors. My instinct is to

resist labelling all of my uterus-possessing predecessors 'women.' The label and all of its associated requirements and expectations were imparted upon these individuals, not chosen. But it would also be ridiculous to ignore the comradery and kinship I share with these folks. To experience being assigned Female at birth, to be deemed inferior, fragile, and segregated from the more important half of the community, is one that we share. Within a traditional Jewish upbringing, this meant limited access to education and expression, sitting up on the balcony in synagogue, not permitted to actually participate, and generally being raised to fulfil particular 'background' responsibilities.* Yet this lineage has also gifted me a deep appreciation and interest in textile hand craft; all of my grandmothers knitted, crocheted, sewed clothing and home goods, and engaged in a variety of other textile arts, including needlepoint and cross stitch. For many years these women crafted textiles for their family members, to make money, and as charity work. In an oral history interview from 1979, my great-great-grandmother Rose Sutin describes knitting socks for the World War I effort as a spectator at Brooklyn Dodgers games. I have inherited some of their materials and tools, including many knitting needles, and have been grateful to receive teachings in these practices as well. Once in my early teens I was doing some knitting in Bubbs' presence and she was outraged at the technique I was using! She immediately began teaching me a different way to cast on—create the first row of stitches—that made a sturdier starting edge to the piece. It is a fun, repetitive method that uses your thumb, third finger, and a single needle. Last year, I had the opportunity to pass this teaching on to my younger brother, who was beginning the process of knitting his first pair of mittens.

This project has been an incredible opportunity to more actively consider my connections to family through material practice. I have had the chance to incorporate a number of different textiles into this process and exhibition, including unused yarn, vintage merchandise, and goods manufactured by family businesses. These materials have been a vehicle for discovering and preserving familial stories and bonds. Thank you, reader, for joining me to navigate this process and witnessing this work.

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* Modern Orthodoxy maintains extremely strict divisions along gender lines in almost every facet of everyday life. Within my own family, as is likely common among many immigrant cultures, each generation has heralded additional consolations toward reform and assimilation. Back in the old country, my female ancestors would have never even been sent to receive an education, such a terribly precious component of Jewish faith and life. The privilege to study and develop one's knowledge was wholly restricted. By the time my parents were growing up in Toronto, they were both sent to Hebrew Day School, fulfilling the mitzvah of bestowing on your children a Jewish education. Even if a family could not comfortably afford it, it was considered a highly important responsibility towards keeping the culture alive.

# ‘WELCOME’ NOTES

[1] Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Second Edition, 2021), 137.

[2] Kovach, 140.

[3] Kovach, 146.

[4] Kovach, 146.

[5] Kovach, 139.

[6] Susan Strega and Leslie Brown (2015), quoted in Kovach, 142.

[7] Kovach, 142.

[8] *Welcome to Blackhurst: An Iconic Toronto Neighbourhood*, (Toronto: A Different Publisher, 2022).

[9] A Different Booklist, 2022, Link to A Different Booklist.

[10] Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 53.

[11] Kwon, 53.

[12] Kwon, 148, (emphasis original).

[13] Kwon, 148, (emphasis original).

[14] Kwon, 154.

[15] Kwon, 154, (emphasis original).

[16] Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 6.

[17] Loveless, 47.

[18] Loveless, 59-61.

# WATER

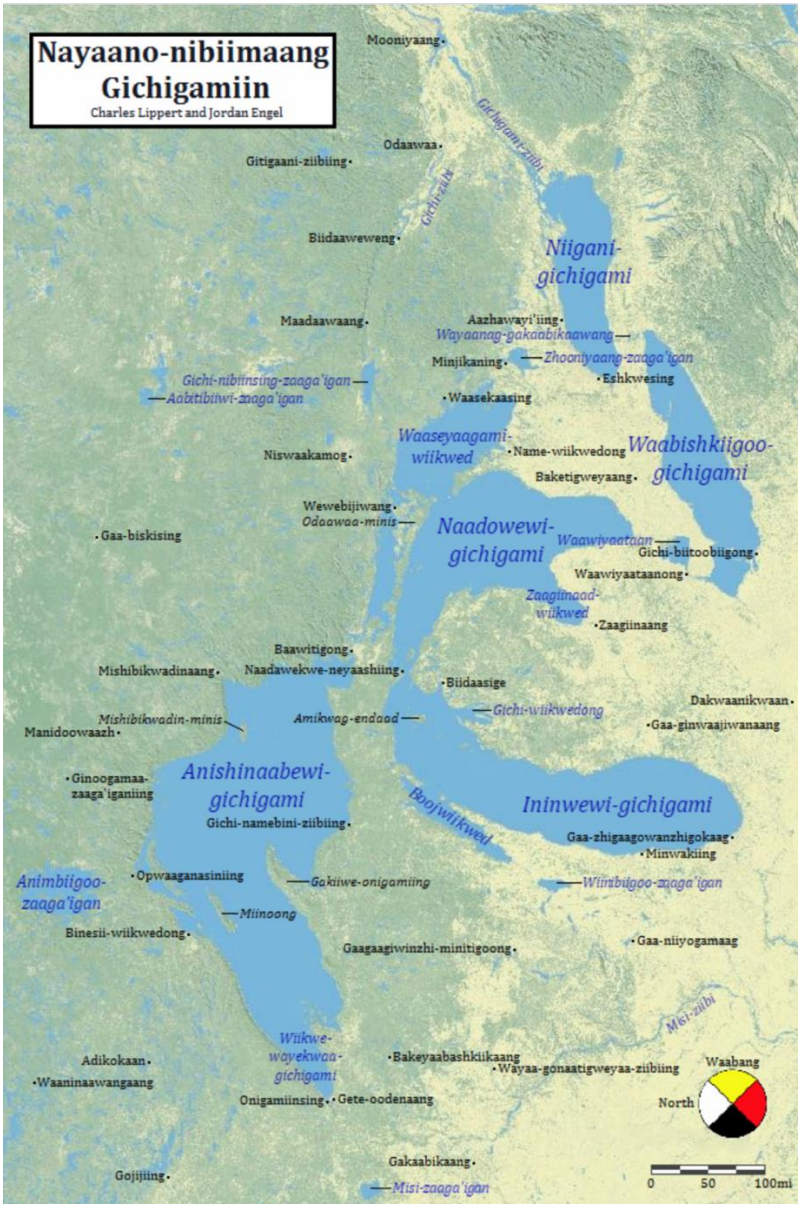


*Figure 2: 'Nayanno-nibiimaang Gichigamiin (The Great Lakes) in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe), by Charles Lippert and Jordan Engel,' 04/14/20015. Accessed via the Decolonial Atlas, Link to Decolonial Atlas.*

The earliest traces of human presence on these lands date back about 12-13,000 years, as the glaciers of the last Ice Age began to retreat. These receding ice sheets shaped the landscape of the Great Lakes region as it is known today; the shoreline of glacial Lake Iroquois gradually transformed into present-day Lake Ontario. In Anishinaabemowin, this body of water is known as Niigani-gichigami, translating to Leading Sea, or First Sea. As depicted in the map above (Figure 2), the Anishinaabek traditionally orient themselves to the East (Waabang)—where the sun rises—thus Lake Ontario is at the

top. Another notable site on this map is Minjikaning, meaning 'fish fence.' This refers to the ancient fishing weirs located at the narrows between Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching; here stakes were driven into the water to strategically barricade the channel, creating narrow openings to catch fish.[19] Many Indigenous nations gathered here over millennia to meet in Council, fish, and trade. Archaeologists have dated existing stakes at the narrows to be roughly 4,500 years old. The Wendat name for this place is Karonto, translating to 'log lying in the water,' while the Kanien'keha/Mohawk peoples refer to it as Tkarón:to, meaning 'trees (standing) in the water there.'[20]

In a 2018 talk at the Myseum of Toronto, Bonnie Devine mapped the migration of this name south from the narrows along Indigenous trade routes to the present-day site of Toronto. Long before European settlers reached this area, the north shore of Lake Ontario (particularly around the Humber, Rouge, and Don Rivers), was a highly active zone for commercial trade and settlement. Evidence of vast trade networks have been unearthed in the form of materials such as copper, turquoise, and marine shells; objects that would have travelled here from all across Turtle Island.[21] This major trading post was connected to the fishing weirs at the narrows via a well-travelled walking path. The narrows were a key site in the context of a much larger trading network; once in Lake Simcoe, it was a short portage to Georgian Bay, and from there one could access Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior. Lord Simcoe recognized that the trail was such a valuable route he had it turned into a corduroy road, laying logs along the existing path so that it might be used to transport goods year-round.[22] Later renamed Yonge Street (and Highway 11), it remains the longest road in the world. The settler town of Toronto—mistakenly adopting the name from the original fishing weirs—continued to grow as an economic centre in the region in large part because of its position along such an important trade route. Control of Yonge Street meant prime access to the Upper Great Lakes and Hudson Bay.[23] From the western tip of Lake Superior, one was connected to the Mississippi River, a direct route all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico.

Originally cultivated in the Gulf of Mexico and Central America, corn made its way to this region via these river networks between 800—1300 CE. The arrival of corn spurred major changes for the peoples of this region, particularly for the ancestral Wendat on the north shore of Lake Ontario. The Wendat developed a more sedentary Longhouse culture of farming, trading corn for furs and fish with the Anishinaabek of the region.[24] The next few hundred years saw the two nations solidify their relationship and presence in the area:

> 1300—c. 1610: Ancestral Wendat village sequences and burial ossuaries dot the Toronto landscape. Longhouse villages surrounded by immense cornfields are moved every fifteen to thirty-five years or so to gain access to fresh soils and timber. Artifacts reveal large trading

> networks with Anishinaabe allies and other Indigenous Peoples that extend as far as the Gulf of Mexico and Hudson Bay. A Council Fire is maintained at the fish weirs at the Narrows for centuries (perhaps thousands of years) and is host to many meetings that confirm the alliance between the Wendat and Anishinaabek.[25]

This account is an excerpt from *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians,* part of Jumblies Theatre + Arts' multi-year, multi-media Talking Treaties project. The 2022 publication, a collaboration between Toronto Biennial of Art, Jumblies Theatre, and Art Metropole, is a creative investigation into 'the complex intercultural roots of treaty relationships in the place we now call Toronto.'[26] Included in the book are a wide variety of land-based activities and prompts for creative writing and drawing responses, fostering an embodied learning experience for the reader. This work creates space to explore individual and collective responsibilities to this land, considering how all Torontonians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can actively navigate their relationship to this place. So, what does it mean to be an active treaty partner?

In the words of the *Treaty Guide*, 'a treaty establishes ongoing responsibilities to one another, other beings, and the land. It creates a cooperative interdependence and a form of kinship.'[27] For the Indigenous Peoples of this region, treaties and alliances are understood as an ongoing process of relationality that relies on exchange and maintenance, not a fixed contract. There are a number of symbolic elements that anchor the language and practice of treaty making, including the exchange of Wampum,* the establishment and maintenance of a Council Fire,† or the Shared Dish—also sometimes referred to as a kettle or bowl. This last method of maintaining peaceful relations is grounded in the idea of a shared meal, recognizing that whatever resources are present ought to be divided equally among those who require sustenance. I am sure many can relate to the concept of a shared meal acting as means to repair and reinforce good relations. In Jewish culture food is a key component of *every* holiday; the preparation of specific dishes is perhaps the most widely fulfilled tradition across

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* 'Wampum is a string or belt of small tubular beads made from purple and white marine shells,' which could be woven into particular designs to symbolize words and commitments made in its presence. 'As mnemonic devices, [Wampum Belts] are crucial for maintaining the oral memory of treaty making.' (*A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 20)

† A Council Fire, in Anishinaabe, Wendat, and Haudenosaunee traditions, is both a metaphor for governance and a meeting place for Councils, alliances, and treaty making. 'A Clan, community, or nation could hold a Council to resolve internal matters or make decisions that affect all parties. Two or more Clans or nations could hold a Council to air differences, settle disputes, and protect the rights of their citizens. Regional Council Fires were hosted and maintained by a particular Clan (e.g., the Eagle Clan of the Mississaugas of the Credit) or nation (e.g., the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy) and could be returned to annually or semi-annually over hundreds of years' (*A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 20).

factions and degrees of Orthodoxy, and an interesting realm to compare and contrast different interpretations across regions and communities. Even for the holiday infamous as a day of fasting, Yom Kippur, the pre-fast and break-fast meals are important times of gathering. *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians* summarizes this literal and metaphoric tool for diplomacy as such: 'A shared meal is an embodied act involved in peacemaking.'[28]

The rivers and lakes of this region connected a network of Council Fires where communities could gather, share a meal, exchange goods and information, and discuss stewardship of the lands. 'The three main groups upholding this network of alliances and land-based memory are the Wendat Confederacy, the Anishinaabek, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (including the Seneca).'[29] Maintaining good relationships between nations and with the lands ensured that all peoples in the region had sufficient resources, a stark contrast to life in Toronto as experienced today.

> This was, historically, a place of bounty. It was a seasonal meeting place, a place for trade and ongoing council. It's been a place where Indigenous Nations have come together to remember and relate going back thousands of years. Toronto did a lot of forgetting to become what it is today. All rivers were renamed, 'requickened,' first in French and then again in the English image. Maps were updated, stripping away thousands of years of land-based knowledge.[30]

Maps have always been a powerful colonial tool. Simplified, aerial drawings of the land express a completely impersonal interpretation of place. Meanwhile, the maps are never really 'right' anyways. From the beginning of this research, spending time comparing maps of the Toronto area across many decades, it became obvious that they could not align with each other; each source provides one view of the bigger picture, and it is only in bringing these disparate perspectives together that a deeper understanding may be reached. The land, waters, and all living beings present here continue to play an active role in shaping this place. My hope for the Bathurst Street Map is that it continues to grow and morph over time, absorbing the forces that act upon it.

Of the multitude of species that thrived in this region, passenger pigeons were perhaps the most populous and glorious of all. Billions of passenger pigeons thrived on the eastern half of Turtle Island. This was long before rock doves—the species of domesticated pigeon that abound urban centres today—were brought ashore in the Maritimes by the French. 'Passenger pigeons were bigger than their rock dove cousins, with longer necks and longer tails,' writes Adam Bunch in 'A Brief History of the Pigeons of Toronto,' a chapter in *Toronto Book of the Dead*, published in 2017.[31] Emigrating in flocks that could reach millions, witnesses described columns of birds a kilometre and a half wide and five hundred kilometres long; they would blot out the sun for days as they passed.[32] In 1895, Chief Simon

Pokagon of the Potawatomi described the colourful avian creatures as such: '[…] I have seen them move in one unbroken column for hours across the sky, like some great river, ever varying in hue; and as the mighty stream, sweeping on at sixty miles an hour, reached some deep valley, it would pour its living mass headlong down hundreds of feet, sounding as though a whirlwind was abroad in the land.'[33] For many generations this seemingly infinite population of birds was an important source of protein for many Indigenous Nations across the Five Fresh-Water Seas and beyond; responsible and respectful hunting practices assured that this bountiful species was never under threat of depletion.

With the arrival of settlers, this 'resource' was regarded as ripe for exploitation. Given the sheer density and abundance of pigeons, one could aim a rifle rather aimlessly into a passing flock and successfully drop at least one or two. Recently arrived residents developed ways to capture and slaughter them on mass, and they soon became a key commodity in the young town of Toronto. Pigeons could be roasted or stewed, their feathers saved to become mattress stuffing or building insulation. In colonial settlements all across the Atlantic coast, rampant hunting combined with the destruction of the pigeons' habitat via deforestation had drastic consequences for the species. By the midway point of the 19th century, hundreds of thousands of birds were dying each day, and the species became officially extinct in 1914.[34]

The glorious ecological bounty that originally drew folks to gather in this region has been eclipsed by a new value system which measures the importance of land in terms of proximity, financial value, and suitability for 'development.' Continually resurfacing this earth at such a brutal magnitude erases with it the stories of that place, however that may have manifested in physical form. Memories and histories are embedded in the landscape wherever folks engage with life. It could be a particular block of row houses, a brutalist community centre, or things much smaller like an unchanged, tagged billboard or a pothole the locals know will never be fixed. Humans and other beings relate to each other in space, at any moment our physical environment is informing our behaviours, actions, and relationships.

