

## CONNECT TO CARE



by 吳倩彤 Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Criticism and Curatorial Practice.

OCAD Graduate Gallery, 205 Richmond Street West, OCAD University

March 1-6, 2024

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Abstract

*Connect to Care* is a curatorial project that explores through art-making how ethical care can be practiced *about, with* and *for* Asian newcomers in an attentive, bottom-up and reciprocal manner.

Collaborating with two newcomer-focused, Asian-founded art collectives – The Department of Imaginary Affairs and Waard Ward (in collaboration with artist Nicolas Fleming and artist Darren Rigo) – alongside Asian newcomer collaborators from the community, the exhibition presents their collective works of floristry and story-telling. These works invite reimagination of how newcomers can (re)establish their relationships with the society that they are resettling in, and how communities can connect and manifest ethical newcomer care through a proposed three-principle framework inspired by feminist scholars: (1) *Caring about* – attentive to newcomers' voices and needs, (2) *Caring with* – bottom-up approach and, (3) *Caring for* – (re)building of reciprocal kinships and connections.

As newcomers and immigrants continue to make up a significant share of the Canadian population, this project hopes to enrich and fill the gaps of existing newcomer care and support. It also envisions to expand the scope of care ethics scholarship in relations to the subject of newcomers and/or immigrants, as well as curatorial and artistic practice.

**Key words:** *Care ethics, Newcomers, Asian diaspora, Contemporary art, Curatorial practice, Community, Collaboration, Participatory*

## Acknowledgements

*Connect to Care* is formed on the traditional territories of the Mississauga of the Credit who are part of the Anishinaabe Nation, the Wyandot Nation, also the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Six Nations, and many other Nations, recorded and unrecorded. The land this project operates on is named Tkaronto (which might be colonially known as Toronto) meaning where the trees meet the water or the gathering place. As a newcomer, to be frank, I had minimal knowledge on the histories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. With the care and support that I received from the communities, particularly from my CCP faculty and cohort, I came to realize the importance of taking care of this land and recognizing my positionality in these complicated histories as a first-generation Chinese Canadian settler. I am committed to an ongoing journey of learning, unlearning, and relearning these knowledges, caring *about*, *with* and *for* the Indigenous communities.

### §

I could not have done this paper without the immense care and support that I received in relations to all my fellow artists, mentors, friends, family, and newcomer communities.

To the artists (collectives), Jennifer Chan from the Department of Imaginary Affairs; Petrina Ng, Patricia Ritacca and Hanen Nanaa from Waard Ward; Darren Rigo and Nicolas Fleming who worked with Waard Ward collaboratively on the exhibited project *Flowers for*, thank you for putting your trust in me, and collaborating with me on this project. All your artistic practices inspire me in every way to rethink how the society can connect and care for one another.

To my fellow Asian newcomer collaborators, thank you for your courage and openness in participating in the two workshops and enriching my thesis. Together you transformed the gallery space into a joyous and warm place, where connections and kinships could be (re)forged.

To Dr. Suzanne Morrissette, my program director and primary advisor, thank you for your advice, facilitation, and assistance throughout these two years of study. I would not be able to make this through without your care and support.

To Julius Manapul, my secondary advisor, thank you for always being so enthusiastic about my project. Your thoughtful curatorial insights and ideas have deeply inspired this project and have always motivated me to think further about my position as a curator.

To Dr. Soyang Park, thank you for your time and efforts in explaining all these difficult concepts and theories surrounding care and care ethics and facilitating my REB application.

To my cohort in CCP Program, my first community that I got connected with in this foreign country, thank you for always inspiring me with all your knowledge, and making me feel belonged.

To all the faculty whom I feel honored to receiving care and insights from: Dr. Amish Morrell, Dr. Jim Drobnick, Dr. Maria-Belén Ordóñez, Dr. Andrew Gayed, Tairone Bastien, Dr. Dot Tuer, Dr. Charles Reeves, thank you.

I am also indebted to the Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Ashok Mathur, and the whole team of School of Graduate Studies, for tending to my requests, listening to my voices and needs, and providing me with care, support, and guidance to see this project to fruition.

To all my friends, whether you are in Toronto or Hong Kong, thank you for always supporting me, and lending your ear to me whenever I felt lonely, anxious, and nervous.

To my parents, mama and baba (in Cantonese, mum and dad), and my partner, Wei, thank you for everything.

## **Dedication**

To all the newcomers who struggle to find themselves here in the so-called Canada.

To all my fellow Hong Kong friends, no matter where you are.

給漂泊在外的香港人，不論你在何方。

**Table of Contents**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Abstract.....  | 1  |
| Acknowledgements.....                                    | 2  |
| Dedication.....  | 5  |
| List of Figures.....                                     | 7  |
| 序 Preface: 吳倩彤的故事 The Story of Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)..... | 8  |
| Curatorial Statement.....                                | 10 |
| Exhibition Support Paper.....                            | 29 |
| Introduction.....  | 29 |
| Methodology.....   | 30 |
| Exhibition Review.....                                   | 36 |
| Literature Review.....                                   | 39 |
| Spatial Curation.....                                    | 42 |
| Postscript.....  | 46 |
| Bibliography.....  | 48 |
| Appendix A: Artists Biographies.....                     | 51 |
| Appendix B: Thesis Photo Documentation.....              | 53 |



## List of Figures

|            |  |    |
|------------|--|----|
| Figure 1.  | DIA, <i>Interactive Installation of The Stories of Us (2018 – ongoing)</i> ,<br>Photo by Laiken Breau  | 20 |
| Figure 2.  | DIA, <i>Wall-mounted, text-based artwork of A Story by Zhenyi (2019)</i> ,<br>Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)  | 20 |
| Figure 3.  | DIA, Booklets & Butterflies in the Interactive Installation of<br><i>The Stories of Us (2018 – ongoing)</i> , Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)                                | 21 |
| Figure 4.  | DIA, <i>The Stories of Us</i> , Installation View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)   | 22 |
| Figure 5.  | Waard Ward in collaboration with Nicolas Fleming, Darren Rigo,<br><i>Flowers for Anesian Issa (2021) &amp; Flowers for Sajeda Almarad (2021)</i> ,<br>Photo by Darren Rigo | 23 |
| Figure 6.  | Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, <i>Flower Arrangements (2024)</i> ,<br>Installation View, Photo by Darren Rigo   | 25 |
| Figure 7.  | Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, <i>Flower Arrangements (2024)</i> ,<br>Photo by Anne Layacan   | 26 |
| Figure 8.  | DIA, Asian newcomer collaborators, <i>“Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop (2024)</i> ,<br>Photo by Jennifer Chan   | 27 |
| Figure 9.  | Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, <i>Flower Arrangements (2024)</i> ,<br>Entrance View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)  | 43 |
| Figure 10. | Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, <i>Flower Arrangements (2024)</i> ,<br>Exit View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)  | 43 |
| Figure 11. | <i>Community Area</i> , Installation View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)   | 44 |
| Figure 12. | The Chinese-English Phrase Book that was produced in 1980s by<br>the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Photo by Jennifer Chan  | 45 |

## 序 Preface:

### 吳倩彤的故事 The Story of Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

“You can leave Hong Kong, but it will never leave you.”

Nury Vittachi, *Hong Kong: The City of Dreams*<sup>1</sup>

Hong Kong has always been my home. The thought of leaving my home where I was born and raised had never occurred to me, not until two years ago. After living through the city’s largest political protests in history in 2019 – 2021, I was eager to escape the chaos, and re-ground myself in a new place.

In February 2022, amidst the pandemic, I arrived in Canada through a temporary immigration program created specifically for Hong Kong residents. Excited to see where this unknown path and country would guide me to, I made every effort to adapt and integrate into Canada: adjusting myself to the arduous winter, trying to speak English with the local accent, pretending to understand cultural references in conversations and laughing at jokes that I didn’t even understand fully. I always thought I would be able to quickly adapt to these differences and feel more settled within a short period of time, but that did not happen. I felt lost and anxious, with no one to talk to. I longed to find my communities here while missing my family and friends who were now 7,793 miles away.

Hoping to take the edge off these distresses, I decided to pick myself up and looked into various newcomer- and/or immigrant-serving organizations and community centres, searching for the connections that I longed for. I came to realize that there were two barriers that hindered my access to these care and support. The first barrier, I am not eligible to receive these care. Out of my expectation, my status as a then-work permit holder and now an international student was often not

---

<sup>1</sup> Nury Vittachi, *Hong Kong: The City of Dreams* (Singapore: Periplus, 2007).

included in these support, often known as newcomer settlement programs. The reason why is that these demographics are classified as temporary residents. Being neither a citizen nor someone who is permitted to stay in Canada for a long period of time, temporary residents, even though they are also newly-arrived, are being excluded in most of the newcomer care and support.

Even if I was eligible for some of the settlement programs, they did not always suit my needs: these programs focus largely on immediate settlement needs, which include searching for employment, accommodations, language training, as well as financial and legal aid. As much as I appreciated these care and support, I was also looking for something more. Friendships that provide a sense of inclusion in society and kinships that bring forth familiarity and belonging.

These constant experiences of feeling “not being cared for” in a societal manner has prompted me, as an Asian newcomer and emerging curator, to begin this journey of exploring the meaning of care and care ethics for the community. My two years of research, alongside personal experiences of engaging with Asian newcomers, are epitomized in this curatorial project. I hope this is not the end, but a starting point of reimagining the meaning and practice of care towards the growing populations of newcomers and immigrants in the country.

## Curatorial Statement

「我来自于沉默的尖叫和重塑的梦想，这些给予我前行的动力。」

“I am from silent screams and re-written dreams which give me resilience to move forward.”

*A story by Zhenyi | 故事作者 Zhenyi, The Stories of Us | 我们的故事*<sup>2</sup>

In Canada, nearly 1 in 4 people are foreign-born.<sup>3</sup> The ratio is expected to grow further as the government plans to continue to welcome historic numbers of newcomers into the country in the next two years.<sup>4</sup> This expansion of newcomer communities entails more people to experience the journey of resettling in a new country. Leaving behind the familiar and having to adapt to a foreign environment, languages and cultures. Newcomers are prone to unsettling experiences when they are in search of kinships and connections that evoke familiarities and belonging.

Foregrounding relationship- and community-building, this exhibition collaborates with two newcomer-focused, Asian-founded arts collectives – The Department of Imaginary Affairs (DIA) and Waard Ward<sup>5</sup> – to display works of storytelling through lived experience and acts of making (floristry) that were communally created with Asian newcomers.<sup>6</sup> Both collectives are invited to participate in this project as their process-led artistic practice not only embody the proposed three-principle of

---

<sup>2</sup> Zhenyi, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Zhenyi”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2019), 1. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/zhenyi-4/>.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, “Nearly one in four people in Canada are immigrants, the highest proportion of the population in more than 150 years” (Infographics Image, Ottawa, 2022), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/g-a001-eng.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), “Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan” (Notice, Ottawa, 2023), <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2024-2026.html>.

<sup>5</sup> The exhibited work is a collaboration between Waard Ward collective and artist Nicolas Fleming and artist Darren Rigo. While the formation of Waard Ward will be explained in later parts of this curatorial essay, if you wish to understand the context of this collaboration between Waard Ward and the two artists, please refer to *Appendix A: Artist Biographies*.

<sup>6</sup> In here, the participating Asian newcomers are community members instead of professionally-trained artists.

newcomers care ethics – *caring about*, *caring with* and *caring for* – but also invite reimagination of the meaning of arts, artists, and how they intersect with the building of a more equitable and accessible society.

According to a 2021 *Statistics Canada* report, newcomers generally suffered higher rates of loneliness than Canadian-born population due to “experience[ing] disruption to their social networks during migration and encounter[ing] barriers establishing new relationships and connections”.<sup>7</sup> Rebuilding their social networks in the country has been identified by newcomers as the most important factor contributing to their inclusion in the society.<sup>8</sup> However, this area, for years, had not been sufficiently addressed by the existing newcomer care and support initiatives led by the government. These initiatives, usually referred as settlement programs, spent half of their resources in language assessment and training services, as well as information dissemination of living in Canada.<sup>9</sup> Only one-tenth of it has been dedicated to building community connections, the key for newcomers to feel a sense of belonging in the country.<sup>10</sup> Recognizing this limitation and unethicity of the existing newcomer care with the hope to reenact relationships and connections for newcomers became the first curatorial impetus of this project. It is also the reason why DIA and Waard Ward were selected for this project. Both collectives reorient relationship-building and collaborative spirit in newcomer care, and attentively explore artistic practices that could bring forth a sense of belonging stemming from their experiences of also being newcomers and immigrants in the country.

---

<sup>7</sup> Max Stick, Feng Hou & Lisa Kaida, “Self-reported loneliness among recent immigrants, long-term immigrants, and Canadian born individuals” (Statistics Canada’s Economic and Social Reports, Ottawa, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021007/article/00001-eng.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), “2023 Settlement Outcomes Report: Data-driven Insights for the Future of the Settlement Program” (Government Reports, Ottawa, 2023), <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/documents/pdf/english/corporate/publications-manuals/part-1-newcomer-outcomes-stock-take.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Encompassing a duo-collective exhibition and two community workshops at the OCAD U Graduate Gallery, this curatorial project *Connect to Care* draws inspirations from the work of DIA and Waard Ward, as well as aspirations of feminist scholars and care ethicists to illustrate how relationships are key in newcomer care. Through their work, I observe newcomer care ethics can take place in three ways: (1) *Caring about* – attentive to newcomers’ voices and needs, (2) *Caring with* - bottom-up approach, and (3) *Caring for* - (re)building of reciprocal kinships and connections. As an Asian newcomer myself, this project embodies my own continuous journey of searching for care in relations to communities. It also hopes to make space for other newcomers with Asian roots to Canada and beyond to connect and reforge kinships, supporting this burgeoning community to care in relations to one another.<sup>11</sup>

Enacting the gallery space to *caring about*, *caring with* and *caring for*, the exhibition invites the participation of Asian newcomers to subvert the ‘white-cube’, and transform it into a gathering place where they can search for kinships and connections through participatory community workshops led by the two artist collectives: a flower arrangement workshop and a story-telling workshop. Both workshops, through a communal approach, encourage newcomers to listen to and (re)forge ties with one another through collective acts of flower-arranging and writing. In particular, the flower arrangement workshop facilitated by Waard Ward ask newcomers to get connected and engage in a collaborative process of flower-arranging in Japanese *Ikebana* style (生け花), which translates as “making flowers come alive”. These floral assemblages become part of the exhibited work, permeating the gallery space with the harmonious and collaborative spirits of newcomers.

---

<sup>11</sup> According to Statistics Canada, more than 60% of newcomers are Asian-born in 2017 – 2021. This trend is expected to continue and by 2036, Asian-born immigrants will represent more than half of all immigrants population. (Source reference: Statistics Canada, “Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians” (Statistics Canada’s The Daily, Ottawa, 2022), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.pdf?st=FIXzb2TW>; Statistics Canada, Asian Heritage Month... by the numbers (Statistics Canada’s The Daily, Ottawa, 2023), [https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2021/smr08\\_250](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2021/smr08_250).)

## §

Here, a definition of care and care ethics can help frame the way that these can be contextualized to support better understandings of newcomer care. American feminist educator Bernice Fischer and Professor Joan C. Tronto defined care as:

a species of activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.<sup>12</sup>

This broad and multi-dimensional definition grounds care as a kind of human activity rather than “an emotional state” or “merely a nice feeling”.<sup>13</sup> It underscores care as a relational practice as all of us *seek* to interweave “in a complex, life-sustaining web”. With care defined as actions and ways of doing, or connecting, the question of how to practice that for people to live “as well as possible” prevails. This is where care ethics intervenes as a moral-shaping theory, inquiring into the ethical ways of manifesting care with different social and political implications.<sup>14</sup>

Informed by feminist thinking and practices, care ethics foregrounds relatedness, “understanding the world in a state of relationship”.<sup>15</sup> As one of the founding voices, American feminist Carol Gilligan

---

<sup>12</sup> Bernice Fischer & Joan C. Tronto, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring,” in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, eds Emily K. Abel & Margaret K. Nelson (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 40.; Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 103.

<sup>13</sup> Talia Schaffer, “Care Communities: Ethics, Fictions, Temporalities,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (July 2019), 524. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-7616139>.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, “Introduction: The Disruptive Thought of Care,” in *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Jacqueline Millner, “Care, interrelatedness and creative practices,” in *Care Ethics and Art*, eds Jacqueline Millner & Gretchen Coombs (London: Routledge, 2021), 21.

emphasized care ethics aims at “sustaining connection...keeping the web of relationship intact”.<sup>16</sup> Expanding on this notion, Tronto’s theorization of “Four Phases of Caring” and “Four elements of Care” provides a solid socio-ethico-political framework in thinking through ethical care as a practice, which can be adopted in different context.<sup>17</sup>

According to Tronto, caring as “a species of activity” can be dissected into four phases, each associated with a virtue or element: *caring about*, which requires recognizing the needs for care in an attentive manner; *caring for*, which refers to the willingness of taking responsibilities to “meeting the needs of others”; *care giving*, which speaks to the competences of care-giver(s) in providing and delivering care; and *care receiving*, which discerns “the responsiveness of the care receiver to the care”, recognizing their autonomy and agency.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the four phases and elements, Tronto supplemented a new phase of care - *caring with* in her book *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice*.<sup>19</sup> It stresses that all democratic citizens are “equal...in being care receivers” and in their “capacity to voice need”.<sup>20</sup> These citizens can “work together to identify needs and assign responsibilities for care”.<sup>21</sup> It is key to note that the democratic citizen that Tronto referred here are less about the legality of citizenship but more about its relationality. She believed anyone could become a citizen once they enter care relations.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Carol Gilligan, "Images of Relationship," *North Dakota Law Review Vol. 81: No. 4, Article 2*. (January 2005), 724, <https://commons.und.edu/ndlr/vol81/iss4/2>.

<sup>17</sup> Joan C. Tronto, “An Ethic of Care,” *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging* 22, no. 3 (1998): 15–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44875693>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Joan C. Tronto, “Why Personal Responsibility Isn’t Enough for Democracy,” in *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9ggfvp>.

<sup>20</sup> Wynne Walker Moskop, “Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice, by Joan C. Tronto,” *American Political Thought* 4, no. 2 (2015): 351. <https://doi.org/10.1086/680427>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Iris Parra Jounou & Joan C. Tronto, “Care ethics in theory and practice: Joan C. Tronto in conversation with Iris Parra Jounou,” *Contemporary Political Theory* (15 February 2024). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00680-6>.



The curatorial impetus of this project hopes to rethink newcomer care through an ethical lens built on Tronto's theoretical frameworks. From my own experiences, I have become skeptical of the efficacy of newcomer care that refers mainly to the settlement programs and services delivered by government and institutions. According to the IRCC's definition, settlement programs aim at "provid[ing] newcomers with the information required to make informed decisions, language skills adequate to their settlement and integration goals, and the support they need to build networks within their new communities."<sup>23</sup> While these programs align with Tronto's definition of care – activities that the government and/or newcomers do to "maintain, continue, repair [one's] 'world'", they do not register with care ethics that allow people to "sustain connection" and live "as well as possible". They were often manifested hierarchically through the government, presuming newcomers' needs to only those that can assist them in "integrating successfully into Canadian society" and help the country to "realize the economic, social and cultural benefits of immigration."<sup>24</sup> These usually pointed towards the more immediate needs including job-searching, English language training, financial and legal aid to information and orientation about living in Canada. The development of social connections and friendships, while are identified in the definition of settlement programs and often ranked the most needed care for newcomers to settle in the country, are mostly obscure in the current manifestations of newcomer care.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the absence of newcomer care in relations to community-building, government and institutions are also stagnated in interweaving some Asian newcomers into the web of relationships. More "temporary residents" with Asian roots such as international students and work permit holders have now resettled in Canada. While in reality they are also newly-arrived individuals in the country, they are excluded from existing system of newcomer care and support. These problematic aspects

---

<sup>23</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Settlement Program: Program Terms and Conditions (Program Terms and Conditions, Ottawa, 2023), <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/program-terms-conditions/settlement.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Jennifer O'Brien, "Finding community, fighting loneliness a challenge for newcomers," *CBC News*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-immigrants-1.6820685>.

of newcomer care urges this project to take off from Tronto's phases of care, and propose a three-principle framework of newcomer care ethics, which will also become the curatorial foundation of this exhibition. They are:<sup>26</sup>

**(1) *Caring about* - Attentive to newcomers' voices and needs:**

Instead of presuming newcomers' needs as only those that revolved around languages and employment, newcomer care ethics entails listening to the diverse newcomers' voices and identify their needs through communications and participatory engagements. This should first reinclude the new-arrivals who are excluded in the existing newcomer care system. It also calls forth more spaces, time and opportunities for newcomers to interact, forging caring relations. Specifically, within the context of Asian newcomers, communicating in English might be a barrier for them to express their voices clearly. Therefore, it is crucial for caregivers attending to this, and facilitating the communications through translations and interpretations, or other options that transcend verbal communications, for instance, communal art making, which often focus on body and visual languages, if needed. As Tronto pointed out in her article "*Creating Caring Institutions: Politics, Plurality, and Purpose*", while the process of determining needs is complicated, this is how social provision of care can become better.<sup>27</sup>

**(2) *Caring with* - Bottom-up approach:**

Echoing the process of *caring about*, *caring with* emphasizes the importance of establishing non-hierarchical relations between Asian newcomers and care givers. Both sides should "work together" in identifying needs and listening to one another. The current newcomer care,

---

<sup>26</sup> In here, care-givers mean anyone who provide care about, for and with newcomers. It does not limited to government and institutions, but also grassroot organizations, collectives, community groups and individuals who have caring relations with Asian newcomers. It does not presume any hierarchy between care-givers and care-receivers.