A key part of place-based relationality is dependent on naming, a practice which sits at the convergence of language, culture, and environment. Started in 2013 by Hayden King and Susan Blight, The Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming Project describes their work as 'an effort to restore Anishinaabemowin place-names to the streets, avenues, roads, paths, and trails of Gichi Kiiwenging (Toronto)—transforming a landscape that often obscures or makes invisible the presence of Indigenous peoples.'[35] The initiative began replacing official street signs and historical plaques across the city with Anishinaabe versions, including highly politicized sites like Queen's Park, home to Ontario's provincial legislature. At Davenport and Spadina, the junction of two historic Indigenous trails, the temporary installations were so impactful that the community supported an effort to

incorporate the Anishinaabe names into the City's official street signs (Figure 4).[36] Gete-Onigaming, the Anishinaabemowin name for what became Davenport Road, refers to the street's origins as a portage route connecting the Don and Humber rivers, following the base of the glacial bluffs.


*Figure 3: 'Gete-Onigaming, formerly Davenport Rd,' Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming, 2015. Link to Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming.*


*Figure 4: 'Gete-Onigaming,' Toronto Street Sign Database Wiki, 2017. Link to Gete-Onigaming.*

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I'm told at one time

the River's mass used to glide across the entire valley

It has always been a highway

before cars were thought of

or White people

birch bark used to cut the water

passing songs along the shores

Excerpt from *Don Song* by Rebeka Tabobondung (2002)

The rivers of this immediate vicinity ran south towards Niigani-Gichigami, many mouths opening into a naturally harboured nook which would later be called the Toronto Harbour. In 1792, a 19-year-old Joseph Bouchette* conducted a relatively extensive hydrographic investigation in the 'harbour' area on behalf of the naval service. The resulting *Plan of Toronto Harbour, With the Rocks, Shoals & Soundings Thereof, Surveyed & Drawn by Joseph Bouchett* allowed the rocky bay to be navigated by ship captains wielding large vessels. Once inside the bay, the sand and rock bar jutting out into the lake curved a sheltering arm around those looking to set anchor. According to Ron Brown,† 'geologically, the "Island" was a spit of sand deposited by the lake currents swirling westward from the Scarborough Bluffs, past the swampy mouth of the Don River.'[37] This bit of land extending out into the lake was well forested and had long been visited as a site for fishing and camping. It was accessible via multiple waterways; waters that have been the main mode of transportation and exchange across

* Bouchette would later go on to become Surveyor General of Upper Canada aka Colonial Map Maker Supreme.

† This information appears in 'Along the Lakeshore,' the first chapter of Ron Brown's book, *Toronto's Lost Villages*. Published by Dundurn Press in 2020, the book features about 200 words covering the 12,000 years of human life on these lands before the arrival of European colonizers, followed by over 200 pages chronicling settler construction projects. Brown fails to provide a definition for what he considers a lost 'village' worth noting. At the same time, the text largely dismisses Indigenous settlement in the area seemingly based on their 'crude' construction (5), limited size, and lack of permanence. Further, Brown does not provide sources for this information. Brown's description of 'The Toronto Islands' begins as such: 'These days the popular Toronto Islands are a busy summertime retreat for Torontonians, and have been so for many decades. *Even* Indigenous Peoples came here to hunt and to fish, although *no evidence of villages* has been found' (11, emphasis added). This is a frustratingly patronizing description of Indigenous life in the region, and completely ignores the plethora of artifacts, histories, and knowledge connected to these lands. The shoreline of the lake has shifted so drastically over the past thousands of years, some of the physical 'evidence' of life here is currently underwater. The peninsula/island remains just a sandbar that continues to disappear into the rising lake. So maybe it was wise not to build 70+ homes here, many of which are perennially threatened by flooding and instability?

these lands for millennia. The Mississauga established fishing camps and seasonal villages along the rivers and lakeshore; the peninsula was known as Minising/Minnesink/Menecing, the locative form of the word for island, 'minis.'[38] Though initially deemed unfit for habitation by the settlers, it was certainly a strategically valuable feature of the physical landscape for those with eyes towards military defence.


*Figure 5: Plan of Toronto Harbour with the Rocks, Shoals, & Soundings etc. surveyed & drawn by J. Bouchette, 1792. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, accessed via Historical Maps of Toronto.*

John Graves Simcoe arrived in the area one year later, ordering a new survey of what he called the 'York Harbour.' This second map, completed by Alexander Aitken in 1793, drew heavily on Bouchette's work, adding further information about the adjacent rivers and streams.[39] This included Garrison Creek, the site at which Fort York would later be built and continues to occupy. Across from the mouth of the Garrison was the western tip of the sand peninsula, curving back landward. 'Simcoe thought that one entrance would be so easy to defend he called the end of the peninsula Gibraltar Point—named after the rocky fortress at the entrance to the Mediterranean.'[40] The re-naming of the site was a precursor to the installation of a lighthouse. Anishinaabe writer and scholar Hayden King compares Simcoe's role as a colonial figure in Toronto to that of Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés.[41] King recognizes Simcoe as 'responsible for claiming land and erasing dozens—maybe hundreds—of

Indigenous place names in much of the Toronto region and replacing them with the names of English men, many of which persist to this day.'[42]

In 2019, the Government of Canada launched an interactive map highlighting '780 geographical places named in over 65 Indigenous languages or dialects.'[43] The initiative, somewhat ironically titled *Stories from the Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada* recognizes the vast number of places that have derived their present— 'official,' settler-state determined—name from Indigenous languages. One local example is Mimico Creek, derived from Omimeca/Omiimiikaa, meaning 'place of the wild pigeons' in the Michi-Saagiig dialect of Anishinaabemowin.[44] This name persists as a reference to the vast numbers of passenger pigeons that once nested there; the species, as mentioned earlier, that was entirely expunged from this land by settler populations. While this is valuable work, the language and framing of such a project completely ignores the innumerable names and histories that have been completely erased through 'Canada's' colonial existence. This is one of many projects implemented by the Canadian government in recent years to demonstrate their efforts towards reconciliation, yet this kind of surface-level acknowledgement remains frustratingly inadequate. It is important to resist praising endeavours that claim to strengthen Indigenous language and culture while upholding the settler-colonial status quo. A tremendous amount of work remains to be done towards meeting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action related to the revitalization and preservation of Aboriginal Languages.*

In terms of Indigenous histories, knowledge, and present/future community life here in the city of Toronto, First Story Toronto's mobile application is an exciting and invaluable resource. Developed at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto in partnership with Centre for Community Mapping, the First Story app 'is an interactive map accessing original stories, photographs, archival documents, audio and video clips that illuminate the evolving Indigenous history of the Toronto area.'[45] It has been incredibly interesting for me to investigate these sites and stories; I have been able to visit some in my area,† and look forward to exploring even more of their audio tours and walking guides in the future. Spadina Road is another place that derives its name from the Mississauga. Between 1660-1700, the

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* Article 14 called upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act, which received royal assent in 2019. The original Calls to Action included requests to support the following principles: 'Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them,' asserting that 'the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.'

† The NCCT, located at 16 Spadina Road, is just a couple blocks away from my apartment and has been my local voting station for the recent Provincial and Municipal elections.

Michi Saagig/Mississauga, 'a group of Anishinaabek from near the Mississagi River on the north shore of Georgian Bay,' relocated to the north shore of Lake Ontario.[46] Following the retreat of the Seneca from these territories sometime after 1687, the Mississauga established themselves along a number of rivers, including the Rouge, Humber, and Credit. The presence of the Anishinaabek in what is now known as southern Ontario was consolidated through 'the relighting of old Council Fires and establishment of new ones, such as the mouth of the Credit River.'*[47] The shore cliffs of glacial Lake Iroquois, formed during the last Ice Age, were a dominant geographic feature of this area. One of the steepest sections of this ridge, at 23 meters high, is near the present-day site of Casa Loma. From atop this ancient shoreline, the Anishinaabek could track activity along the waterfront, including the harbour, keeping eyes on the French and other settlers making their way into the area. This place was called Ishpadinaa, translating to high hill/place.[48]

The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (NCCT) has had a profound impact on the community on Ishpadinaa and the surrounding neighbourhood. Just south of the NCCT is the Toronto Public Library's Spadina Branch, which houses one of the most extensive Native Collections in the city. The façade of the library features the name Mahsinahhekahnikahmik in Cree syllabics and roman orthography, meaning 'the lodge or place of the book.'[49] Across the street is Spadina Station, home to an impressive variety of artwork as part of the Toronto Transit Commission's Public Art Program. The station entrance just north of Bloor Street features the *K'san Village House Posts,* carved by Gitxsan artists Fedelia O'Brien, Murphy Green, and Chuck 'Ya'Ya' Heit. The carvings were commissioned by the Wigwamen Housing Corporation to commemorate the building of Wigwamen Terrace (a 120-unit senior citizens apartment at 14 Spadina Rd, also an NCCT initiative) in 1979, and were subsequently donated to the TTC.[50] These three traditional housing supports (Figure 6) were carved out of red cedar, depicting an owl (O'Brien), wolf (Green), and a hawk (Heit).[51] A few blocks north, the Kendal Avenue entrance to Spadina Station features *Barren Ground Caribou*, a 2.5 metre-wide quilt designed for the site by legendary Toronto feminist and textile artist Joyce Wieland (Figures 7 and 8). Intended to 'bring the tundra landscape to downtown Toronto,' stitching this colourful, highly textured quilt took 3 people 8 months to complete, and was finally unveiled in its current home in 1978.[52] I often go out of my way to visit this stunning textile work, truly the hidden jewel of this underutilized outlet of the sprawling station. The labour and care put into this work is palpable even behind glass; enduring pencil marks

* According to a Mississauga Oral Tradition, they became known as Mississaugas of the Credit because of their honourable relations with the fur trade as 'people of good credit.' The Credit River, also called Mazina'ige–ziibi, translating to 'to write, or to give or make credit,' was a key route for exchanging goods with the French. (*A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 50).

and imperfect hand-stitching embrace an honest mode to creation that I deeply appreciate and have sought to incorporate into my own work.

*Figure 6: 'K'san Village House Posts in Spadina Station.' First Story Toronto, 03/01/2013. Accessed via First Story Blog, Link to K'san Village House Posts in Spadina Station.*

*Figure 7: 'A quilt for a subway.' Photo by Ron Bull, Toronto Star Photographic Archive, 10/19/1977. Featuring Joyce Wieland (middle), Joan Stewart (left) and Louisa Leighton. Accessed via Toronto Public Library Photographic Archive.*

*Figure 8: 'Barren Ground Caribou by Joyce Wieland: a romantic vision of the Arctic tundra.' Photo by Nathan Ng, stationfixation.com, 01/2022.*

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Let us return, once again, to the lakeshore. Construction of the Gibraltar Point Lighthouse finished in 1808, becoming the first permanent lighthouse built in Nayanno-nibiimaang Gichigamiin (the Great Lakes). It was the first building made out of stone in Toronto—though the rock itself was culled at a limestone quarry in Niagara—and the tallest structure in town for almost half a century.[53] The erection of the lighthouse was a painfully literal symbol of colonizing forces solidifying their presence on this land towards long term occupation, a process that would continue to thrive on methods of erasure and resource extraction. Notably, despite Simcoe's efforts to make 'York' stick, the Indigenous-language-derived-name for the city, Toronto, has prevailed.

The task of Toronto's first lighthouse keeper was given to John Paul Radelmüller, a Bavarian farmer who became a trusted servant of one of 'Mad' King George III's sons, Prince Edward. Upon first reaching Turtle Island, Radelmüller was stationed in the Atlantic provinces, working as a porter to Prince Edward (after whom the Island and County are named) and then graduated to a position of steward for the lieutenant governor of Nova Scotia. On New Year's Day in 1804, he arrived in York, just a tiny, muddy town, with few resources and no connections. Four years later Radelmüller was installed in a small wooden cabin on Gibraltar Point, and charged with maintaining the lantern atop the tower. The lighthouse keeper ensured that this beacon shone brightly each night, guiding any ships safely into the harbour, and signalling to the mainland the allegiances of approaching vessels. This became a particularly important role in the following years, as the War of 1812 found its way to Fort York. He survived the war. Yet, it was from the very top of this lighthouse, from the chamber which held his most precious charge, that Radelmüller was toppled to his death in 1815. Having been attacked by two friendly soldiers also stationed on the peninsula, quarrelling over liquor, the lighthouse keeper was killed with the fall, brutally quartered, and hastily buried in the sand. The two men scattered body parts in various shallow graves across that end of (what would later become) the Toronto Island.[54]

That is one version of events. The story of Radelmüller's murder has been recounted, in a multitude of variations, across generations of folks living in this city. These disparate tales do have common threads that tie to present-day life in Toronto, asserting that the Gibraltar Point Lighthouse is perpetually haunted by the original lighthouse keeper's ghost. The facts of his murder remain unconfirmed, and many have strived to renounce this 'myth' all together. But odd bones, including a jaw (!), have been found and the legend lives on. Some see the blood spilled from his body as he fled up the stairs, to the safety of his lighthouse. Others hear the guttural moaning of a man in distress, or strange patterns in the fog at a certain time of night. It seems fitting that Toronto's first permanent stone structure, as erected by settlers, is so deeply saturated with stories of personal and regional significance. And also, that it is a story of a few white settler-men inflicting unnecessary violence upon

one another. It is exactly this concoction of story, personal experience, and material presence that create connections to land, that inspire notions of ‘place’ in their inhabitants.

# ‘WATER’ NOTES

[19] Talking Treaties Collective (Ange Loft, Victoria Freeman, Martha Stiegman, and Jill Carter), *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, (Toronto: Jumblies Press, Art Metropole, and Toronto Biennial of Art, 2022), 8.

[20] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 8.

[21] Bonnie Devine, “Tkarón:to & Turtle Island: The Remarkable Indigenous Trade Networks,” November 2, 2018, Myseum of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, video, 40:17, Link to Tkarón:to & Turtle Island: The Remarkable Indigenous Trade Networks.

[22] Devine, 2018.

[23] Devine, 2018.

[24] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 11.

[25] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 11.

[26] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians.*

[27] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 18.

[28] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians,* 21.

[29] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 16.

[30] Ange Loft, “Remember Like We Do,” in *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that Carry this Place,* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2021, eds. Denise Bolduc, Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere, Rebeka Tabobondung, and Brian Wright-McLeod), 17.

[31] Adam Bunch, *The Toronto Book of the Dead* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2017), 214.

[32] Bunch, 214.

[33] Bunch, 215.

[34] Bunch, 217.

[35] Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming, accessed February 12, 2023, Link to Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming.

[36] Rick Garrick, “Where the streets have an old name,” *Anishinaabek News,* May 2, 2017, Link to Where the streets have an old name.

[37] Ron Brown, *Toronto’s Lost Villages*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2020), 11.

[38] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians,* 50; Ojibwe People’s Dictionary, “Minis,” 2021. Link to Ojibwe People’s Dictionary.

[39] Nathan Ng, “1792 Bouchette Plan of Toronto Harbour,” *Historical Maps of Toronto*, 2013. Link to 1792 Bouchette Plan of Toronto Harbour.

[40] Bunch, 110.

[41] Hayden King, “Rising Like a Cloud,” in *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that Carry this Place* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2021, eds. Denise Bolduc, Mnawaate Gordon-Corbiere, Rebeka Tabobondung, and Brian Wright-McLeod), 12.

[42] King, 12.