<sup>27</sup> Joan C. Tronto, "Creating Caring Institutions: Politics, Plurality, and Purpose," *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 4:2, (2010):168, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2010.484259>.

however, defies *caring with* as it continues to uphold the status of care givers – the “host society”. An ethical version of newcomer care should be practiced through a two-way process that foreground co-understanding and co-learning between both care givers and care receivers. These include cultural knowledge and experience exchange, as well as skills and aesthetics sharing. This often works best in a communal setting, where care givers are usually (previous) newcomers themselves, or have immigrational backgrounds who could resonate and are more willing to borrow an empathetic lens in *caring with* other newcomers.

**(3) *Caring for* - (re)Building of reciprocal kinships and connections:**

*Caring for* underscores the reciprocity nature of the relations between Asian newcomers and care givers. When *caring for* is enacted, care givers recognize their responsibilities in these relations, and respond to the needs that are identified together with Asian newcomers during the process of *caring about* and *caring with*. *Caring for* as a process embodies the (re)sustaining of kinships and connections that are once lost by many Asian newcomers when they experience resettlement changes. These kinships and connections, whether they refer to those between Asian newcomers and care givers, or those within Asian newcomer populations, help evoke a sense of community, belonging and mutual support. These feelings are what many Asian newcomers are searching and longing for in order to keep themselves in the web of relationships. Whether these connections will remain close-knitted also depend on their shared interests, languages, and culture.

Artmaking and curating, especially those that are community-oriented, are considered as caring practices. As Professor Thilde Langevang denoted in her article, *Care in creative work: exploring the ethics and aesthetics of care through arts-based methods*, artists and curators are “caring actors”, where one of the dominant modes of their creative work should always relate to “care for others

within kinship groups, friendships, communities and neighborhoods”.<sup>28</sup> This three-principles framework of newcomer care ethics presents as an invitation to art communities – artists, curators, creatives, arts practitioners – to reorient their practice to caring *about*, *with* and *for* Asian newcomers and beyond.

## §

The exhibition hopes to open up a space that exudes the ethical care *about*, *with* and *for* Asian newcomers. The selection of artists at the forefront embody this. Collaborating with the two arts collectives instead of individual artists is a deliberate choice. Both collectives’ process-led artistic practice speaks to the three principles of newcomer care ethics: *caring for* – their artwork were emerged from engaging with Asian newcomers with different backgrounds and status, and listening to their needs; *caring with* – these artwork were created through “working together” at community workshops; *caring for* – through the artmaking processes, virtuous relationships were (re)forged among Asian newcomers, as well as those with the society.

The exhibition not only celebrates the efforts of the two collectives, as well as the different works that were collaboratively created by Asian newcomers, but also becomes a communal experience that seek to create caring relations with visitors. From the opening night to the two community workshops, visitors can read, experience, feel, touch, sense these displayed works together. Those with similar positionalities can relate to the work and receive a sense of comfort and care whereas those who are not familiar with these newcomer narratives can, as underscored by Care ethicist and

---

<sup>28</sup> Thilde Langevang, Rashida Resario, Ana Alacovska, Robin Steedman, Dorothy Akpene Amenuke, Sela Kodjo Adjei & Rufai Haruna Kilu, “Care in creative work: exploring the ethics and aesthetics of care through arts-based methods,” *Cultural Trends*, 31:5 (2021): 448-469, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2021.2016351>.

Professor Fiona Robinson, “not only learning how to be attentive and patient, how to listen and respond, but also how to rethink our own attitudes about difference and exclusion”.<sup>29</sup>

*The Stories of Us (2018 – ongoing)* is an on-going newcomers story-telling project organized by the Department of Imaginary Affairs (DIA). It started off as a program to respond to the lack of available English as Second Language (ESL) teaching materials for adult newcomers.<sup>30</sup> Tending to this need, the DIA organized workshops and invited newcomers from different backgrounds, regardless of their status in Canada, to craft diverse resettlement experience in English as a “reflective activity” of journaling.<sup>31</sup> These stories would then be translated into the authors’ home languages, and published as ESL learning resources across Canada. Moving away from the conventional top-down approach of designing ESL materials, this project makes space for these resources to be created through collective, non-evaluative acts of writing with newcomers’ authentic voices. Crafting these narratives through workshops also connected newcomers together, and facilitated community and kinship building.

The project is curated in two ways in the space: an interactive installation that creates a tactile experience for visitors to touch, feel and read a selection of Asian newcomer stories in 14 different languages (see fig. 1), and a wall-mounted, text-based artwork, showing a quote extracted from the story told by Zhenyi, a Chinese newcomer (see fig. 2).

---

<sup>29</sup> Fiona Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 164.

<sup>30</sup> “The Stories of Us,” *The Stories of Us*, The Department of Imaginary Affairs <https://dia.space/projects/the-stories-of-us/>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



Figure 1. DIA, Interactive Installation of *The Stories of Us* (2018 – ongoing),  
Photo by Laiken Breau

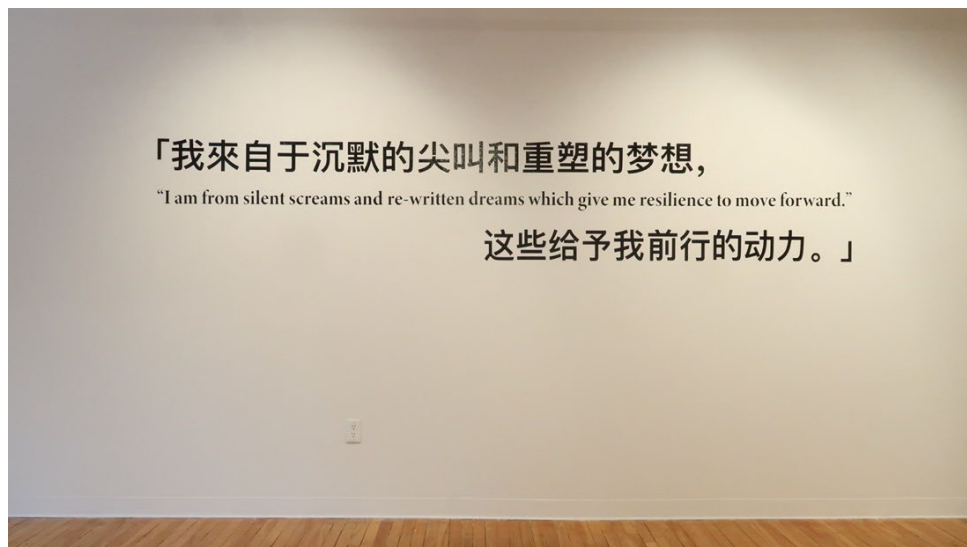


Figure 2. DIA, Wall-mounted, text-based artwork of *A Story by Zhenyi* (2019),  
Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

In the interactive installation, each story is printed into a booklet hung on the wall, with a unique clay butterfly attached. (See Fig. 3) The butterfly embodies not only the act of migration, but also transformations, the growth and changes of Asian newcomers while resettling in a new country. Each of them is intertwined with 14 different colours, referring to the diverse languages that is narrated in the stories, and is in different sizes. It symbolizes the envisionment of how different communities with diverse cultures can connect and tend to one another.



Figure 3. DIA, Booklets & Butterflies in the Interactive Installation of *The Stories of Us* (2018 – ongoing), Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

Apart from the butterflies, a long, horizontal mirror is also mounted on the wall alongside the stories. It invites the audience to look into their reflections while reading the stories, reflecting upon the meaning of “us” in these stories: what role(s) did you, or did you not play in influencing the journeys of Newcomers? Visitors can also connect with the other artwork in the space by looking into the mirror, encouraging them to forge caring relationships with people that are embodied in these artwork (see Fig. 4).



Figure 4. DIA, The Stories of Us, Installation View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

The two pieces of photographs that centres the space, printed in cotton sateen with vibrant, harmonious flower assemblages, are works from Waard Ward, an art and social practice collective, in collaboration with artist Nicolas Fleming and artist Darren Rigo (see fig. 5). The collective proposes the idea of a diasporic flower district; “waard” is also a romanization of the Arabic word for flower. Titled *Flowers for Anesian Issa (2021)* and *Flowers for Sajeda Almarad (2021)*, these two photographs, which belong to a larger photo series named *Flowers for*, captures the collaborative spirit and social interactions that are grounded in Waard Ward’s practice in supporting newcomers and refugees.<sup>32</sup> Collectively led by Syrian florist Bd Al-Mounim, community organizers Hanen Nanaa and Laura Ritacca, artist Petrina Ng, and curator/educator Patricia Ritacca, the collective collaborates in non-Western approaches of floristry, community garden building and alternative newcomer support. For this exhibition, the non-Western approach refers specifically to *Ikebana (生け花)*, a Japanese traditional style of arranging flowers, which unlike western-style arrangements, emphasis on spacing instead of fullness, asymmetrical instead of symmetrical, process instead of results. It also speaks to

<sup>32</sup> The *Flowers for* series were produced by newly-arrived Arab-speaking individuals during a series of workshops facilitated by the collective in September 2021 to be displayed as part of an exhibition at the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington. During the process, newcomers and refugees built kindships and connections through “collaborative exchange of skills, resources, aesthetics and cultural knowledge and experiences”.



a particular history of how the cut flowers industry in North America was established by the then-East Asian newcomers during a pre-WWII era of exclusion laws and throughout Japanese internment as a way of living.<sup>33</sup>



Figure 5. Waard Ward in collaboration with Nicolas Fleming, Darren Rigo, *Flowers for Anesian Issa* (2021) & *Flowers for Sajeda Almarad* (2021), Photo by Darren Rigo

These flower arrangements in the photographs were produced by newly-arrived Arab-speaking individuals in a series of non-Western floristry workshops facilitated by the collective in September 2021, to be displayed as part of an exhibition at the Visual Arts Centre of Clarington. Rigo was invited to document these flower arrangements and installations whereas Fleming was invited to design and build a site and project-specific environment turned floristry teaching studio, which were shown as part of the compositions in the photographs. There were also other collaborators, including garden designer and flower grower Allison Chow, as well as indigenous educator Joseph Pitawanakwat, who brought their knowledge and skills to enrich the process of offering newcomer care and support.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Petrina Ng, "Neither Fortunes nor Flowers Last Forever," *Petrina Ng's Artist Website*, <https://www.petrinang.com/nfnf-workshop-1>.

<sup>34</sup> Didier Morelli, "Nicolas Fleming, Darren Rigo & Waard Ward," *Esse*, Issue 104: Collectives (Winter 2022): 58.

These workshops embodied multi-layered community-building, forging kinships and connections not only within newcomers and refugees, but also with artists and the public through “collaborative exchange of skills, resources, aesthetics and cultural knowledge and experiences”.<sup>35</sup> It reimagines new ways of how acts of making and creating can contribute to the ethical practices of newcomer care and support that foregrounds connections.

For this exhibition, the two works of *Flower for* taken by Rigo, for the first time, were reprinted on both sides of the soft fabrics. These photographs in the past were usually framed statically in galleries or public spaces. This change of material was intentional, embodying newcomers’ persistent feeling of unsettledness, of alternating between outside and inside. Placing the work in front of the windows of the gallery space, complicates this binary, and hopes to bridge the unsettled feeling of being an “insider” and “outsider” that endlessly surrounding newcomers. Visitors are also invited to (re)explore their positionalities with newcomers and refugees through looking at the work from different perspectives.

Right opposite to the two photographs of flower arrangements, eight living floral assemblages are placed on the two shelves next to the gallery entrance and/or exit (see fig. 6). Its scents fill the room with a hint of calmness, welcoming as well as bidding goodbye to visitors.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



Figure 6. Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators,  
*Flower Arrangements* (2024), Installation View,  
 Photo by Darren Rigo

These flower arrangements were created at a flower arrangement workshop that was facilitated by two members from Waard Ward, right before the opening of the exhibition. Twelve Asian newcomers were gathered in the gallery to learn and connect through *Ikebana*. Translated as “making flowers come alive”, this act of flower arranging rejuvenates the life of cut flowers which presumably are dying since they are being uprooted from the plant.<sup>36</sup> When newcomers became the one who arranged the flowers, these gestures embodied a regaining of agency, having the power to establish themselves in this new country – “making themselves come alive”.

The practice of *Ikebana* also focuses on processes and asymmetrical balances, which speaks to the different ways that people can connect with one and other (see Fig. 7). For the first time, the workshop invited participants to arrange flowers not as individuals but in groups of two to three,

---

<sup>36</sup> These information are quoted and made reference to the Handout that was created by members of Waard Ward Collective, and distributed during the Flower Arrangement Workshop.

foregrounding the bonding between newcomers. All of the vessels that hold the flower arrangements were thrifted across Toronto with most of them originating from Asia, sharing the participants' experience of resettling in a foreign place. Situated across the room, the stark contrast between the "fresh flowers" in the photographs and the freshly arranged floral assemblages allows different diasporic realities to mesh and encounter within the same space: thrive and decay, past and present, ephemeral and permanence.

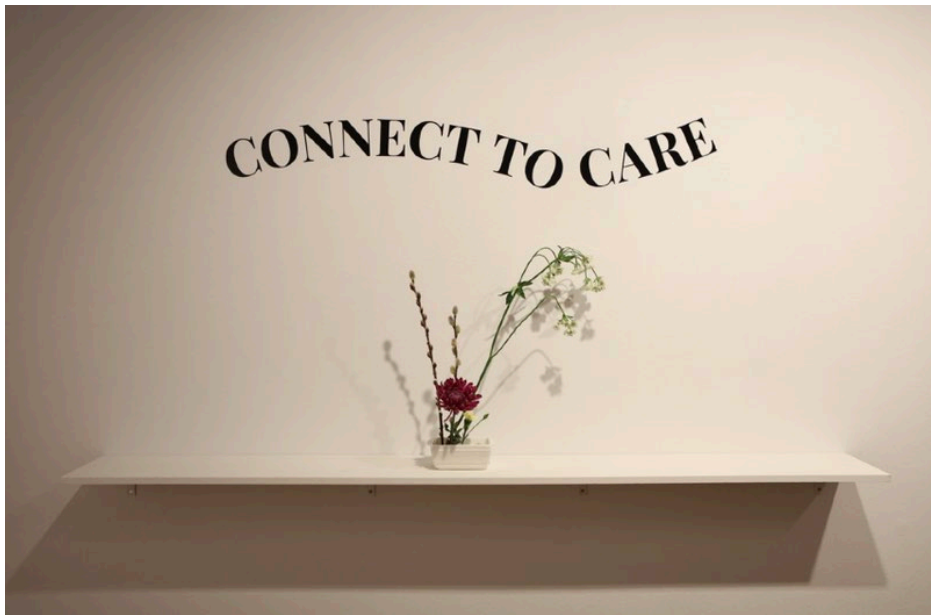


Figure 7. Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators,  
*Flower Arrangements* (2024),  
Photo by Anne Layacan

Apart from the flower arrangement workshop, a story-telling workshop was also organized, making space for 8 Asian newcomers & immigrants to connect through exploring, listening and attending to their own voices (see Fig. 8).



Figure 8. DIA, Asian newcomer collaborators,  
 “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop (2024),  
 Photo by Jennifer Chan

Through acts of writing and journaling, participants were offered opportunities to reflect on their resettlement experiences, relationships with languages and memories of home. While the workshop was primarily conducted in English in view of its diverse make-up, participants were also encouraged to write and express in their home language(s) as a gesture of honouring and embracing their identities and cultures that were once and perhaps still familiar to them. The workshop ended with an exercise to draft one’s own land acknowledgements. It hopes to expand the discussion and practice of ethical care not only with and for Asian newcomers, but also its relationality and responsibilities with the Indigenous communities, which is rarely discussed in the discourse of newcomer care.

## §

Care is embedded as the responsibilities of a curator, speaking to its etymological root of ‘curating’ in Latin as *cura* or care. While ways to care for objects and/or artworks are often touched upon in the

study of curatorial practice, ways to care for people and communities in accordance with care ethics is rarely a theme discussed upon and curated in a gallery setting. This curatorial project hopes to concretize and enact care ethics as a practice in the realm of newcomer care, and explore how acts of artmaking can contribute to that. Inspired by Austrian curator Elke Krasny's feminist care ethicist methodology of "curating-as-caring", which foreground connectedness and social interactions, this project also rejuvenates the role of curator in (re)activating gallery spaces as caring places for (re)building connections between Asian newcomers. This project embodies my journey of searching care as being part of the Asian newcomer communities, and my yearning to curate spaces that practice ethical care *about, with* and *for* newcomers, immigrants and other equity-seeking communities in Canada and beyond.

§

We invite you – connect to care.

## Exhibition Support Paper

### Introduction

This support paper provides a detailed recount of my research process, which brought forth the exhibition curation – *Connect to Care* (March 1 – 6, 2024) and two community workshops (March 1 & 5, 2024) that took place at OCAD U Graduate Gallery. This project started out as my own pursuit of care as an Asian newcomer. I wanted to get connected with people who looked like me, who shared similar experiences with me. Being also a curatorial student, I became curious to explore whether my pursuit of care is something in common that is shared among other Asian newcomers, and whether I could intersect this pursuit with my curatorial practice. That is how this project started. From research methodologies to care-full literature reviews, these processes helped substantiate and enrich my understanding on the concept of care and care ethics. Most importantly, these insights inspired me as a curator to (re)forge relationalities between the three seemingly non-related subject matters: ethical care, Asian newcomers, and artmaking. Looking at how care as a practice was (re)shaped by different artists and curators, I sought out contemporary art exhibitions and community programs that can help develop my curatorial thinking for this project. Ultimately, some of the key concepts that I identified in feminist care ethics through literature and exhibition reviews – attentiveness, empathy, reciprocity, relationship-building, community, collaborative spirit, equality – were consolidated and formed “the three principles of newcomer care ethics” that was outlined in the curatorial essay. This framework then became the backbone of this curatorial project. It shapes the selection of venue, choice of artists, spatial curation, and the planning of two community workshops.

## **Methodology**

To enrich and concretize my curation in exploring ethical care *about, with* and *for* Asian newcomers, I have mainly adopted and interweaved three qualitative approaches: (1) Interdisciplinary, (2) Ethnographic, and (3) Participatory.

I also surveyed different exhibitions, as well as literature that revolved around care and care ethics that speak to relationship- and connection-building among people. While they did not speak directly to Asian newcomers, they reoriented care as a relational practice among people.

### **Interdisciplinary Approach**

The biggest questions that I needed to crystallize at the forefront for this project are what is care and care ethics. As María Puig De La Bellacasa mentioned in her book, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human World*, care itself is a “contested” word, and it can mean different things to different people, in different situations.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, while concurring De La Bellacasa’s notion of “embracing these ambivalent grounds” of care, there is a need to study how care, and ways of care, is understood through different disciplines. Apart from investigating this through the lens of arts and cultural, and immigration and settlement studies that are directly related to this research, I was also eager to identify how they were interpreted in the domains of political theories, feminist studies, education studies, healthcare spectrum, more-than-human worlds and so forth. Comparing these different theorizations and perspectives of care and care ethics provided a more holistic picture for me to contextualize the definition of care and care ethics in the realm of Asian newcomers. The results of approaching these literatures through an interdisciplinary lens are summarized in the later section – Literature Review in this paper.