[43] “Stories from the Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada,” Geographical Names Board of Canada, last modified February 28, 2023, Link to Stories from the Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada.

[44] “Stories from the Land,” Link to Stories from the Land; *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 50.

[45] "First Story Toronto App & Bus Tour," Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, accessed March 4, 2023. Link to First Story Toronto App & Bus Tour.

[46] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 47.

[47] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 47.

[48] *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians*, 50.

[49] "Toronto Public Library Spadina Road Branch," First Story Toronto, accessed March 4, 2023.

[50] "K'san Village House Posts," First Story Toronto, accessed March 4, 2023.

[51] "K'san Village House Posts," First Story Toronto, accessed March 4, 2023.

[52] "Joyce Weiland, Barren Ground Caribou, 1977–78," *Art Canada Institute*, accessed February 6, 2023, Link to Joyce Weiland, Barron Ground Caribou, 1977–78.

[53] Bunch, 110.

[54] Bunch, 113.

# BLOOD

Victoria Freeman's academic and creative work has been another key feature of my research up to this point. Long interested in the interconnections between family history and historical memory, in 2000 Freeman published *Distant Relations: How My Ancestors Colonized North America*, and just last year released a follow up article *Revisiting Distant Relations*, reflecting on the research process and shifts in public discourse over this period of time. Exploring the power relations between public and private memory, Freeman asserts that 'family histories and the historical, social, and political consciousness they engender are not mere personal expressions, but reflect intersubjective processes both within families and in wider communities in both Indigenous and settler contexts.'[55] More recently Freeman has been working with Ange Loft, Martha Stiegman, and Jill Carter as a part of the Talking Treaties Collective to manifest a number of 'research-based arts projects' that 'artfully [share] Indigenous history and awareness of the place now called Toronto.' The Collective is fascinating and impactful in many ways, including their collaborative way of working and creative modes of generating conversation and reflection, through workshops and other modes of community-making. Their work was featured in the first two editions of the Toronto Biennial of Art: *The Shoreline Dilemma* (2019) and *What Water Knows, The Land Remembers* (2022). In 2019 Talking Treaties created *By These Presents: 'Purchasing' Toronto*, a dance, film, and material exploration of colonial history filmed on site at Fort York/Garrison Creek. The project is self-described as 'an absurdist examination of the Toronto 'Purchase', a controversial treaty between the British and Mississaugas covering much of modern-day Toronto.'[56] In 2021 the collective published *A Treaty Guide for Torontonians* (2022), heavily cited in the previous chapter, and Ange Loft created *Dish Dances*, a dance-based film, both as part of the 2nd Biennial.[57]

Reading *Distant Relations* was incredibly interesting and likewise intimidating. Freeman's investigation into their family's colonization and settlement on Turtle Island is highly detailed, rich with textual evidence and narrative. Of course the scale and depth of this work is far greater than I might hope to achieve in one short year, but there were a number of writing methods that I found to be especially relevant to my own work. As robust and well researched as the book seems to be, Freeman does not shy away from asking the unanswerable questions, of striving to understand the purpose, intent, or emotion which may have motivated ancestors to perform certain actions. This is a practice that has emerged as a valuable dialogic tool in my own writing, one of expressing my own confusion and questioning without expectation of clarity. The end of *Distant Relations'* first chapter, 'Home,' address the internal conflicts Freeman's ancestors in England may have faced when leaving their homeland, and with it, some of their own family relations:

> Was [Mercy Jelly] excited about [her children's] impending adventure, or fearful for their safety? Did she worry about shipwrecks in violent storms or ambushes by pirates or massacres by the "Indians" she had heard about? Did John and Agnes offer to take her with them and did she refuse? Did she say she would rather die in her own house than live her life among strange heathens in a godforsaken place, that she would rather live with the devil she knew than one she didn't know, that she would never leave England, her home, her roots, no matter how bad things got or how good they might be elsewhere?[58]

It is important to consider these dilemmas in context, and also valuable to analyse in relation to contemporary understandings of family and migration in a settler-colonial state such as Canada. Answering these questions might be impossible, but the exercise is widely applicable. When I started my graduate studies at OCAD University in the fall of 2021, I was just beginning to consciously investigate my family's history here in the city, and one of the first sites I focused on was 46 Huron Street.* This brick duplex still stands on the west side of Huron, just south of Dundas Street West; it is just over a block away from the Art Gallery of Ontario, Grange Park, and OCADU. My maternal great-grandmother, who I knew as Bubby Lil, grew up in this house with her family in the 1920s and 30s. It was here that a teenage Lillian Wolfson received this postcard (Figure 9) from her future husband, Samuel Silverberg, on Boxing Day, 1935. Over 80 years later, in October 2021, my writing was preoccupied with their day to day existence: 'where did they buy their groceries? // how did they organize their kitchen? // i know they used to walk over to kensington // for a freshly slaughtered kosher chicken // on friday nights and other holidays.'[59]

* Yes, 'Huron' Street, a reference to the Wendat Peoples ('Inhabitants of an Island') who established themselves in this area over a thousand years ago. They were called 'Huron' by the French, translating to 'Boar's Head,' likely a derogatory reference to a common Wendat hairstyle, also meaning 'lout' or 'ruffian.'


*Figure 9: Postcard to Miss Lil Wolfson from S.G.S., December 26, 1935. Note the lush ecological landscape captured 'in the Valley of the Humber.' The final paragraph of this note reads: 'I must profess, Lil, that the ginger ale you served on Sunday night tasted absolutely great, for I can still feel it seeping through the vital parts of my body. I wish to thank you in advance for any more that you may serve in the future. Yours S.G.S.'*

I grew up just west of Yonge Street and north of Eglinton Avenue; pretty much as close as one could get to the geographic center of the City of Toronto, as the passenger pigeon flies. I have always identified as being from Toronto, rarely would I put my Canadian-ness at the forefront, and surely never would I say I was from Ontario. Home was this metropolitan mess of subways and museums and food from every corner of the world. We ate a lot of takeout, semi-regularly shuffling through the stack of menus gathered from the dozens of restaurants within walking distance. In my parents' house they have always kept a kosher kitchen, meaning separate sets of everything for meat and dairy—dishes, cutlery, pans, knives, etc. To this system was added another stash of paper plates and dollar-store silverware for any uncertified sustenance. Yet so much of my upbringing was related to life along Bathurst Street. I went to school at Bathurst and Glencairn, Shabbat dinners on Friday nights were at my great-grandmother's house at Bathurst and Eglinton, Bathurst was where we went for bagels, pea soup, and kosher meat. My family's history here in this city, dating back to the early 1910s, has always been deeply connected to the Jewish community, a commitment which likely began out of necessity and circumstance but has persisted over generations. It was the oddly compiled, messy, mismatched community of Jews spread across the city that felt especially like home, the 'place' that had shaped my worldview. The landmarks and culture that shape the community are constructed upon the land, often subtle or temporary but also those of immense grandeur and solidity. For a diasporic community, these monuments to presence hold immense power, often beyond natural features of the land. Freeman acknowledges 'how much immigrants lose of their family memory because it is tied to physical places—to houses, farms, towns, landmarks, battlefields, and graves.'[60] These places are not always pretty or well maintained, nor should they need to be particularly 'natural' to be considered sacred land. The folks in my own family are perhaps even more distinctly 'city people' than many

others; my parents have both never been camping.* The connection to land as nature may not be present, yet five generations of family members are tied to this geographic place. Why and how are these connections forged?

At an early stage of this research process, I began entering geographic details about my family's history in an online mapping tool. This started with relatives' homes I was personally familiar with, and grew into further questioning of past addresses, schools, and gravesites. At first this was out of curiosity, wanting to confirm visually a previously-unqualified bodily knowledge that many of our ancestors and relations have lived, worked, and studied along this road now known as Bathurst Street. Within the general realm of 'Toronto,' the majority of data points are indeed skewed to align with this particular 'area' of the city, slightly west of the city's geographic and cultural centre, an unassuming north/south artery travelled across generations. This trend follows that of the broader Jewish community, which continues to be concentrated along Bathurst Street, as per the 2016 Census.

These findings were, of course, to no personal surprise. By the late 19th Century, an increasing number of Eastern European Jews (including some of my ancestors) were arriving in Toronto. In contrast to the earliest Jewish arrivals, this new wave of immigrants was arriving with few resources and fewer options in terms of accommodations and job prospects in the city. As Stephen A. Speisman describes in *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937,* 'Toronto in the late nineteenth century was a city divided into pockets of distinct groups segregated by religion and by social status [...] Italians, for instance, were distributed in a number of tiny regions throughout the city.'[61] Yet the Eastern European Jews, who 'had had centuries of conditioning to the fact that spiritual survival depended on cohesiveness,' departed from the normative pattern and concentrated their settlement in one major area.[62] But to claim true cohesion among this new 'community' would be unwise. Individuals and families, often fragmented, were arriving from near and far, via New York City primarily as well as Halifax. Cooperation and compromise were a necessity, if a difficult ask, for any diasporic community to establish a solid foundation in this new country.

Orthodox men from rival towns in a remote region in Galicia, having been raised on legends of their adversaries' immorality, suddenly found themselves bunking together. They were forced to accept that between them were fewer disagreements to address compared to those obnoxiously wealthy Jewish merchants from Vienna. And it was always better to work for/with a Jew you did not like than depend

* Never slept in a tent once! Not even in the backyard!

on a goy* for employment or assistance. Ever a people known to champion internal conflict and argumentation, perhaps this new iteration of a familiar tribulation was taken in stride by the burgeoning community of Jews in Toronto. By creating some broader categories of distinction between subgroups—often related to place of origin, economic status, and of course, their interpretation of Jewish law—small scale incongruities could be accepted as a necessary sacrifice towards the betterment of community. This perhaps semi-subconscious transplanting of the shtetl† from old world to new allowed for these immigrants to establish a deeper sense of belonging within their own community, where they could still speak Yiddish, attend synagogue, and participate in mutual assistance programs.

Finding coherence as a diasporic community is no simple or quick task, especially when the population in question does not actually originate from the same 'place.' Stuart Hall's seminal text on *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* addresses this issue of populations aspiring to return to a 'sacred homeland' as the singular path towards formulating collective identity. From Hall's perspective, '[the diasporic experience] is defined, not be essence or purity, but by a recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference' (emphasis original).[63] To thrive in an ever-shifting place, such as this one, that continues to redefine itself through the identity of its population, all citizens, and especially newcomers, must be willing to adapt.

The Jews who found themselves in Toronto did not all arrive from the same place, but they shared a common (if deeply theoretical and prejudiced) goal of re-establishing a Jewish homeland in Israel/Palestine. This ambition to re-colonize distant lands that they considered rightly theirs apparently did not translate to any self-criticality in the context of their own settlement on Turtle Island.

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* 'Goy' is Yiddish word used to describe anyone who is not Jewish, otherwise known as a Gentile. The term is somewhat derogatory/insulting, suggesting an uncivilized nature. 'Goy-ish' can also be used as an adjective. Here I will paraphrase from legendary comedian Lenny Bruce on the difference of Jewish vs Goyish: 'Pumpernickel and fruit salad, Jewish. White bread and baton twirling, goyish. The army is goyish. The Navy is goyish. The Marine Corps is goyish. The Air Force is Jewish. Kool-aid, goyish. Instant potatoes, scary goyish.' (1961)

† The literal translation of 'shtetl' from the Yiddish simply means 'town.' Realistically, 'shtetl' refers to a small Jewish community, self-contained with the necessary resources/institutions to support Jewish life: i.e. a synagogue, cheder (school), bakery, kosher butcher. These communities did and continue to exist on the margins of larger cities and towns. In the absence of an alternative name for the stretch of Bathurst Street rife with Jewish life and businesses (an official Business Improvement Association would require far too much cooperation and agreement!), I am proposing 'the Shtetl.' Let's make it happen.

I wonder how much of this can be attributed to the unfortunately successful methods of erasure employed by Britain and France—namely the implementation of the Doctrine of Discovery and conceptions of 'terra nullius.'* For poor immigrants arriving in this muddy town, how likely is it that they ever interacted with Indigenous folks or learned about their presence on the land? Considering restrictions of mobility and language, survival within the confines of this settler-colonial urban landscape were likely top of mind.

Still, it is personally frustrating that Zionism and a blind commitment to re-establishing the State of Israel were effective in producing some level of agreement and coherence among the early Jewish community in Toronto. Even though they had so little themselves, these Jews still donated to the cause, sending pennies overseas when they could. It was (and continues to be) perceived as one's sacred duty, even though the majority of the community surely never imagined or intended to actually visit or live in this idealized homeland. Supporting the abstract utopia of Israel is something that everyone could agree on; such an idea was understood uniquely in the imagination of each Jew. My Grandma Shirley travelled all over the world from the 1940s-90s, including visiting the United Kingdom and Barbados dozens of time, but never went to Israel. Despite dedicating countless hours of time and energy to Zionist initiatives in Toronto, including community events like the Hadassah Bazaar, she did not choose to actually visit the place she'd been working all those years to support. Perhaps she wanted to preserve whatever utopia she held in her imagination, rather than facing the reality.

By the late 1890s, Jews outnumbered all other ethnic groups in 'the Ward,' a squalid, densely populated immigrant slum bounded roughly by Queen Street, Yonge, Gerrard, and University Avenue. Successful in some ways, the Ward housed a variety of synagogues attending to different denominations, kosher restaurants, a Yiddish theatre, and a variety of other services to support the community. Yet the area had been facing major issues of overpopulation and deterioration for already half a century, and with a new wave of arrivals in 1905, rents continued to increase while building maintenance—the majority of properties were owned by Gentiles—trended in the opposite direction. By this time those who could afford to leave the Ward began to migrate, with many Eastern European Jews drifting westward across University Avenue, then gravitating further toward Beverley and McCaul Streets. By 1912, "66 percent of the Jews in Toronto lived in the area bounded by Spadina, Palmerston, Queen and College," their movement westbound somewhat predetermined due to unwritten social and economic factors deterring Jews from settling in other neighbourhoods.[64] Long

* Interesting to think that the Jews would have been excluded from this perception of 'occupied land' as space controlled and developed by Christians?

accustomed to discrimination at the hands of dominant groups, the Eastern European Jews more readily accepted their status at the periphery of society, socially and physically. Understanding their power as collective and relational, the community maintained social and physical ties by moving gradually, en masse, a trend which would continue northwards up Bathurst Street in the decades to follow.

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*Figure 10: Katie & Shirley Roseberry Ave (~1915), scanned by Michael Boyd 01/23/2023. Born in 1898, Katie was one of Shirley's six maternal aunts. My immediate family made the trip down to Florida to meet Katie in 2007, where she was the oldest person living in the state at the time, at a spry 109. Katie passed two years later, followed by Shirley four years after that in 2013, herself just a few months shy of her 100th birthday.*

By 1920 several of my great-great-grandparents (from both sides of my family) had settled in Toronto, mostly having migrated northwards from New York City. On my father's side of the tree, Sutins lived on Wales, Leonard, and Roseberry Avenue. Today this house on Roseberry Ave is part of the grounds of Toronto Western Hospital on the north side of Dundas at Bathurst Street. My great-grandmother Shirley Sutin (child pictured in Figure 11; see also Figures 12—13) was born in 1913 and maintained ties to

the area for the better part of a century.* Other members of the Sutin clan lived in an apartment on the west side of Leonard Avenue which still stands across the street from the hospital grounds. I myself have been a frequent visitor to Toronto Western as of late. In January 2023 I began six weeks of daily Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation—repetitive, low level shock therapy intended to jump-start the part of my brain that is supposed to regulate my depression. This might be the most intense mental health treatment I have ever participated in, not to mention the challenge of simply showing up to the hospital every weekday morning. But spending time at the hospital also meant being present in a place that my ancestors have been connected to for generations. Each morning I walk down to the Leonard Avenue Entrance, enter the Krembil Discovery Tower, and take the elevator to the 7th floor, rising above the land where once my great-great-grandparents made a home for their family in this New World. The Sutin family bounced around to a number of addresses in the vicinity, and even once they had moved further away Shirley continued attending schools nearby (Figure 12), insisting on staying connected to her friends in the area. Shirley was a dedicated member of the community centre basketball team where she had the chance to play with legendary Olympian Bobbie Rosenfeld. She volunteered at the Hospital during World War II and for many years afterwards—Shirley organized (and modelled for) charity fashion shows and donated blood so many times the Red Cross asked her to stop.†

* Shirley was actually born in New York City, on December 7th, 1913. Shirley's parents, Lou Sutin and Rose Hassinsky, had both emigrated to New York in the 1890s at ages 6 and 9, respectively. Lou and Rose married on Christmas Day, 1905, in NYC, making the move to Toronto permanent a few years later. The majority of their family remained in New York, and Shirley was born during one of their frequent trips back to visit. Over Shirley's childhood they would make the journey often, by motorcar or train, staying with family in Brooklyn and even sending Shirley to school with her cousins on extended visits.