---

<sup>37</sup> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, “The Disruptive Thought of Care” in *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 1.



## **Ethnographic Approach**

Another key part of researching for this curatorial project is to inquire into the existing newcomer care and support programs, especially those targeted to Asian newcomers, in Canada.

Currently, there are minimal literature and publications on this subject matter, except for a limited number of official reports and/or documents produced by the government. They often only list out the different types of settlement programs, and their budget spending, instead of conducting critical evaluations and analysis. In view of this, I tried to understand the settlement programs through observing and conversing within the communities.

As an Asian newcomer myself, I often felt frustrated by not being able to find the care and support that I needed from the settlement programs put forward by the government and institutions. The care and support that would help forge friendships and a sense of belonging with communities in this new and foreign country. I wondered if other fellow Asian newcomers also shared this same feeling of unsettledness and loneliness and looked for alternative ways to care and support themselves.

My first entry point to collect these data is through reading the full library of *The Stories of Us*, which was created by the Department of Imaginary Affairs (DIA), one of the participating art collectives in the exhibition. These stories were written and told by newcomers as a reflective and English learning activity, recounting their everyday experiences, difficulties and needs while resettling in Canada. Looking specifically into the 87 stories narrated by Asian newcomers coming from different parts of the world, it was not difficult to find voices that resonated with my experience. Padma Priya Reddy, who was a Client Services Executive in India before moving to Canada, mentioned how the “services

that were available to [her] were not what [she] needed”, and how every immigrant was being “put in the same box” and “given a one-size-fits all treatment” when it comes to settlement support.<sup>38</sup>

Some storytellers also shared their struggles in finding communities and re-establishing themselves in this new country: “I lost my old friends and struggle to make new ones”<sup>39</sup> and “It’s hard to fit into a group of people when you look different or speak differently.”<sup>40</sup> These entailed the importance of newcomer care to expand and reorient their direction in supporting people to forge ties and connect with one another. This was exemplified when many of these storytellers found themselves with a sense of belonging only after they were (re)connected with communities. For instance, Bahareh felt settled in the country after she connected with other newcomer women and girls through YWCA Scarborough; Amal and Mohammad were able to find strong care and support through their fellow Arab and Bengali communities, easing their stress and home-sicknesses during their resettlement journeys.<sup>41</sup> These stories reiterated how connections, relationships and communities should be foregrounded in caring newcomers.

While these stories accentuated the need to reorient ethical care for newcomers, how artmaking could contribute to this process remained ambiguous to me. With the limited literature available, I decided to search for related programs that speak to ethical care for newcomers. Luckily, I came across the Newcomer Artist Training in Community Arts Facilitation that was offered by MABELLEarts as part

---

<sup>38</sup> Padma Priya, “The Stories of Us: Padma Priya’s Story”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2021), 8, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/padma-telugu-7/>.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Anonymous”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2020), 2, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/anonymous-chinese-youth-7/>.

<sup>40</sup> Seyon, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Seyon”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2020), 1, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/seyon-tamil-7/>.

<sup>41</sup> Bahareh, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Bahareh”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2021), 2, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/bahareh-persian-7/>; Dr. Amal, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Dr. Amal”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2020), 1, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/amal-arabic-7/>; Mohammad, “The Stories of Us: A Story by Mohammad”, *The Stories of Us* (The Department of Imaginary Affairs: 2021), 6, <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/mohammad-bengali-7/>.

of their Welcome to the Neighbourhood program in November 2023 and February 2024.<sup>42</sup> The program acknowledged the limitations of the current settlement sector in facilitating sense of belonging and connection, and believed artistic activities, especially community arts engagement, could help mediate that and assist newcomers to “broaden their social networks....and forge supportive relationships in the broader community”.<sup>43</sup> During the three sessions of training, I was able to connect and nurture friendships with a group of newcomers (most of them being Asians) through communal drawings, paintings, movement exercises and collaborating on speculative community arts projects. Through the processes of making art, we shared our difficulties in speaking English, securing jobs, maintaining our status in the country and so forth. I also found care and support from trivial things such as giving each other a ride home, sharing resources and supporting each other’s resettlement journeys. This experience epitomized how ethical care can be practiced, through artmaking, through an attentive, bottom-up, and reciprocal approach. It also inspired me, as a curator, to treat the gallery space not only as an exhibition space, but a place in cultivating relationships and connections for newly arrived individuals.

### **Participatory Approach**

As a curatorial project that foregrounds ethical care, it was crucial to (re)include authentic voices of Asian newcomers, which have been deterred from the existing newcomer care, to participate in this research. When considering the approach of involving Asian newcomers, it was intentional to avoid conducting direct interviews with them, in accordance with the principles set out by OCAD University Research Ethics Board (REB). Directly asking sensitive questions about newcomers’ experiences and challenges might inflict emotional harm and psychological risks. Therefore, with the approval of the REB, two community workshops were organized instead during the exhibition period, turning the gallery space into gathering places of tending to newcomers’ voices and needs, and forging

---

<sup>42</sup> “Welcome to the Neighbourhood,” *MABELLEarts*, <https://www.mabellearts.ca/wttn>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

relationships and connections. The capacity of both workshops was kept at around 10 to ensure participants have ample time and opportunities to meet and connect with one another.

The flower arrangement workshop, which was organized on March 1, 2024, received popular responses. Registration was closed after receiving 15 applications. 12 Asian newcomer collaborators ultimately attended, learning, and connecting through floristry in *Ikebana* style. Emphasizing collaborations, the flower assemblages were arranged collectively by 2-3 participants. The workshop led to the creation of eight flower arrangements that were to be displayed as works at the exhibition. Throughout the process, I saw participants connect with one another through exchanging ideas on the choice of flowers, greeneries, and vessels; I also heard conversations revolving around their duration and experiences of living in Canada. One of the participants, Melody Lam, expressed her joy of getting to know her flower-arranging partner, Tran Nguyen, while collaborating on the floristry work.<sup>44</sup> Another participant, who wished to stay anonymous, also shared how she felt grounded and received a sense of belonging within this community. She was contented as everyone in the workshop has similar experiences of resettling in Canada from Asia.<sup>45</sup> These testimonies not only enriched the research of how different ways of artmaking can connect newcomers together, but also envisaged radical interventions of gallery spaces in enacting ethical care.

Meanwhile, the story-telling workshop that was organized on March 5, 2024 intended to make space for newcomers to listen to, reflect on and share their experiences through creative and reflective writing. The workshop received 11 applications, with 8 participants showing up on the day. Facilitated by Jennifer Chen, the Co-founder & CEO of The Department of Imaginary Affairs, the participants were first invited to read and connect with the stories of Asian newcomers exhibited in the space and reflect

---

<sup>44</sup> These oral documentations came from speaking and conversing with participants during the Flower Arrangement Workshop. Approval from Research Ethics Board has been sought and only those whom I had consent with were included here.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

on how those narratives meant to them. Reading the stories and feeling the butterflies that hanged alongside the booklets, one of the participants, who wished to stay anonymous, created a poem in Cantonese as her reflection. One sentence in her poem was translated as: “Butterfly, Butterfly, even if you cannot fly, you are still beautiful”.<sup>46</sup> She explained how the butterfly here resembled herself as a newcomer. Through resonating to the stories that were told by other Asian newcomers, she was encouraged to embrace her identities, and reclaim her agency in living in this foreign country.<sup>47</sup> The second activity, “I am from”, in reverse, asked participants to relate back to their home country/city through responding to various poetry prompts in their first language. This part allowed time for participants to reconnect with their home, evoking the feeling of familiar, which often went missing in newcomers’ daily life. The workshop ended with the last activity – asking Asian newcomers to craft their own land acknowledgement. While the relationalities between Asian newcomers and Indigenous communities are not within the scope of this research, this writing activity served as an extended, open-ended invitation for participants to rethink ethical care in the lens of their responsibilities in this country.

---

<sup>46</sup> These oral documentations came from speaking and conversing with participants during the “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop. Approval from Research Ethics Board has been sought and only those whom I had consent with were included here.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## Exhibition Review

The three curatorial projects that I surveyed reorient care as a relational practice among people. Their programs were manifested in an affective, communal, and participatory approach, aiming to re-enact relationships, and connections across different communities. The curators and collaborators in these projects also contested gallery space as “white-cube”, and transformed them into community spaces of care, where people can collectively “restore, repair and heal the social fabric of society”.<sup>48</sup> The underpinnings from these three projects have collaboratively inspired and influenced my curatorial decisions for *Connect to Care*:

- (1) *Take Care* curated by Letters & Handshakes (an intermittent collaboration of Greig de Peuter and Christine Shaw) at The Blackwood Gallery (September 11, 2017 – March 10, 2018)
- (2) *Room for Taking Care* curated by Erica Cristobal at OCAD U Graduate Gallery (April 1 – 4, 2019)
- (3) *We are what we care for* conceived by Annie Wong at Gallery TPW (July 4 – 8, 2022)

*Take Care* was a collaborative and “connective project” between over 100 artists, activists, collectives, and researchers. Together they conducted a “transdisciplinary inquiry” into care, exploring its “heterogeneous and contested meanings, practices and sites” in five inter-related themes: Labour of Curation, Care Work, Infrastructure and Aesthetics of Mutual Aid, Stewardship and Collective Welfare.<sup>49</sup> Through a diverse array of public-engaging exhibitions, workshops, performances, community gatherings, this project pioneered the implications of art in the field of care, or more specifically, “crisis of care”. From these collaborative artistic activities, I saw not only the relations, but also possibilities of how artmaking and curation can invite diverse communities to rethink and practice ethical care. The choice of working with a vast number of groups and collectives from different

---

<sup>48</sup> Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg & Lena Fritsch, Introduction to *Radicalizing Care Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, et al. Elke Krasny (London: Sternberg Press, 2021), 23.