† Our best guess is 60-70 donations but hard to confirm…

*Figure 11: Shirley's Senior IV Class, 1925. Shirley (age 11) is in the second row from the front, second from the right.*

*Figure 12: Shirley Knitting, ca 1960s.*

Grandma Shirley and Bubby Lil lived well into their 90s; they were the matriarchal anchors of my extended family while I was growing up (Figure 14). Both lived in Toronto for their entire lives, in various homes, gradually drifting northwards up Bathurst with the rest of their growing family and community. I continued this plotting of address, expanded with additional information discovered in old photo albums, business letterheads, and other documents held in the Ontario Jewish Archives. The addresses themselves developed into a relational network of places, the people that had visited them, and the media which documented these encounters. I consider this process as a hybrid map/family tree/archive, a practice which will no doubt continue to expand in coming years. I had been working in roughly chronological order, identifying various sites across Toronto with familial significance and beginning to translate these findings into textile fabrications.

*Figure 13: Three Great-Grandmothers, 1999. Bubby Lil (left) with author (Naomi Daryn Boyd), Nana Boyd (middle), visiting from the UK, and Grandma Shirley (right), with Yael Boyd. With these 3 great-grandmothers (now deceased) and 3 additional grandparents gained through marriage, I had 10 grandparents growing up, including 7 that lived in the Toronto area.*

While the Map is focused on Toronto, other cousins of mine have done a remarkable amount of investigation into our ancestors lives in 'the Old Country.' One passage of travel has been especially interesting to follow, involving my direct ancestor Masia Hassinsky. Masia was born in 1826, her family residing in the Poltava region, today the site of ongoing warfare, near the city of Khariv in central Ukraine. By 1895 her son Solomon Hassinsky had made the journey to America. He then sent funds

and instructions back to Masia so that she, and Solomon's children, could join them in New York City. On February 22, 1896, Masia, aged 70, boarded a boat in Southampton, England called 'the New York' with five grandchildren aged 3-11 in tow, including my great-great-grandmother Rose Hassinsky (later Sutin). They arrived 24 days later, joining relatives at their home on Cherry Street, and later moving to Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Masia passed away at age 90 on January 8th, 1916, and was buried in Mount Lebanon Cemetery in Brooklyn, possibly the first of my family to be committed to the ground on Turtle Island.

Masia's internment here in the 'New World' is remarkable. For the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe cemeteries were highly valued sites within the community and important landmarks signifying connection to place over multiple generations. As Maurice Samuel describes in *The World of Sholom Aleichem*:

> [The old cemetery] was the one piece of earth which they regarded as their own, for it was drenched in tradition. Here, under the roots of the trees, were assembled God knew how many generations which had lived and died in the faith, and sometimes for it. [...] A visit to the old cemetery of Kasrielevky was partly pleasure-jaunt, partly a pilgrimage; for, apart from everything else, this was one clear space of green grass and flowers and shadowing trees where Jews felt at home.[65]

The alternative to internment among one's fellow Jews was to be avoided at all costs; the very thought of being buried among Gentiles, in 'foreign soil,' inspired intense fear and dread. One can understand that for peoples who have spent millennia perilously close to landlessness, there was hope that at least their final, eternal resting place would be one of comfort and familiarity. Such a desire might be expressed as so: 'Do what Thou wilt with me, O G-d, only let me lie at last in Jewish earth!'[66]

Generational connection to land was indeed a scarce privilege, especially as the pogroms continued to multiply and spread. Many communities were forced to abandon their established homes all together, while surviving townships had to manage an increasing number of burials without the right to purchase new land and expand their cemeteries.

This commitment to ensuring an appropriate burial extended not only to one's own soul and family, but to the broader Jewish community as a whole. These beliefs arrived in Toronto alongside the first dozens of Jews to arrive in the 1820s and 30s. In the late 1840s Judah Joseph initiated the purchase of half an acre of land just east of the city towards the establishment of a Jewish Cemetery. 'For an orthodox Jew [such as Joseph] to set up a private burial ground when there were other Jews in his

locality and no other Jewish cemetery would have been contrary to Jewish tradition,' thus the deed was to be held in trust for 'The Hebrew Congregation of the City of Toronto.'[67] Even with a limited number of Jewish families living in the area at the time, it was not a large plot of land. Soon enough they were running out of burial ground and only serving the relatively well-off portion of the community.

Decades later, in 1906, a Jewish man died in an accident just outside the city's borders. In the absence of a formal Jewish community organization to manage the situation, he was buried in a Christian cemetery. 'As had often been the case in Toronto, problems surrounding the death of an individual acted as a catalyst for philanthropic efforts,' and this occurrence left the community horrified and outraged.[68] Samuel Weber responded by purchasing a parcel of land, which was donated for a cemetery in the name of the Hebrew Free Burial Society (also organized by Weber). The spiritual leaders of the community arranged for the accident victim to be disinterred and laid to rest in the new Jewish cemetery at Bathurst Street and Roselawn Avenue. Over the years the Roselawn Avenue Cemetery gradually expanded, incorporating various congregations and organizations into its labyrinthine grid of stones.

My family's weekly car rides over to my Grandma Shirley's house for Shabbat Dinner almost always followed the same route, inevitably passing by those gated rows which hugged Roselawn from both sides. This cemetery had been full for decades. To me it seemed proof that indeed Jews belonged here, had made a home here on this land. It was not until many years later I learned that I have direct ancestors buried in this particular cemetery.

# ‘BLOOD’ NOTES

[55] Victoria Freeman, “Revisiting Distant Relations,” *Genealogy* 5, no. 4 (March 2021): p. 86, Link to Revisiting Distant Relations.

[56] Talking Treaties Collective, 2022. Link to Talking Treaties.

[57] Talking Treaties Collective, 2022.

[58] Victoria Freeman, *Distant Relations: How My Ancestors Colonized North America*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2002), 21.

[59] Naomi Daryn Boyd, *Bubby Lil Pt 1*, October 15, 2021.

[60] Freeman, 2002, xvii.

[61] Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 82.

[62] Speisman, 82.

[63] Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” accessed in *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*, (Oxfordshire: Routledge, edited by Nicholas Mirzoeff, 1999), 31.

[64] Speisman, 90.

[65] Maurice Samuel, *The World of Sholom Aleichem*, (New York: Knopf, 1943), 31.

[66] Samuel, 34.

[67] Speisman, 16-17.

[68] Speisman, 155.

# BATHURST STREET

'At first glance, Bathurst is not a pretty street,' writes Shawn Micallef, 'you don't see it on postcards, and when people think 'Toronto,' it likely isn't the first corridor that comes to mind.'[69] This is the opening line of Micallef's chapter on Bathurst Street, one of a few dozen chosen routes catalogued in *Stroll: Psychogeographic Walking Tours of Toronto*. The book, released in 2010 by local publishers Coach House Books, already feels frighteningly out of date. Contained within the Bathurst walk alone are a number of bygone landmarks and I find myself jealous of the narrator, especially missing the slanted, sticky floors of Honest Ed's. Of course, it is still a tremendous joy to walk along this road through the gaze of an attentive and well-informed pedestrian, and important to have these hyper-local records of the landscape, considering how rapidly changes arrive, erasing stories and knowledge with each new development.

Sure, Bathurst Street is not the most picturesque of boulevards (even by Toronto's standards). Yet it holds deep meaning and gravitas to a number of individuals and communities. Aspects of this urban landscape are viewed by some as unattractive, incoherent, or just plain ugly—that is the physical manifestation of rampart diversity, exchange, and narrative embodied in a place. It is the messy, independent 'development' of a place that gives it character, little by little over time, leaving traces behind of different eras. Gradual transformation and adaptation preserve and create diversity, methods which starkly oppose large scale erasure and re-building projects that aim to establish a unified aesthetic and functional identity. Urban theorist Jane Jacobs asserted that 'the diversity, of whatever kind, that is generated by cities rests on the fact that in cities so many people are so close together, and among them contain so many different tastes, skills, needs, supplies, and bees in their bonnets.'[70] Jacobs herself lived just northeast of Bloor and Bathurst for almost 40 years.* The Jacobs family fled their home in New York City in 1968 to prevent Jane's then-teenage sons James and Ned from being drafted to serve in the Vietnam War. They settled in the Annex, the neighbourhood that best exemplified Jacobs' ideals of concentration, diversity, sidewalk safety, and access to urban parks. Published over 60 years ago, *the Death and Life of Great American Cities* warned readers that 'large swatches of construction built at one time are inherently inefficient for sheltering wide ranges of cultural, population, and business diversity.'[71] Unfortunately, many of Jacobs' suggestions and assessments continue to be ignored by high profit, large scale enterprises which dominate

* Jacobs was born Jane Butzner in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1916 to Jewish parents. She died in 2006 at Toronto Western Hospital at the age of 89.

development in Toronto today. I would hate to know her thoughts on the multi-block condominium project at Bloor and Bathurst that has taken over the site of Honest Ed's and hundreds of other independent businesses, manufacturers, artist studios, and mixed-income residences.

The foot of Bathurst Street is now home to the entrance of Billy Bishop Airport. The Island Airport is separated from the mainland by a 120-metre-wide channel. Before an underwater pedestrian tunnel was built, the Island Airport Ferry was in slow but near constant motion, repeatedly making the two-minute trip back and forth. This was the solution born out of a high-profile, passionate civil debate that propelled former Toronto Mayor David Miller into office in 2003 and stopped the building of a taxpayer funded bridge. This all seems quite absurd to me, comedic. Aside from the issue of funding, there were a number of arguments made defending the existing visual landscape. At some point the public conscious decided that this was where the line was to be drawn in terms of alterations to the 'lakeshore.' From here, 'looking backwards,' Micallef observes, 'it's nearly impossible to see the original shoreline: Toronto came a long, long way and stopped in a very straight line.'[72] The memory of the land has been wiped from the surface of this city, where local upright citizens fight to have the architectonic frontier of their garbage peninsula preserved in its 'natural,' unobstructed state. Victoria Freeman's 2010 Ph.D dissertation directly addressed this issue of historical memory in Ontario's capital. Titled *'Toronto Has No History!': Historical Memory in Canada's Largest City*, the paper contemplates Toronto as 'an interesting place to look at historical memory because its colonial and Indigenous past may seem irrelevant to its multicultural, indeed postmodern, present. Given that 50 percent of the population was born outside of Canada, Toronto is a city where family, local, and national histories diverge significantly, complicating how Torontonians relate to a past with which most residents have little genealogical or even cultural connection.'[73]

The intersection of Bathurst Street and Gichi-Onimagiing (Davenport Road) emerged early on as a powerful point of confluence for many of the ideas this project strove to address, namely those of Indigenous and settler histories here in the city. Today this intersection is home to the Tollkeeper's Cottage Museum, owned and managed by the Community History Project, founded in 1983. Originally located on the southeast corner of the intersection, the Tollkeeper's Cottage (Tollgate #3 of 5 along Davenport) operated from roughly 1835-1850.[74] The Community History Project began raising funds in the 1990s to purchase and restore the cottage, and it was installed in its present location in 2008.

On September 30, 2022, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I had the honour of participating/witnessing a ceremony on the site which recognized the Tollkeeper's Cottage Park as a National Healing Forest site. The gathering was hosted in collaboration with the Indigenous People's

Solidarity Group and the National Healing Forest Project, featuring a drum circle, traditional dancing, and stories of the land.[75]

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As demonstrated, the Jewish community is hardly the only population in the city with deep connections to Bathurst Street. Author Dionne Brand describes the site in her essay 'Bathurst' as such:

> Bathurst Street was the centre of the Black community in Toronto. As soon as you got here, if you were an immigrant, you made the pilgrimage to Bathurst Street. […] Around Bathurst was where most of the communities ended up, pushed by jobs and prejudice to where they could rent a place. I heard that only the Jewish people would rent to Blacks here in the forties and fifties, that they themselves had been pushed by jobs and prejudice to Spadina. And in the sixties, a Canadian economy hungry for cheap labour brought flocks of Black labour to Bathurst Street and its surroundings.[76]

There are a few things I would like to unpack here. The references to immigration, movement, and the concept of pilgrimage as an inherently cultural and spiritually practice, also deeply connected to walking. The acknowledgement of past (hi)stories tangibly present on the landscape. Understanding the physical manifestations of systemic racism, particularly in relation to housing and safety of home. Co-adaptation across defined identities, the various waves of migration that shaped the neighbourhoods across Spadina, Bathurst, and Christie—Chinese, Jewish, Caribbean, Korean, etc—as communities were othered and steadily swept northwest. Recognizing Bathurst Street and Bathurst Subway as essential arteries connecting seemingly unremarkable landmarks and countercultural enclaves. Evidently Bathurst Street has been occupying space inside Brand's mind long before the initial publishing of *Bread Out of Stone* in 1994, if in a slightly different form. Her debut novel, *In Another Place, Not Here* (1986), also makes ample reference to the west side of Toronto as her two leading characters navigate life as migrant women in the city.

Dionne Brand has been a major (if underappreciated) literary figure in Toronto over the past decades and continues this work by uplifting new voices. Bringing together a myriad of imaginative and perceptive writers with ties to Toronto, Brand recently edited *The Unpublished City*, an anthology whose first volume emerged in 2017. Describing the conceptual goals of the publication, Brand instructs us to read 'unpublished' not simply as not in print, but 'as the narratives, and imaginations of the City that are present, and yet fully realized, nor acknowledged. […] In these stories and poems we apprehend what lies on the surface of the City's glass walls, in the depths of its rapidly and perennially

urbanized landscape, and in its bristling and multilingual streets.'[77] Many of the included pieces take place in this city, sometimes overtly but other times simply in attitude and vague moments of mutual understanding. It is important to listen to the voices of those around you and witness how they walk the same streets you walk. It is important to behold a roster of unrecognized talent which so poignantly represents the true make up of this city's citizens. It is important that all of us living in this place, as residents and treaty partners in Tkaronto, consider then what we have been taught to know about this city. What of its 'history'? What of its 'future'? I see in this practice care, criticality, consideration, allyship, and pride.

Volume II of *The Unpublished City*[*] featured an introduction by Tracey Lindberg, writer, lawyer, activist, and citizen of the As'in'I'wa'chi Ni'yaw Nation. The central focus of the foreword is reminding readers that 'cities are Indigenous lands, too,' that the cleanliness and sanctity most often attributed to rural areas is similarly relevant on urbanized land.[78] Lindberg continues: 'Toronto is sacred land. Toronto's children are as sacred as any others. Toronto has as many beautiful, spiritual and sacred spaces as those places we drive to in the country to put down medicine, say prayers, hold ceremony and give thanks. Like all of our relatives, the land has a history—storied, un/imaginable and rich.'[79] Settler-colonial forces of development cannot erase the memory of the land. False requirements of authenticity are not inherently valuable, and support settler-colonial methods of erasure.