<sup>49</sup> Letters & Handshakes, Curatorial Statement on *Take Care*, The Blackwood Gallery, [https://content.blackwoodgallery.ca/media/pages/publications/take-care-overview/ab21390cee-1607101207/take-care\\_publication.pdf](https://content.blackwoodgallery.ca/media/pages/publications/take-care-overview/ab21390cee-1607101207/take-care_publication.pdf)

disciplines, for instance, Kwentong Bayan Collective, Onaman Collective, Cultural Workers Organize and EMILIAAMALIA, also instigated the reason why I collaborated with art collectives for this show, embodying care in relations to communities, for this show.

Exploring how care as a relational practice intersected with Asian diasporic identities, *Room for Taking Care* was a four-day participatory performance series and exhibition. The invited three artists – Amy Wong (with her son Rudi Wong), Nedda Baba and Ayumi Goto – introduced “performative forms of taking care that took root from their personal experiences,” and engaged viewers for a “dialogue on care” in the OCAD U Graduate Gallery.<sup>50</sup> Their work realigned the importance of viewers’ participation, where care can only be manifested relationally with their presence and actions in the performances. This thesis project, which shared the same venue with my show, inspired my curatorial planning in multiple ways: the importance of reciprocity in caring relations, which brought forth the two community workshops that foreground relationship-building among and for Asian newcomers; attentiveness to the practice of care in Asian diasporic context, which led to the choice of displaying works of decolonial storytelling and floristry; and the subversive nature of this gallery space, which encouraged me as a curator to rethink how this space could facilitate Asian newcomers reclaiming their agencies in the country through acts of artmaking.

The symposium *We are what we care for* first caught my attention in Summer 2022 while I was planning to explore care ethics for this thesis project. Comprised of panels, conversations, workshops and dinners, this five-day event invited artists, curators, and arts practitioners to “collectively dream” how different modalities of care can spark institutional transformations in the arts as a community instead of a sector.<sup>51</sup> While these conversations have enlightened my curatorial practice as someone who is new to Canadian art scene, I was intrigued by the space design created by artist Rihab Essayh.

---

<sup>50</sup>Erica Cristobal, “Room for Taking Care,” *MFA Thesis*, (OCAD University, 2019).

[https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/2853/1/Cristobal\\_Erica\\_2019\\_MFA\\_CCP\\_THESIS.pdf](https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/2853/1/Cristobal_Erica_2019_MFA_CCP_THESIS.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> “We Are What We Care For,” *Gallery TPW*, <https://www.gallerytpw.ca/we-are-what-we-care-for>.

Essayh created an immersive installation with layers of chiffon, where its colours resembled a sunset that was seen from the artist's window. Inviting visitors to rest with the installations, the gallery space exuded care, joy, warmth, and calmness. This experience inspired not only the curation of a community area in *Connect to Care*, but also the consideration of using fabrics for the photographs of *Flowers for*. All of which suggested ways of spatial curation conveying ethical care.



## **Literature Review**

Like what have mentioned in the section of Methodology, existing research on newcomers, let alone Asian newcomers, in the lens of ethical care, are minimal in the academic discourse. Not to mention how that could be practiced through artmaking. Therefore, to forge ties among these three themes, and create a more sounding basis for my curatorial planning, I tried to comprehend literature that fall into these three aspects: (1) principles of care ethics, (2) crisis of care, and (3) care ethics in artmaking and curating. Ultimately, I identified feminist care ethics as the epitomized philosophies and theories that informed this curatorial project.

### **(1) Principles of care ethics**

Care ethics has been widely discussed and explored in the last 50 years. It is often placed against the backdrop of education, healthcare, and domestic spheres instead of immigrants or racial relations in the broader societal context. To contextualize care ethics in the realm of newcomer care, I identified three feminist scholars among many, whose theories were particularly helpful in shaping my proposed framework of newcomer care ethics: Carol Gilligan, Joan Tronto and María Puig De La Bellacasa.

Gilligan as the first scholar who introduced care ethics in her ground-breaking book, *In a Different Voice* in 1982, suggested care as “an ethic grounded in voice and relationships, in the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully (in their own right and on their own terms) and heard with respect”.<sup>52</sup> She highlighted the need to practice care ethics with those who were marginalized or overlooked by traditional ethical theories.<sup>53</sup> This overarching theory formed the backbone of my understanding of care ethics in the first place. Meanwhile, Joan C. Tronto’s definition of care, as well as her “Five Phases of Care”, delineated a more solid and practical framework for me

---

<sup>52</sup> Carol Gilligan, “Carol Gilligan,” Interview by Webteam, *Ethics of Care*, July 8, 2018, <https://ethicsofcare.org/carol-gilligan/>.

<sup>53</sup> Sehta Bharti, “Theorizing Social Justice: In a Different Voice.” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 70, no. 1 (2009): 187, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856506>.

to understand the concept. As explained in the curatorial essay, my proposed three principles of newcomer care ethics are borrowed from Tronto's connotations of *caring about*, *caring for* and *caring with* in "Phases of Care".<sup>54</sup> For De La Bellacasa, her endeavour in "constantly reth[inking], contesting and enriching" care, especially studying care ethics with the posthuman and/or more-than-human worlds, grounded me not only with the fluid and complex nature of care, but also our caring relations with non-human: environment, animals, cyborgs and so forth.<sup>55</sup> While this curatorial project remained human-focused, it precisely works as one of the iterations of rethinking, contesting and enriching care ethics.

## (2) Crisis of Care

Acknowledging and understanding the existence of "Crisis of Care" helped trace some of the challenges and contradictions when (re)thinking newcomer care through an ethical lens. Two articles were introduced to me through surveying *Take Care* exhibition (more information will be available at Exhibition Review): Precaria a la Deriva's A Very Careful Strike – Four hypotheses, and Nancy Fraser's "Contradictions of Capital and Care".<sup>56</sup> They were particularly resourceful for me in navigating through the trajectories of care against the backdrop of the current capitalistic, neo-liberal society.

Both articles outlined a similar framework in explaining why care as a practice, or care work, has been systematically devalued and has existential crisis under the capitalism regime based on its gendered, underpaid and invisibilized nature. Precaria a la Deriva described them in the details through their "Four Elements of Crisis of Care" whereas Fraser explained these through her proposed "three regimes

---

<sup>54</sup> Joan C. Tronto, "An Ethic of Care," *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging* 22, no. 3 (1998): 15–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44875693>; Joan C. Tronto, "Why Personal Responsibility Isn't Enough for Democracy," in *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qgfvp>.

<sup>55</sup> de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, 24.

<sup>56</sup> Precarias a la Deriva, "A Very Careful Strike – Four Hypotheses", trans. Franco Ingrassia and Nate Holdren, 2005, <https://thecommoner.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Precarias-a-la-Deriva-A-Very-Careful-Strike.pdf>; Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," in *New Left Review* 100 (2016): 99-117, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii100/articles/nancy-fraser-contradictions-of-capital-and-care>

of social reproduction-cum-economic production in capitalism's history".<sup>57</sup> Both authors emphasized the need to radicalize and reorient care as practice to reimagine new or other possible ways of living, alleviating existential threats and social inequalities that happened around the world, especially after the pandemic. In here, care ethics, or "logic of care" that was proposed by Precaria a la Deriva was underscored as new ways in governing "our world": affective virtuosity, interdependence, transversality and everydayness.<sup>58</sup> These elements, which reminded me of Tronto's elements of care, were intended to abolish the gendered hierarchies that was set by the current capitalistic society, between social reproduction and economic production activities, and revolutionize the society "from valuing the accumulation of capital to valuing life".<sup>59</sup>

### **(3) Care ethics in relations artmaking and curating**

For this, I am in debt to two publications which provided an extensive breadth of practical case-studies, shedding light on how care ethics have continued to centre in the artistic practices of different artists and institutions around the world: *Care Ethics and Art*, edited by Jacqueline Milner and Gretchen Coombs and *Radicalizing Care: Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, edited by Elke Krasny, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Birgit Bosold and Vera Hofmann.<sup>60</sup> From performance to textile-based art, museum curation to public programs that happened outside institutions, both books are publications that I always referred to when I was lost in the world of care ethics. In particular, "Curating-as-caring" that was coined by Krasny also become the underlying spirit of my curatorial thinking: "works toward hope, joy, 'capacious imagination the ability to create community across social and economic justice struggles'".<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care".

<sup>58</sup> Precarias a la Deriva, "A Very Careful Strike – Four Hypotheses".

<sup>59</sup> Jacqueline Millner, "Care and Art — AWARE Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions," *AWARE Women Artists / Femmes Artistes*, September 07, 2021, <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/magazine/de-lart-et-du-care/>.

<sup>60</sup> Jacqueline Millner and Gretchen Coombs, *Care Ethics and Art* (New York: Routledge, 2021); Elke Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*.

<sup>61</sup> Krasny et al., *Radicalizing Care Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*, 11-12.

### Spatial Curation

*Connect to Care* took place in the Graduate Gallery at OCAD University. The venue was selected in relations to connecting with to my first community in the country as an Asian newcomer: my cohort at the CCP Program. I hope to share this space and community with my fellow Asian newcomers and re-activate it as a gathering place for visitors to rekindle with one another. The windows at the Graduate Gallery also prompted me to choose this space. During a site visit in 2022, I looked out from the windows, feeling the warm sunlight while observing people on the streets. I came to realize that this longing to connect with people on the street embodied a similar feeling of newcomers – wanted to reach out and connect with communities but always trapped by the invisible boundaries that were set by the mainstream society. Incorporating the two windows with the artwork became a way to resist and break those boundaries. This became my first curatorial impetus in the space, which led to the final placing of the two works from the series of *Flowers for* (2021) in front of the windows, inviting viewings from both inside and outside the galleries.

The number of works from the two art collectives were also carefully curated in even numbers, symbolizing principles of ethical care – reciprocity, equality, and collaboration: 14 Asian Newcomer stories, 2 photographs, 40 words in total on the wall-mounted quote (Chinese and English) and 8 flower arrangements. While there was no intention to develop a route for visitors to explore the exhibition, the pillar situated in the gallery often propels them to start viewing works from the left (facing the window). Recognizing this impulse, exhibition didactics and four flower assemblages were created on the left as a welcoming space for visitors (see fig. 9). They will be re-greeted by the similar setting when they bid farewell to the exhibition, except the didactics was replaced with the title of show (see fig. 10). It served more as a rhetoric question to ask visitors at the end of their visit, inviting reflections and reimaginings of new ways in connect and care for one another.