Creative forms of writing and other communicative arts are tangible and effective methods towards decolonizing and re-storying this place now known as Toronto. In 2020 Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and the House of Anansi press blessed us with *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies*. A genre- and form- defying masterpiece of a book, Dionne Brand herself described it as 'far ahead of us in so many registers of story, language, and worldview; its cumulative effect is a new cosmography.'[80] The only way I could possibly explain the magic of this text is to offer an excerpt:

> In December of every year, Mindimooyenh wanders through Ikea in North York each day, meditating like it is a labyrinth. They repeat "Gersby," followed by "Hemnes," over and over

[*] I was incredibly grateful to stumble upon these two tantalizing chapbooks at Glad Day Bookshop in the summer of 2022. I hate to be overly dramatic, but there was a buzz on the streets of Toronto last summer. Everyone was just thrilled to be back out on the streets, together. In June 2022 the Queers of Toronto were able to come together in community for the first time since the pandemic began. One could participate in the uplifting and recognition of their peers simply by showing up. All this to say, despite many issues with the official Pride Toronto, the Village was a nice place to be. Located at 499 Church Street, Glad Day is the oldest (active) queer bookstore in the world! It is certainly Torontonians' most prized source of queer literature—which is *not* to say that it is every Toronto Queer's favourite bookstore.

> between the hours of 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. every day. They don't eat or drink except for $1.99 Ikea meatballs at 8:30 p.m., just before closing. Mindimooyenh takes the bus there and the bus home. They smudge in the parking lot before they go in. They put down their semaa in the *Ficus elastica* plant in the warehouse section.[81]

Among Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's incredible repertoire of writing, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* (2011), *The Gift is in the Making* (2013), and *As We Have Always Done* (2017) have deeply informed much of my academic and theoretical thinking, yet reading (and re-reading) *Noopiming* has had a profound influence on the way I interact with these particular lands and this city. Simpson's characters navigate Toronto's unnatural urban-settler landscape, infusing new modes of being and story into each site. The Ikea in North York has personal significance for my kin as well. This Ikea was just down the street from our dentist's office; post-appointment meatballs and mashed potatoes became a welcome reward/tradition for my siblings and I. The myriad of narratives and experiences that abound in even the seemingly most bland/corporate sites is a testament to how much knowledge and history there is to be uncovered and recognized here on these lands.

# ‘BATHURST STREET’ NOTES

[69] Shawn Micallef, *Stroll: Psychogeographic Walking Tours of Toronto*, (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2010), 132.

[70] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 147.

[71] Jacobs, 191.

[72] Micallef, 133.

[73] Victoria Freeman, *‘Toronto Has No History!’: Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, Ph.D. dissertation, 2010), 7.

[74] “The Tollkeeper’s Cottage: Background,” Community History Project, accessed March 7, 2023, Link to Tollkeeper’s Cottage: Background.

[75] Tollkeeper’s Cottage Museum, accessed March 7, 2023, Link to Tollkeeper’s Cottage Museum website.

[76] Dionne Brand, “Bathurst,” *Bread Out of Stone: Collections, Sex, Recognitions, Race, Dreaming, Politics*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 1994), 33-34.

[77] Dionne Brand, *The Unpublished City*, (Toronto: Book*hug Press, 2017), 1.

[78] Tracey Lindberg, *The Unpublished City: Volume II*, (Toronto: Book*hug Press, 2018), 11.

[79] Lindberg, 11.

[80] House of Anansi Press, 2020.

[81] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies*, (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2020), 48.

# CHAPTER ONE: A MAP IS BORN

> [Archives] exist in other forms, in other living things, as incomplete, indeterminate, and ever-changing. Trees, rocks, ice, rivers, lakes and so much more are archives of a particular kind. The earth remembers; water remembers; all living things are records of the worlds they help to create and encounter. They listen, feel, taste, and absorb. That is, they are evidence of time and the movement of other things around and through them as vibrations, marks, bruises, shifts in colours, texture, and weight.[82]

The grounding physical object for this project is an 18-metre-long wool Map covering the 18km stretch of Bathurst Street from Lake Ontario to Steeles Ave. The fabric represents the land as a living archive for a wide variety of information: names, (hi)stories, relationships, material creations, and ecological developments connected to this place. The Map is intended to continue growing over time with input from visitors and community members. Its basic structure is a scroll that echoes and disrupts characteristics of a traditional Sefer Torah, a handwritten copy of the Hebrew Bible made according to very specific regulations.

Where a traditional Torah uses the skin of a kosher animal as the writing surface, the map has a base of woven wool fabric. Similarly an animal by-product, wool is more sustainable—in the short and long term—and offers its own interesting material properties and connections. Wool is durable yet biodegradable, fire, stain, and odour resistant, and also affords felting. As a process, felting has been practiced around the world for many, many years. Felt is made by producing friction, forcing the micro-barbs of the material to stick to themselves. Unprocessed fleeces can be roughly bonded together on a large scale, or thread can be used for delicate, decorative craftwork. The thickness, density, and stiffness of the material is controlled throughout the process and requires few (if any) tools. Through felting, I have been able to bond different forms of textiles; the technique is effective with knitted or crocheted panels, braided lengths of yarn, or adding layers of wool fabric together. As these fragments are felted to the base of the Map, traces of the material transfers through to the ‘underside’ of the fabric. This perspective of the work most clearly exposes the hand labour that has gone into the making of this piece, including the imprecise nature of my technique. I do not claim to be an expert in any of these modes of working. In terms of experience, knitting is likely the medium I feel most confident in, though this work presented an opportunity to further explore modes of crocheting, cross-stitching, weaving with wool, and of course, felting.

As my creative practice has developed over the past few years, I have been working with an increasing percentage of materials that have been found, discarded, self-harvested, recycled, upcycled, etc. For me this category includes repurposing drapes left on a curb in my neighbourhood and unidentifiable skeins of yarn found at thrift stores. I am also grateful to my friends and family who now think of me when they stumble upon a stash of odd material, whether out on the street themselves or cleaning their own closets. Receiving these gifts from my relations reinforces their participation and influence on my creative work generally, and especially in terms of this project that is so overtly grounded in community. So far, a number of these materials have been incorporated into the Map: these include tapestry wool which originally belonged to a great-grandmother in Montreal, passed down via my Grandma Mimi, yarn from my Grandma Sue knitted on my Grandma Shirley's needles, buttons from Bubby Lil, and so on. Contemporary treatment of textiles as material is also worth noting: globally, the fashion industry produces a *massive* amount of waste even though fabrics are generally quite easy to repair or reuse regardless of size.*

That being said, while I continue to try to reduce my overall material footprint, I have had to purchase some new materials over the course of this project. Most notable in this context is the fabric sourced for the base of the Map. Given the sheer size/scale that I needed (18 meters), it was always going to be difficult to find vintage or deadstock textiles, even more so because I was looking for real wool (ideal for felting). After spending some time searching for 'local' manufacturers,† I went looking for fabric within the area delineated by the Map. For me this was a dissimilar but valid approach to embracing locality. Rather than trying to find the closest manufacturer, I was able to visit various nearby sources for textiles and eventually found myself at The Wool House (454 Queen Street West). The self-proclaimed purveyor of 'mostly natural fabrics' is a blissful destination for those intrigued by texture, weave, colour, and pattern. Best of all, a visit to the Wool House at Queen and Augusta means time to chat with Salim! He is a kind and helpful salesman that is a pleasure to visit with, and clearly loves the material and community he works with. Considering the stunning merchandise, Salim will definitely upsell you with some great deals—especially if you are a student and/or willing to stay and visit for a while—and usually adds a couple extra inches on the yard.

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* As basic sewing skills become lost to the general public, folks can no longer repair their own clothing (even simple mends), and they are less likely to save smaller scraps of fabric that might have otherwise been perfect for rags, a quilt, or stuffing for a pillow or mattress.

† There are a number of wool mills in Ontario and across Canada, many of whom are developing more sustainable practices for every step of the sheep to yarn process. Unfortunately, none of these facilities produce wool fabric, a much more intensive process that seems to have gone out of practice all over Turtle Island.


*Figure 14: Salim's card from the Wool House, 454 Queen Street West, received 05/2022.*

In terms of colour choice, I originally went in looking for something as unprocessed compared to a natural fleece, ideally undyed, but this was not possible within the scope of Salim's inventory. The next option might have been white. The 'winter white' that Salim had available was frankly quite shockingly stark/foreign as a tone that was to represent land. Regardless, there was far from enough in stock to meet the needs of the Map. Fortunately, this lovely grey wool fabric presented itself, a bolt that had exactly 18m of fabric remaining. While I had not considered it before, this marbled grey colour was indeed the best representation of the surface of this city as I have experienced it. The default, most prominent ground surface within this metropolitan sprawl is, after all, concrete. So, I committed to the grey, recognizing that such a coincidence was too perfect to disregard, grateful for both the material and circumstances for making this decision for me. I managed to roll it back to the IAMD studio at 205 Richmond St West; Salim was also generous in providing me with additional cardboard tubes I could use to anchor the scroll.


*Figure 15: Wheeling my 18m bolt of fabric back to the studio at 205 Richmond St W, 06/2022. Usually about a 12-15-minute walk, it took almost double that time to make the journey with this load. I found this dolly a few months earlier on Brunswick Ave, just north of College St.*

From here I continued searching for materials within the zone roughly defined by the Map, and particularly local/independently owned businesses. Big shout out to Yarns Untangled in Kensington (90 Nassau Street) and Romni Wools on Queen (658 Queen Street West). The notable exception to this location-based sourcing of materials is the Textile Museum of Canada (55 Centre Avenue, just north of City Hall). The Textile Museum has established a Textile Reuse Program, where I have found an abundance of fantastic vintage and deadstock materials that have been donated or otherwise re-directed from ending up as textile waste. For me, visiting the Textile Museum semi-regularly to see the exhibits, research work and speak to the volunteers also contributes to my understanding of community in the context of creative practitioners.

One great find at the Textile Museum was some multi-coloured Japanese yarn, a mix of white, black, blue, red, yellow, and green. While I generally shy away from these combo skeins, this combination seemed perfect to represent life along Garrison Creek. For the Map I created some bulky blue braids of wool to represent the streams and waterways, and wanted to further represent the ecological impact these rivers had along the surrounding landscape. I decided to crochet these extensions of creek life, inspired by Donna J. Haraway's discussion of the Crochet Coral Reef Project in her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Chapter Three of the 2016 publication is titled

'Sympoiesis,' a term used by Haraway to reconsider the relationships between humans and other beings. The Crochet Coral Reef is a constantly evolving project created by Margaret Wertheim and Christine Wertheim that explores the 'nexus of art, science, mathematics, community practice, and climate change.'[83] Haraway explains the basic structural methods behind the project:

> The code is so simple: crocheted models of hyperbolic planes achieve their ruffled forms by progressively increasing the number of stitches in each row. The emergent vitalities of this wooly experimental life-form take diverse corporeal shape as crafters increase the numbers from row to row, irregularly, oddly, whimsically, or strictly to see what forms they could make—not just any forms, but crenulated beings that take life as marine critters of the vulnerable reefs.[84]

My hyperbolic planes were indeed irregular; crocheting is not high up on my list of textile skills. Crochet can be exceptionally helpful for circular designs, but for most rectilinear projects I prefer knitting. To build up the creek life that grew from these waters, I simply repeated one basic stitch, adding in new stitches in relatively random patterns, tracking back and forth across a section of the Garrison Ravine. What other names has it been known by? What would it have been like to traverse this creek up to its source? I worked with reference images nearby to help inform which areas of the creek should be extended/grown outwards: archival maps,* Google Maps, and Lost Rivers.† The rivers were felted on overtop, anchoring the creeks to the map via this central life source. All textile elements on the Map emerged in form through the combination of material and technique, sometimes strange pairings that I was keen to experiment with. The dimensionality and texture of the work supported its interactive nature. Folks were invited to navigate this topographic representation of the land through sight and touch; the tactility of the three-dimensional features, like the creek and bridges, were a particular hit with guests. Sarah Corbett, author of *How to be a Craftivist: The Art of Gentle Protest*, suggests that 'using craft materials that are small, delicate and soft creates a comforting space,' which can further support makers and viewers to tackle difficult questions and subjects.[85] Corbett also describes their approach to craftivism as one that 'focuses on handicrafts that use slow, repetitive hand actions, so

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* Primarily cited via the City of Toronto Archives, University of Toronto Libraries Scanned Map Collections, Toronto Public Library Digital Archive, and Historical Maps of Toronto.

† 'The Toronto Green Community started Lost River Walks to help us discover the fascinating world of the watershed beneath our feet. This site is the start of a field book on the lost streams of Toronto. Bits of our city's history, both natural and built, are included. Those interested can take a virtual lost creeks walk, or better, use the information to take a self-guided tour. Come explore nature hidden under our city and along its ravines and byways.' Lostrivers.ca, P.J. Hare and The Toronto Green Community.

that we can also use the act of crafting to meditate and think critically about the social injustice we are tackling and the strategy we need to overcome it.'[86] This concept of meditating on a subject through the process of creation is one that deeply resonates with my work generally and this project in particular. Indeed, the evidence of handicraft communicates time and dedication on behalf of the maker. Folks recognize hand-stitching as a process that is inherently slow and precise as compared to other modes of visual creation such as painting or digital making practices.

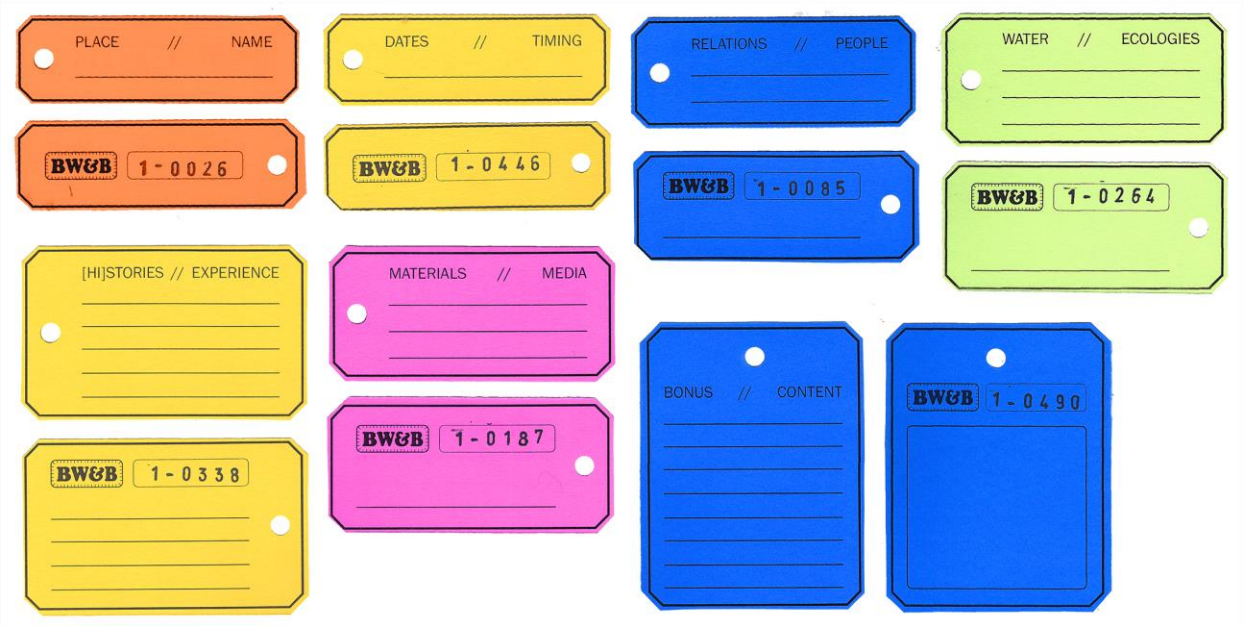


*Figure 16: Variety of Tags for adding contributions to the Map; first edition stamped [1-0001] through [1-0500], 03/06/2023.*

A hand-stitched panel beside the Map invited visitors to the exhibition to contribute their own knowledge through archival tags (Figure 18). I custom print these tags (Figure 17) to serve as labels/descriptors of all elements of the show, including artifacts from my own family archive. Through this system, all data and information take on the same form, all sources given equal standing. Traditionally only Orthodox men can become a 'sofer,' Hebrew for 'scribe,' one who is specially trained to hand-write the Torah scroll, transcribing a very strict version of the text. After the scroll is completed and blessed, it should not be touched directly with any hands at all. Striving to disrupt these restrictions, the Map is interactive both in terms of tactility and knowledge access/creation.