Figure 9. Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, *Flower Arrangements* (2024), Entrance View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



Figure 10. Waard Ward, Asian newcomer collaborators, *Flower Arrangements* (2024), Exit View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

Moving away from the “exhibitionist” approach, all the work in the space were curated with a participatory and reflective approach. Visitors were encouraged to touch, interact, smell, feel and sense the work. They were also invited to look into the mirror, which was mounted on the west side

of the gallery, where one can see the reflections of all the work that were placed in the gallery space. This hopes to reactivate not only interactions and relationships between the work and visitors, but also sensory experiences in gallery spaces.

A community space was also created on the east side of the gallery. It took inspiration from the resting area, which was, as mentioned, created by Rihab Essayh, for the *We are what we care for* Symposium at the Gallery TPW. This community area was curated with Asian cultural imperatives: sitting on the floor with cushions instead of chairs; incorporating books in Asian languages that talks about newcomers' experience (see fig. 11). For instance, one of the books in the pile was a Chinese-English phrase learning book that was produced by the Ministry of Ontario in 1980s (see fig 12). It taught English daily phrases to Chinese Newcomers. During the opening night, there was an occasion where I saw a grandma using the book, to teach her grandchildren Chinese instead. Surprisingly, I overheard that she, as a newcomer, 40 years ago, was also using this exact book to learn English.



Figure 11. Community Area, Installation View, Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



Figure 12. The Chinese-English Phrase Book that was produced in 1980s  
by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation,  
Photo by Jennifer Chan

## Postscript

This curatorial project began as my personal exploration of care and community as an Asian newcomer in Canada. Through working with the two newcomer-focused artist collectives and other newcomer collaborators, I was deeply inspired by how different practices of artmaking animate into caring acts for newcomers. These works not only preserved their dignity and agency, but also embodied the reciprocal and delightful connections that were made between newcomers who are in search of belonging in this new country. I found joy in curating these generative spaces that can (re)forge cross-cultural friendships, transcending differences in languages, cultures and lived experiences. Extending this project to newcomers with different ethnicities as well as other equity-seeking communities in Toronto and beyond have become one of my long-term curatorial interests.

Emerging also from this project, I hope to expand the scope of newcomer care to its relationalities with Indigenous communities. While newcomer care ethics remains an expansive area awaiting thorough research, it is also crucial to think about the role of newcomers and immigrants play in reconciling and establishing caring relations with Indigenous communities. During this project, I was given the opportunity to sit and reflect on my relationship with land acknowledgements, and learn to craft my own one. Awakening this consciousness becomes an act of care for Indigenous communities. My curatorial aspiration, thus, also include building bridges between newcomer and Indigenous communities, facilitating non-violent and dialogical ways of knowledge-exchange.

Ruminating the idea of curating as caring, this project also pushed my boundaries in thinking about alternative modes of curation – those that can decenter the power of curator, and reorient arts as a tool to build more accessible, cohesive and equitable communities. For this exhibition, I experimented working with collectives to accentuate the power of communities instead of individuals. This has now embedded as part of my curatorial practice foregrounding the spirits of collaboration and equity. I also seek to bring future iterations of this project to alternative spaces outside of the white-cube.



While the context of this project remains in a gallery as a deliberate gesture to gather newcomers who often have limited accessibility in these spaces, future iterations should happen within the communities, challenging the traditional definition of gallery and bringing forth social conversations and interactions. Experimenting its site-specificities at community-oriented locations, for instance, family restaurants and community gardens, with different forms and mediums of arts, are also embedded in me as acts of care of a curator.

Ultimately, forging meaningful conversations, interactions and friendships across different communities no longer only serve as my own search of care, but a lifelong curatorial pursuit.

## Bibliography

- Amal. "The Stories of Us: A Story by Dr. Amal." The Stories of Us. Last modified March 23, 2020. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/amal-arabic-7/.F>.
- Anonymous. "The Stories of Us: A Story by Anonymous." The Stories of Us. Last modified May 25, 2020. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/anonymous-chinese-youth-7/>.
- "Asian Heritage Month... by the numbers." *Statistics Canada*. Last modified January 6, 2023. [https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2021/smr08\\_250](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/dai/smr08/2021/smr08_250).
- Bahareh. "The Stories of Us: A Story by Bahareh." The Stories of Us. Last modified March 2, 2021. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/bahareh-persian-7/>.
- Bharti, Sehta, "Theorizing Social Justice: In a Different Voice." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 70, no. 1 (2009): 185-197. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856506>.
- Cristobal, Erica. "Room for Taking Care." Master of Fine Art's thesis, OCAD University, 2019. [https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/2853/1/Cristobal Erica 2019 MFA CCP THESIS.pdf](https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/2853/1/Cristobal_Erica_2019_MFA_CCP_THESIS.pdf).
- De La Bellacasa, Maria Puig. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1mmfspt.3>.
- Fischer, Bernice & Joan C. Tronto. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring." In *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, edited by Emily K. Abel & Margaret K. Nelson, 36-54. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990.
- Fraser, Nancy. "Contradictions of Capital and Care." In *New Left Review* 100 (2016): 99-117. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii100/articles/nancy-fraser-contradictions-of-capital-and-care>
- Gilligan, Carol. "Images of Relationship." *North Dakota Law Review* Vol. 81: No. 4, Article 2 (January 2005): 693-728. <https://commons.und.edu/ndlr/vol81/iss4/2>.
- "Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians." *Statistics Canada*. Last modified October 26, 2022. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.pdf?st=FIXzb2TW;>
- "Interview with Carol Gilligan," *Ethics of Care*, July 8, 2018. <https://ethicsofcare.org/carol-gilligan/>.
- Jounou, Iris Parra & Joan C. Tronto. "Care ethics in theory and practice: Joan C. Tronto in conversation with Iris Parra Jounou." *Contemporary Political Theory* (15 February 2024). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00680-6>.
- Kransy, Elke, Sophie Lingg, Lena Fritsch, Birgit Bosold & Vera Hofmann eds. *Radicalizing Care Feminist and Queer Activism in Curating*. London: Sternberg Press, 2021.
- Langevang, Thilde, Rashida Resario, Ana Alacovska, Robin Steedman, Dorothy Akpene Amenuke, Sela Kodjo Adjei & Rufai Haruna Kilu. "Care in creative work: exploring the ethics and aesthetics of care through arts-based methods." *Cultural Trends*, 31:5 (2022). 448-469.

- Letters & Handshakes. "Take Care." The Blackwood Gallery.  
[https://content.blackwoodgallery.ca/media/pages/publications/take-care-overview/ab21390cee-1607101207/take-care\\_publication.pdf](https://content.blackwoodgallery.ca/media/pages/publications/take-care-overview/ab21390cee-1607101207/take-care_publication.pdf)
- Millner, Jacqueline. "Care and Art — AWARE Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions." *AWARE Women Artists / Femmes Artistes* (September 07, 2021).  
<https://awarewomenartists.com/en/magazine/de-lart-et-du-care/>.
- Millner, Jacqueline & Gretchen Coombs. *Care Ethics and Art*. London: Routledge, 2021.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003167556>.
- Mohammad. "The Stories of Us: A Story by Mohammad". The Stories of Us. Last modified June 10, 2021. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/mohammad-bengali-7/>.
- Morelli, Didier. "Nicolas Fleming, Darren Rigo & Waard Ward," *Esse* Issue 104: Collectives, (Winter 2022). 58-61.
- Moskop, Wynne Walker. "Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice, by Joan C. Tronto." *American Political Thought* 4, no. 2 (2015): 350-354. <https://doi.org/10.1086/680427>.
- "Nearly one in four people in Canada are immigrants, the highest proportion of the population in more than 150 years." *Statistics Canada*. Last modified October 26, 2022.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/g-a001-eng.htm>
- "Neither Fortunes nor Flowers Last Forever." *Petrina Ng*. <https://www.petrinang.com/nfnf-workshop-1>.
- "Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan." Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Last modified November 1, 2023.  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2024-2026.html>
- O'Brien, Jennifer. "Finding community, fighting loneliness a challenge for newcomers," *CBC News*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-immigrants-1.6820685>
- Precarias A la Deriva. "A Very Careful Strike – Four Hypotheses". Translated by Franco Ingrassia and Nate Holdren. 2005. <https://thecommoner.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Precarias-a-la-Deriva-A-Very-Careful-Strike.pdf>;
- Priya, Padma. "The Stories of Us: Padma Priya's Story." The Stories of Us. Last modified June 23, 2021. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/padma-telugu-7/>.
- Robinson, Fiona. *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999.
- Schaffer, Talia. "Care Communities: Ethics, Fictions, Temporalities." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (July 2019): 521-542. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-7616139>.
- "Settlement Program." Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Last modified October 24, 2023. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/program-terms-conditions/settlement.html>

Seyon. "The Stories of Us: A Story by Seyon." *The Stories of Us*. Last modified November 15, 2020. <https://dia.space/mdocs-posts/seyon-tamil-7/>.

Stick, Max, Feng Hou & Lisa Kaida. "Self-reported loneliness among recent immigrants, long-term immigrants, and Canadian born individuals." *Statistics Canada's Economic and Social Reports*. 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021007/article/00001-eng.htm>.

"The Stories of Us." *The Department of Imaginary Affairs*. <https://dia.space/projects/the-stories-of-us/>

Tronto, Joan C. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. New York: NYU Press, 2013. 46-64.

Tronto, Joan C. "Creating Caring Institutions: Politics, Plurality, and Purpose." *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 4:2, (2010): 158-171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2010.484259>.

Tronto, Joan C. "An Ethic of Care," *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging* 22, no. 3 (1998): 15–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44875693>

Tronto, Joan C. *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Vittachi, Nury. *Hong Kong: The City of Dreams*. Singapore: Periplus, 2007.

"We Are What We Care For." *Gallery TPW*. <https://www.gallerytpw.ca/we-are-what-we-care-for>.

"Welcome to the Neighbourhood." MABELLEarts. <https://www.mabellearts.ca/wttn>

## Appendix A: Artists Biographies

### The Department of Imaginary Affairs (DIA)

@dia\_space | [dia.space](http://dia.space)

The Department of Imaginary Affairs (DIA) is a national non-profit working to imagine equitable futures. We work to centre, elevate, and amplify to stories, living experiences, perspectives, ideas and ideally decision-making practices of Newcomers, Immigrants and Refugees and Youth (especially those who self-identify as Black, Indigenous and People-of-Colour) in order to co-design more empathetic programs, policies and services.