*Figure 17: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, Tag panel and details, 03/12/2023.*

The reading of the Torah is a ritualized practice that takes place over the course of a year; a specific section is read each week. Just after the New Year (around late September) there is a ritual celebration for the re-winding of the scroll back to the beginning. Whereas a Torah scroll moves cyclically through time, the Map moves across space, north and south along the central axis that is Bathurst Street. The texture and physicality of the Map will continue to evolve over time, as various bits of information are added and layered together. Having secured the base material for the Map, the next step was to design and build the apparatus that would support it, both while I was working on it in my studio and for presentation/exhibition. Having limited access to wood shop equipment, I decided to build the

structure using standard steel piping, material that allowed me to adapt and reconfigure the structure as needed.

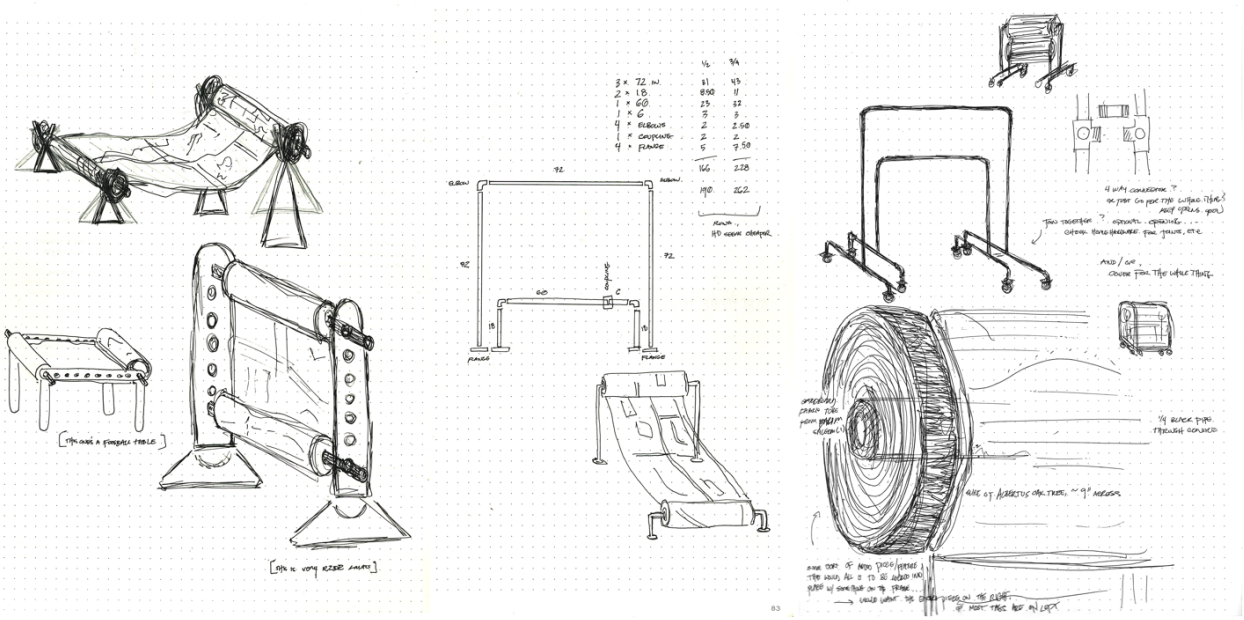

*Figure 18: Notebook sketches for the Map structure/apparatus. 09-11/2022.*

The ‘wrong’ side of the map, the underbelly, serves as a particular point of interest, a further abstraction of the stitch- and felt-work transposed through the material. Supporting physical interaction with the map will be a modular frame, one which allow for differing configurations as needed for working and presenting.

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In addition to the Map, the exhibition featured a separate room dedicated to various familial artifacts and ephemera. Various members of my family, some natural hoarders and others more intentional archivists, have amassed an incredible amount of material related to our family history, from photographs to oral history interviews, letters, garments and other material artifacts. The plethora of material that I have access to in terms of my familial archive is astounding and undeniably a great privilege. It is not something I take for granted.

I was pleasantly overwhelmed with the number and variety of contributions that were added to the Map over the course of the exhibition. Some of the sites that I had added proved to be highly relevant to other visitors. One of these places was Harbord Collegiate, a school that my great-grandmother attended in the 1930s. Three additional tags appeared on this site. Tag 1-0377 reads: ‘My Mom, Estelle (Zaionce) Kates loved Harbord Collegiate. She went with her friends Lyla Martin & Budgie

Graystien. She is still proud she went there. She goes to the reunions every year. She talks about her classmates as if it were yesterday.' The next says: 'My father went to Harbord CI, on Football team, experienced lots of Anti-Semitism, super smart' (Tag 1-0119). Another exhibition visitor contributed the following information: 'Attended Harbord CI in the early 2010s. One of a small handful of Jews, always loved looking at the mid 1900s class portraits & all the Jewish names/students' (Tag 1-0360). There were many 'first apartments' added, and a multitude of memories related to time, food, and place experienced with loved ones.

~

If you have made it this far, thank you for reading. If you are a family member, I look forward to getting your notes/corrections. To all those who have witnessed and supported this work, I am deeply grateful for the encouragement and thoughtful engagement with the material itself. This project is far from over. Stay tuned for *Chapter Two* and beyond!

# ‘CHAPTER ONE: A MAP IS BORN’ NOTES

[82] “Lexicon,” *Water, Kinship, Belief,* (Toronto: Toronto Biennial of Art + Art Metropole, 2022), 42.

[83] Crochet Coral Reef, accessed February 24, 2023, Link to Crochet Coral Reef.

[84] Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 78.

[85] Sarah Corbett, *How to be a Craftivist: the Art of Gentle Protest*, (London: Unbound, 2017), 18.

[86] Corbett, 18.

# THANKS

My first expression of gratitude goes to the land, this place and these waters. Thank you for raising me. Thank you for being a place my family could call home, even though they may not have been invited. For being patient with me through many years of ignorance. For your continued teachings, and for the unanswerable questions. Thank you.

Thanks to all of the teachers, advisors, and mentors that have guided me along this journey. Thank you to Nithikul Nimkulrat for your unwavering support, enthusiasm, and attention to detail; I could have never manifested this project without your encouragement and critical eye. Thanks to Michael Lee Poy for your reassuring words, keen insight, and inspirational studio visits. Thank you to Dr. Amish Morrell, Min Sook Lee, Dr. Ayumi Goto, b.h. Yael, and Peter Morin, who witnessed and supported the beginnings of this project across various classes at OCAD U. Thank you to Jay Irizawa for your advice and assistance in realizing this work. Thank you to all of my classmates and colleagues who graciously provided time and feedback at various stages of this journey, it has been a pleasure to work, create, and be in relation with you all. Special thanks to Veronica Waechter, Angelo Cavagnaro, and Ahmed Bader for keeping me company in the studio through many, many hours of knitting, felting, and stitching.

Thank you to Quentin Mitchell at Vide Press for making my local-risograph-printing dreams come true. Thanks to Daniel Antonucci in the Maker Lab for your chainsaw expertise. Thank you to Michael Friesen at the Ontario Jewish Archives.

A massive thank you to all my relations who came by the exhibition; family, friends, and chosen kin. Your interpretations and contributions to this work have been invaluable, and I am immensely grateful to be part of such a supportive community of folks. Thanks to all of those who gifted stray materials to me: Shayna Boyd, Suellen Boyd, Tamara Lopez, Roger Clarke, Jerry Yang, Franklin Young, and Mimi Lowi-Young. Thank you to Ben Boyd and Sherylan Young for their assistance de/installing the exhibition. Thank you to Michael Boyd for the numerous rides to Home Depot. Thanks to Yael Boyd and Stacey Shopsowitz for putting together an incredible Bathurst-themed food spread for the opening.

# IMAGES

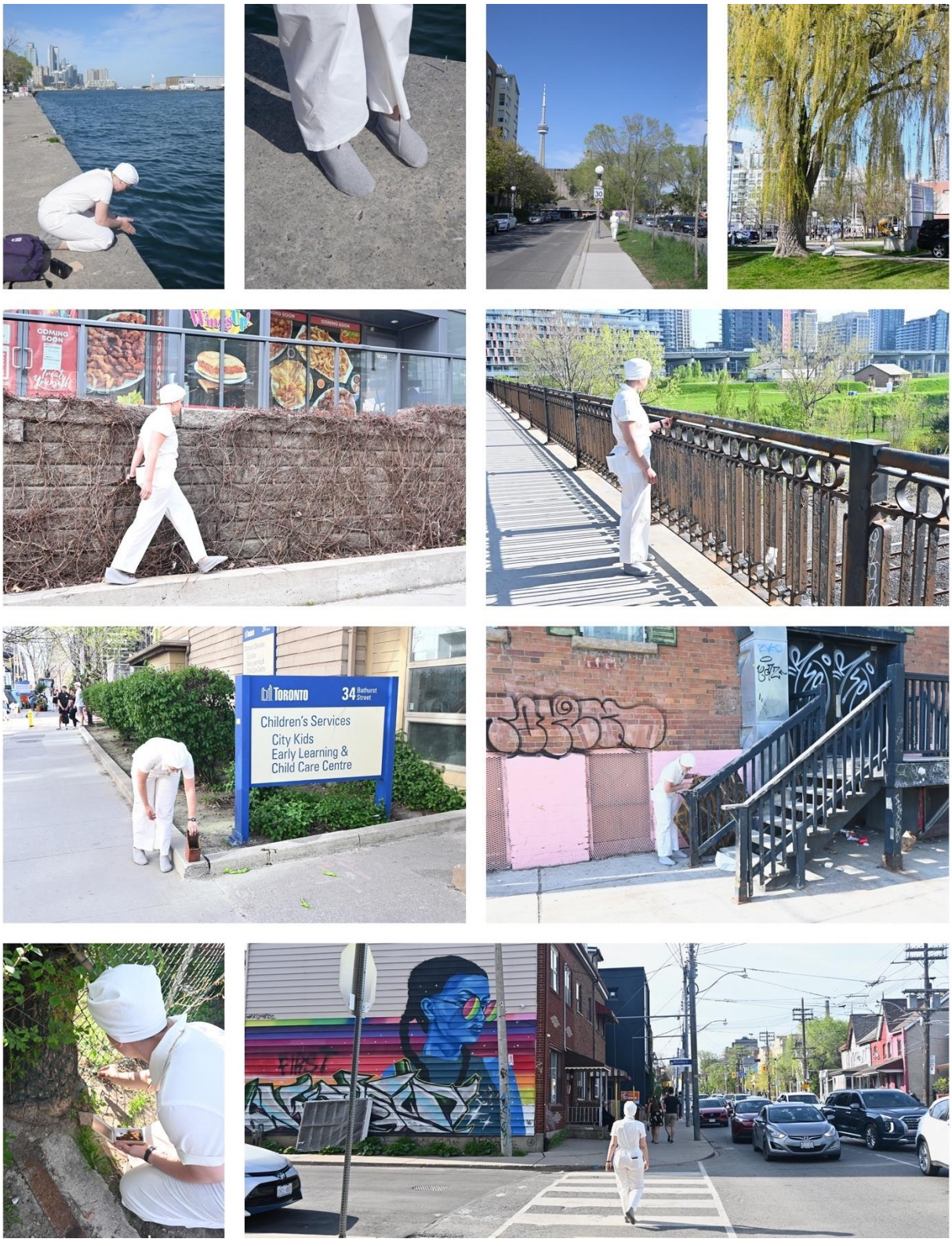



*Figure 19: To Bubbs' House I Go, Part One, 05/13/2022. Photos by mihyun maria kim.*

*Figure 20: To Bubbs' House I Go, Part One, 05/13/2022. Photos by mihyun maria kim.*


*Figure 21: To Bubbs' House I Go, Part Two, 05/14/2022. Photos by Jerry Yang.*


*Figure 22: To Bubbs' House I Go, Part Three, 05/15/2022. Photos by Jerry Yang.*

*Figure 23: To Bubbs' House I Go, jumpsuit from Kotn, 05/18/2022.*

*Figure 24: To Bubbs' House I Go, shoes made by author from grey wool fabric and silk thread, 05/18/2022.*


*Figure 25: Working set up for the Map in the studio and felting process (complete with wrist brace!), 205 Richmond St W, 6th Floor, 02/2023.*

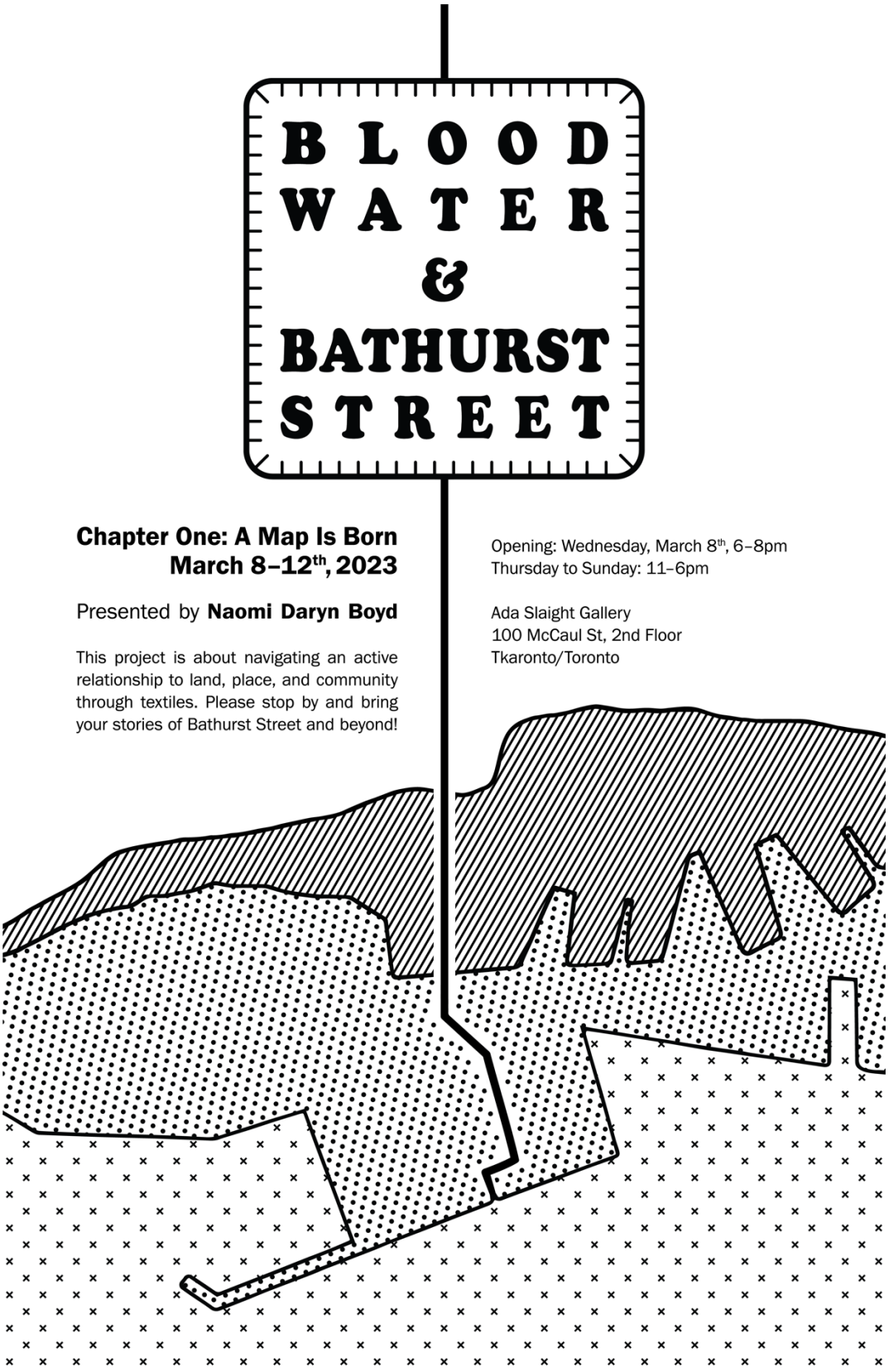



*Figure 26: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition poster, February 10, 2023.*

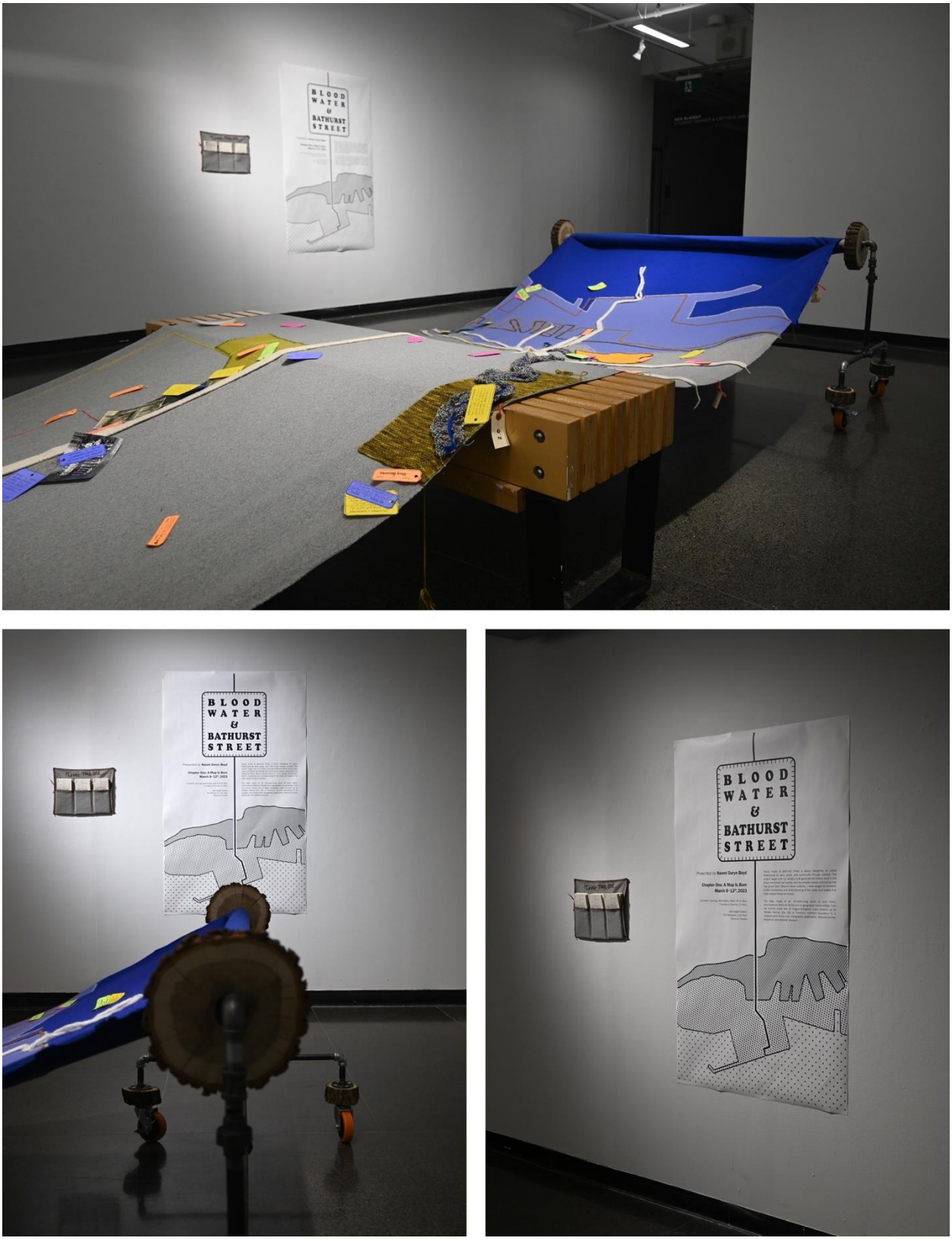



*Figure 27: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, 100 McCaul St, 2nd Floor, Tkaronto, 03/08/2023.*

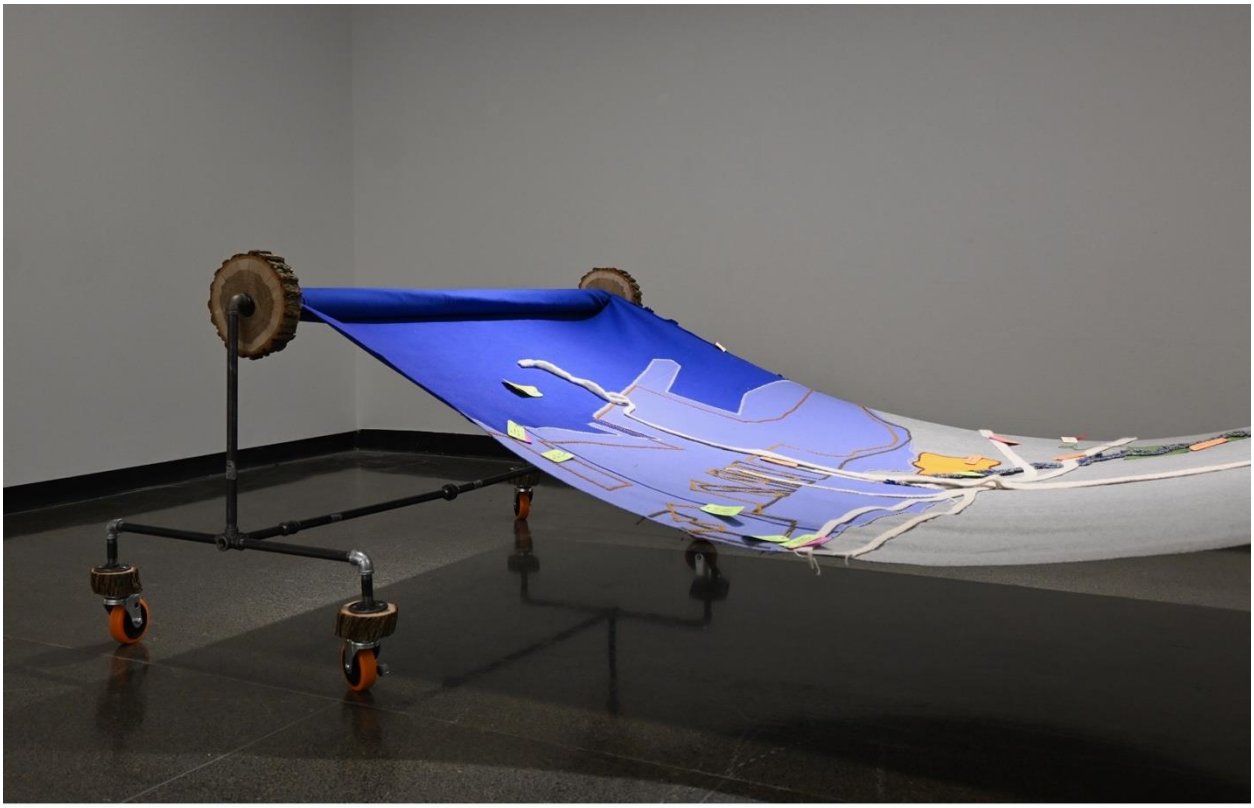



*Figure 28: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/08/2023.*

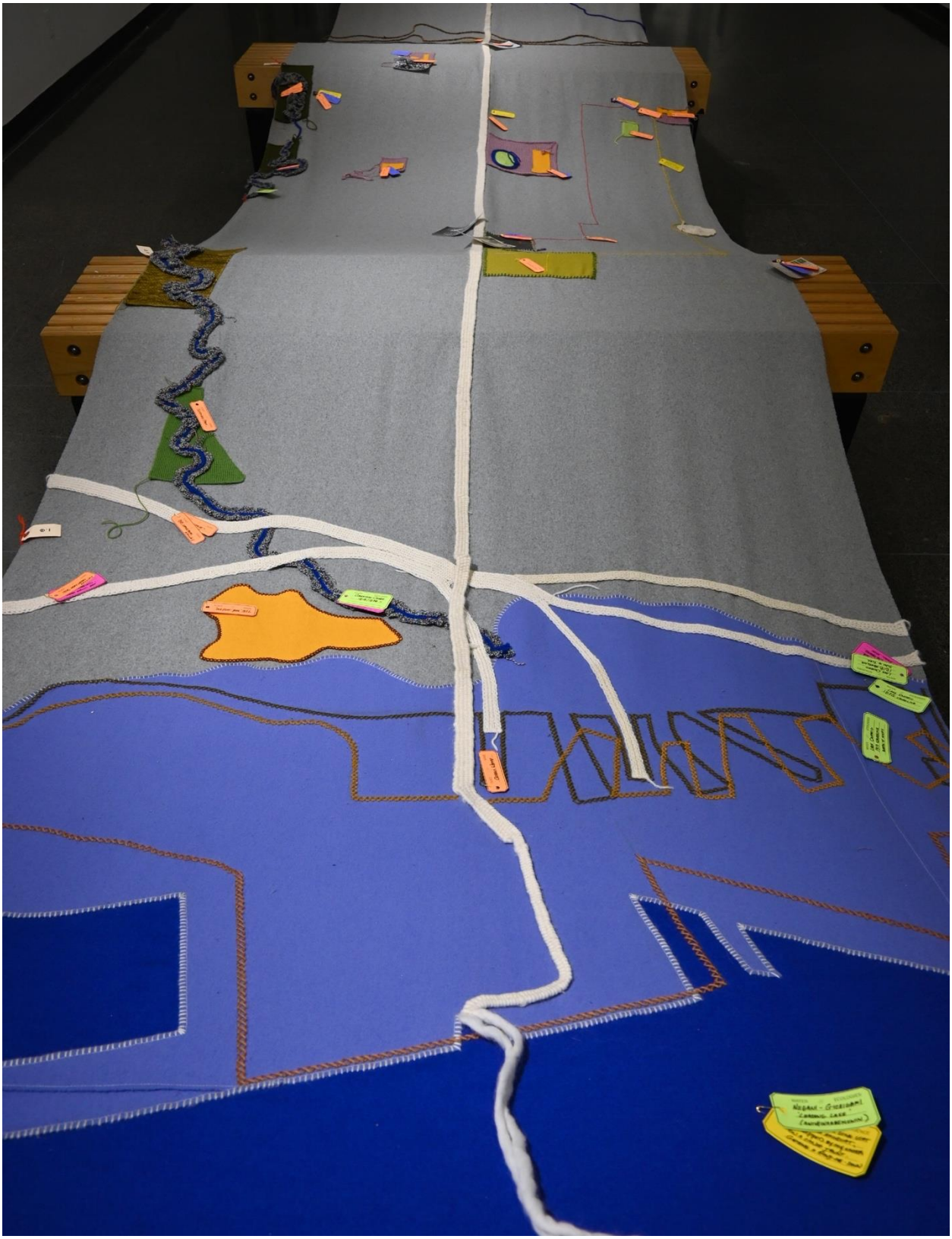


*Figure 29: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/09/2023.*

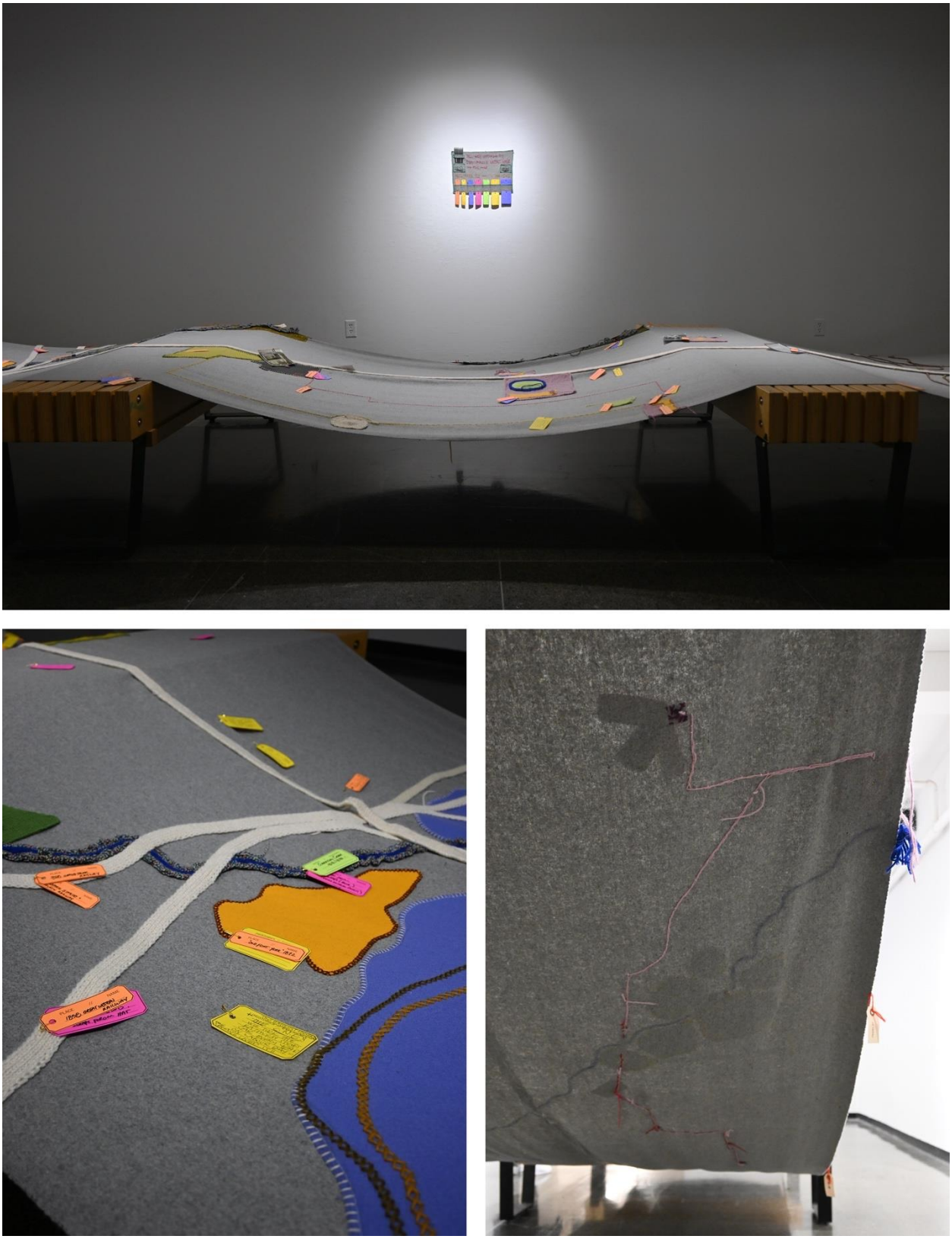


*Figure 30: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/09/2023.*

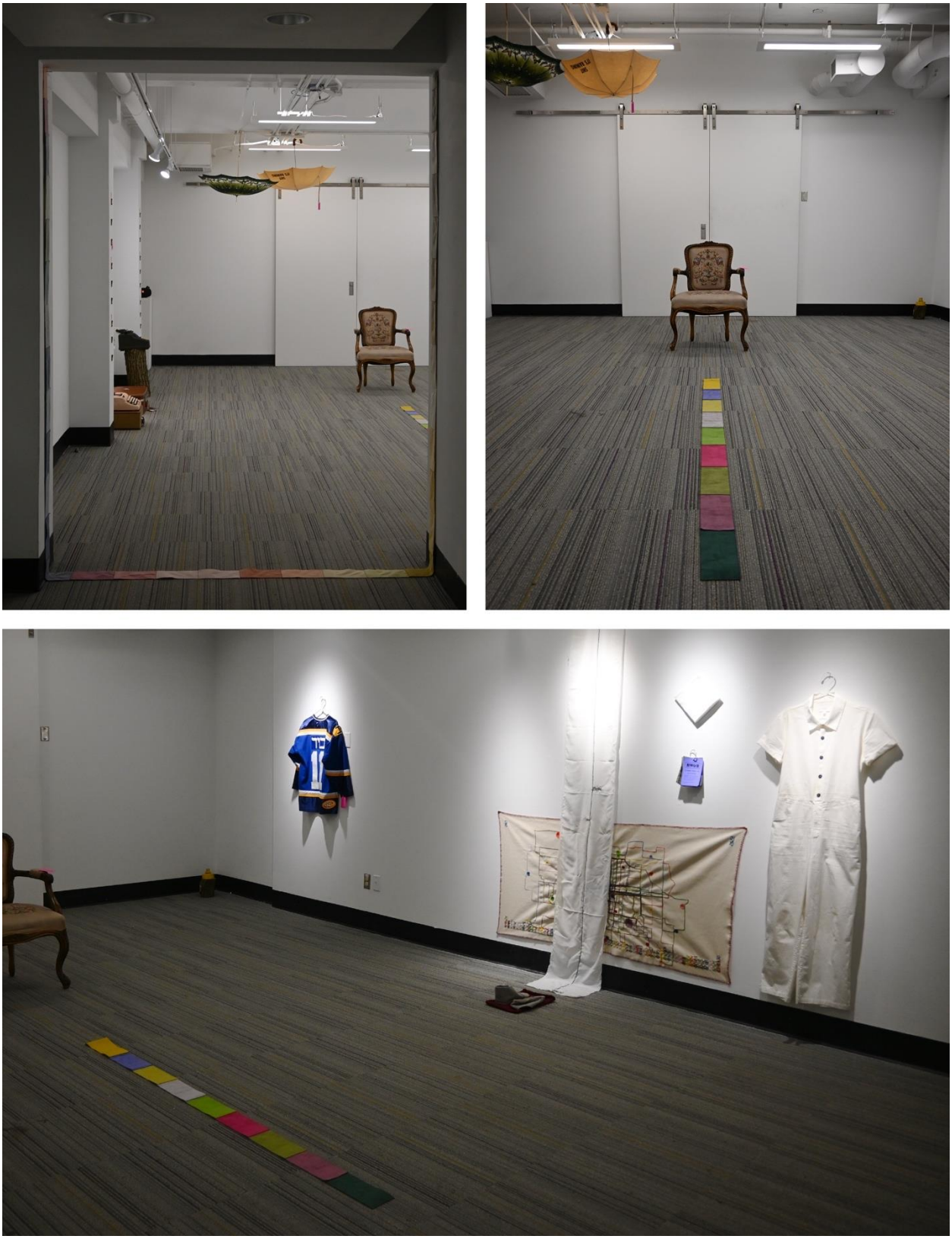
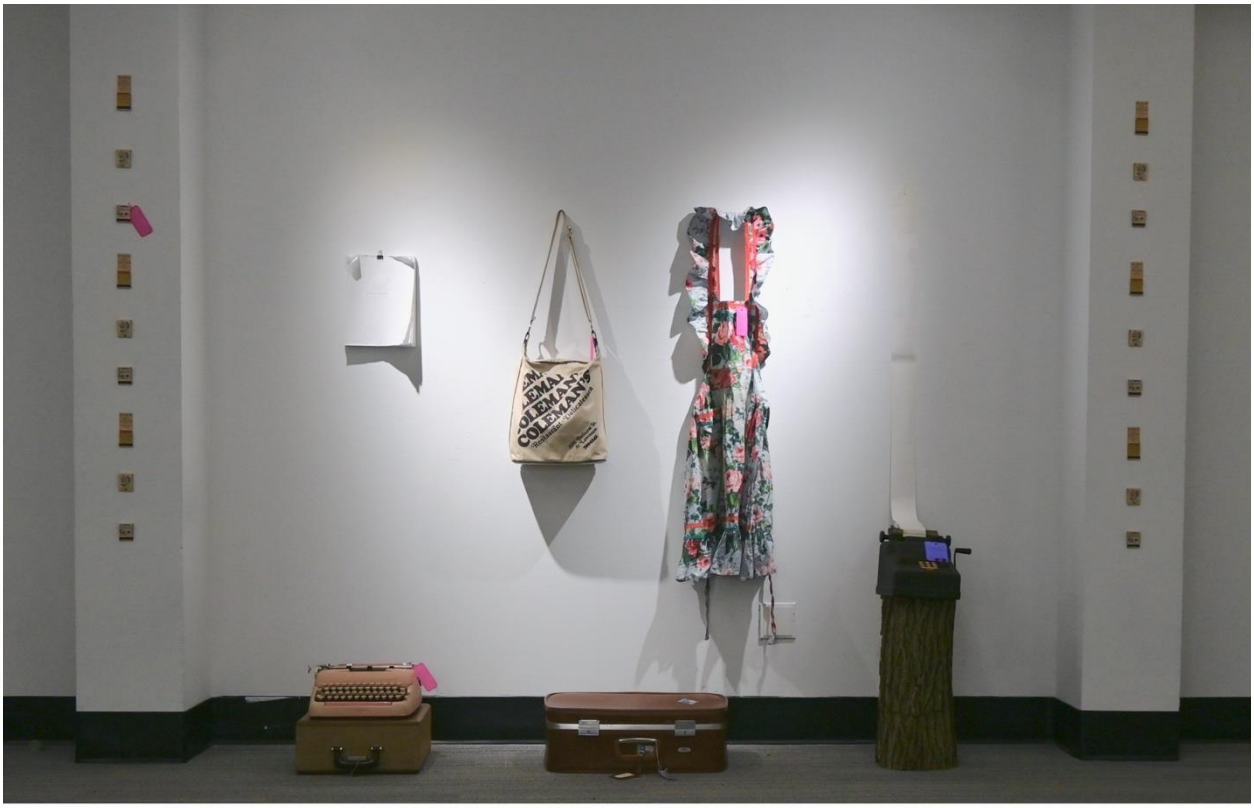


*Figure 31: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/09/2023.*



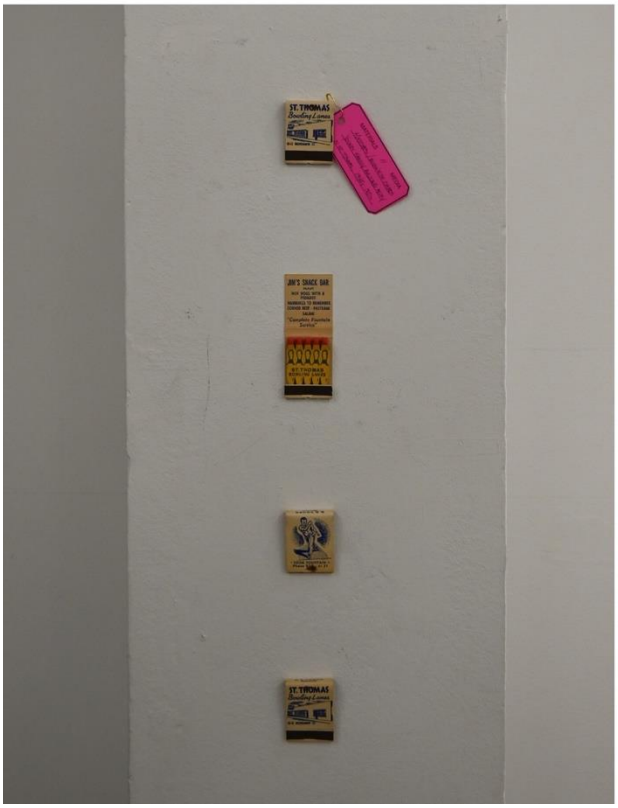




*Figure 32: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, familial artifacts and key reference texts, 03/08/2023.*


*Figure 33: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, Tag details, 03/12/2023.*


*Figure 34: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, details, 03/12/2023.*

*Figure 35: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, details, 03/12/2023.*

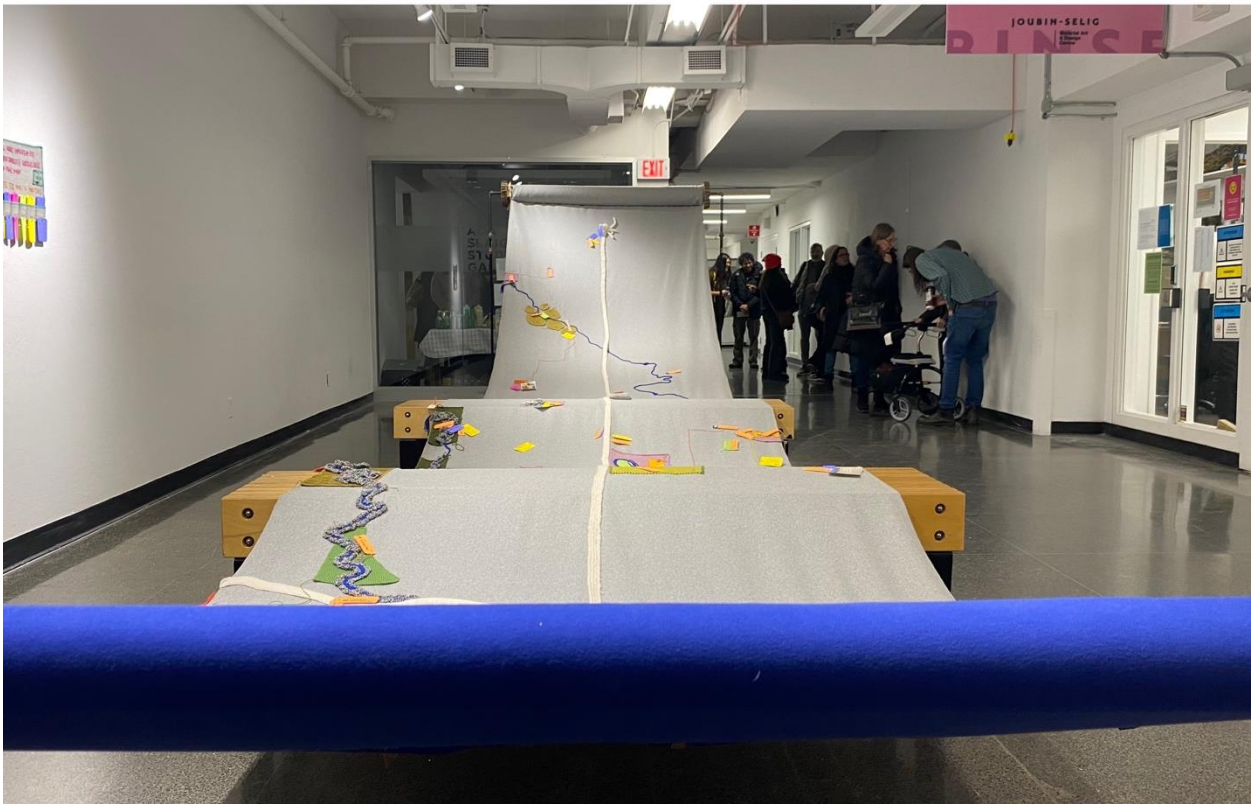



*Figure 36: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition Opening at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, 03/08/2023. Photos by Ron Boyd.*

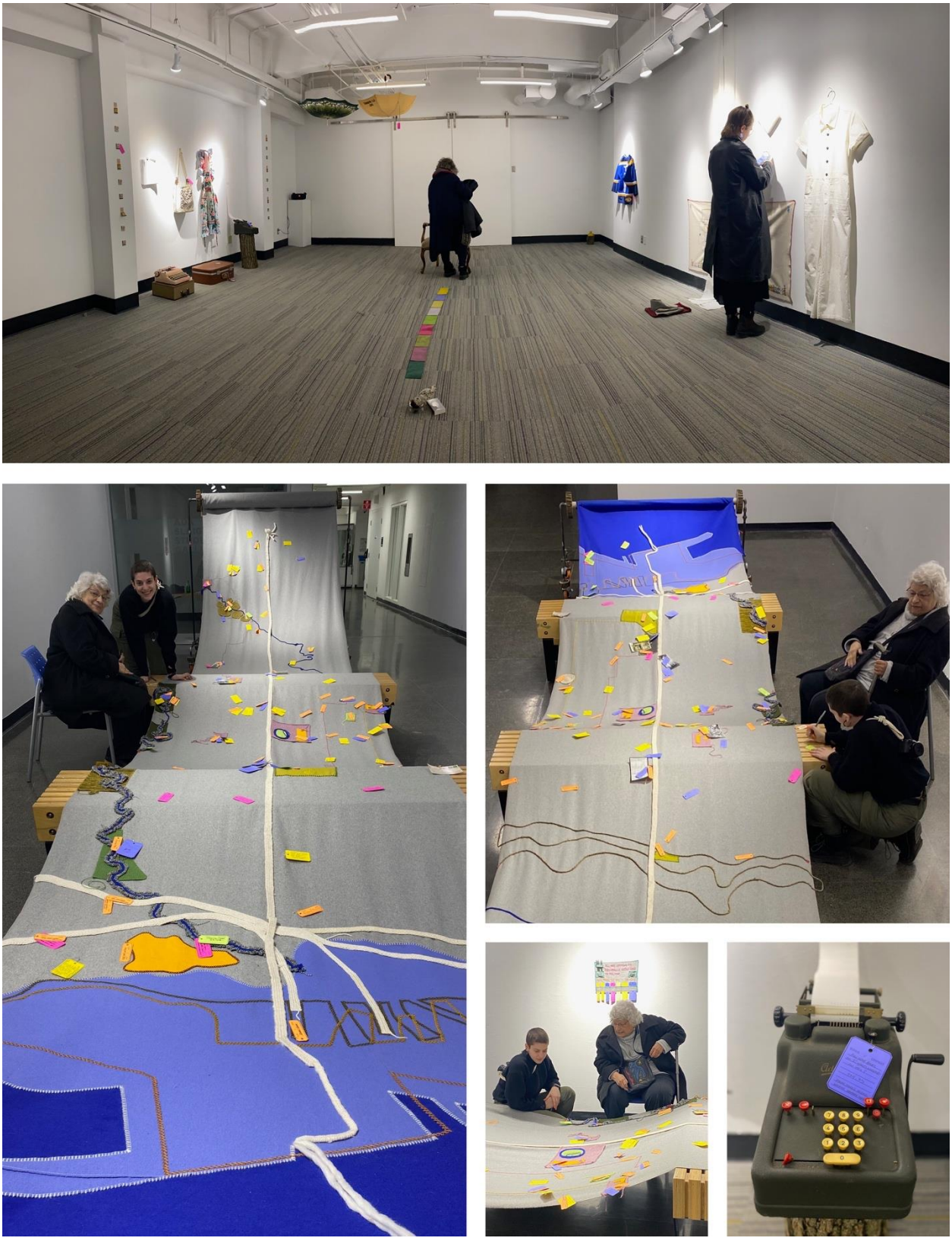


*Figure 37: Chapter One: A Map Is Born, exhibition installation at Ada Slaight Gallery, Tkaronto, adding and verifying information on the Map with my Grandma Sue aka Bubbs, 03/12/2023. Photos by Ron Boyd.*

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