We design artifacts of the future. Through the design and implementation of these artifacts, we can discover why these artifacts didn't previously exist and what they would need to thrive and survive.

### Waard Ward in collaboration with Nicolas Fleming & Darren Rigo

[waardward.com](http://waardward.com)

Waard Ward's name proposes the idea of a diasporic flower district; "waard" is a romanization of the Arabic word for flower.

The contemporary arts collective collaborates in floristry, decolonial research and newcomer support. They create floral arrangements, build community gardens, support mutual aid networks, and invite newcomers to train as florists and imagine social-entrepreneurial futures.

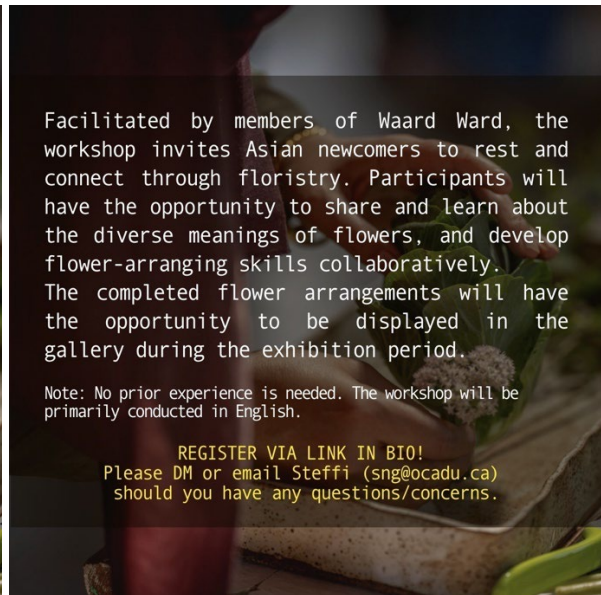
Waard Ward is collectively led by Syrian florist Abd Al-Mounim, community organizers/Syrian newcomers Hanen Nanaa and Shoruk Alsakni, educator Laura Ritacca, curator/educator Patricia Ritacca, and artist Petrina Ng.

The 2021 workshops which led to the series *Flowers for* was also collectively shaped by Nicolas Fleming, who designed and built a site and project-specific environment turned floristry teaching studio (where the photographs were taken); Darren Rigo, who documented the floral assemblages and installations; and other collaborators who brought their knowledge and skills to enrich the process.

## Appendix B: Thesis Photo Documentation

### 1. Call for Participants: Flower Arrangement Workshop

Promotional posts seeking participants for the Flower Arrangement Workshop on March 1, 2024. The completed flower arrangements will be displayed in the gallery during the exhibition period. The workshop is facilitated by two Waard Ward members, Patricia Ritacca and Hanen Nanaa.





## 2. Flower Arrangement Workshop Documentation

A collection of images during the flower arrangement workshop, which was facilitated by two Waard members, Patricia Ritacca and Hanen Nanaa.

Photos by Anne Layacan







### 3. Collaborative Flower Arrangement Work Created by Workshops Participants

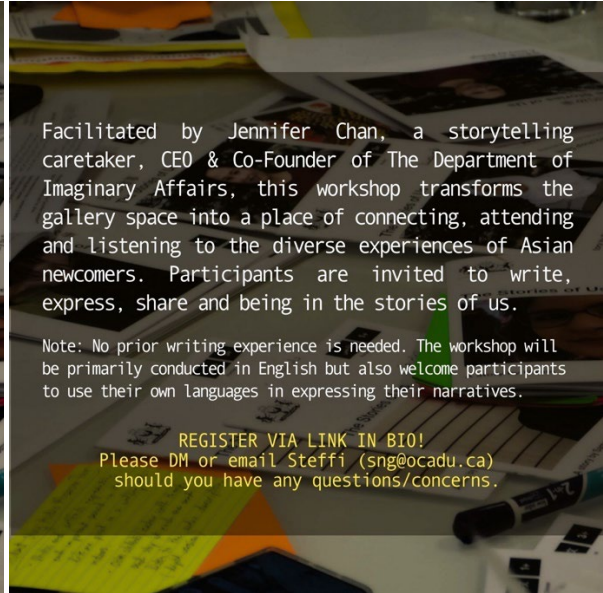
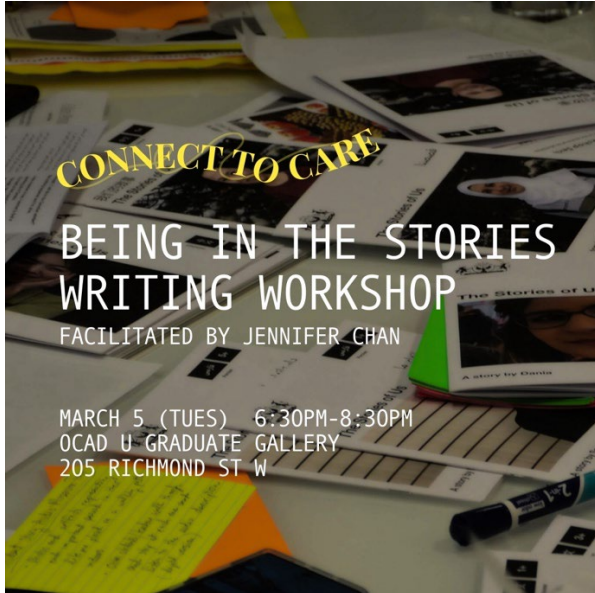
Taken immediately after the workshop on March 1, 2024, these collaborative flower arrangements were displayed besides the gallery entrance. They are collaboratively created by in *Figure 10* (from left to right): Melody Lam & Tran Nguyen, Florence Lai & Eden Tsang, Florence Lai & Eden Tsang, two participants who wish to remain anonymous; in *Figure 11* (from left to right): Yoyo Wong & participant who wish to remain anonymous, Josephina Wong & participant who wish to remain anonymous, Eddy Lee & Perihan, Eddy Lee & Perihan.

Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



#### 4. Call for Participants: “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop

Promotional posts seeking participants for the “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop on March 5, 2024. The workshop was facilitated by Jennifer Chan, CEO & Co-Founder of The Department of Imaginary Affairs.



## 5. “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop Documentation

A collection of images taken during the “Being in the Stories” Writing Workshop, which was facilitated by Jennifer Chan, CEO & Co-Founder of The Department of Imaginary Affairs.

Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

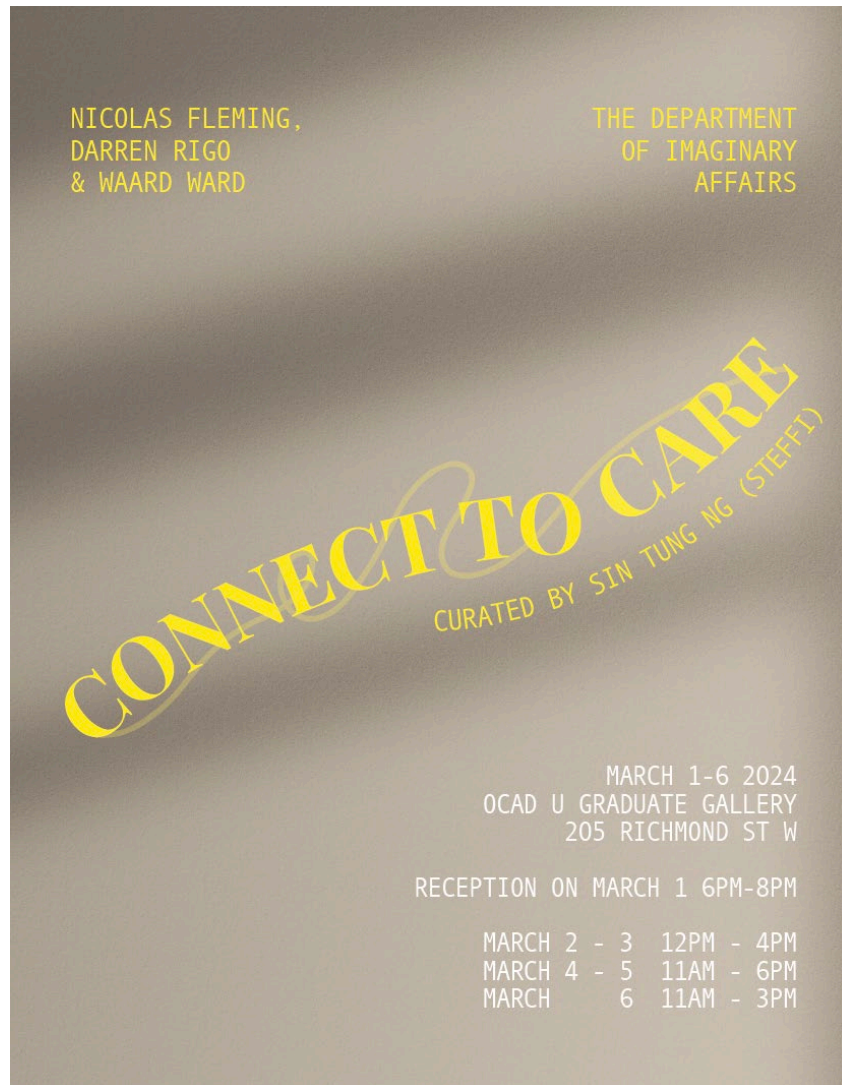






**6. Connect to Care Exhibition Promotional Materials**

An exhibition poster promoting the curatorial exhibition for *Connect to Care: Exploring Ethical Care about, for and with Asian Newcomers through artmaking*, which took place at OCAD U Graduate Gallery.



**7. The Exhibition Entrance of *Connect to Care* (outside of the gallery)**

Exhibition title, alongside participating artists and curator's name were printed in vinyl on the wall outside OCAD U Graduate Gallery. A green bench is placed beneath the title with one of the flower arrangements that was completed during the workshop. It was titled "Toronto".

Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



## 8. The Exhibition Entrance of *Connect to Care* (inside of the gallery)

Curatorial essay was mounted on the wall for visitor reference, with four flower arrangements placed on the shelf beneath. The flowers decayed in this image as they were taken on the fourth day (March 4, 2024) of the exhibition.

Photo by Laiken Breau





## 9. Installation View of the Exhibition

A collection of images showing how displayed works are connected in the gallery space.

Photos by Darren Rigo & Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)





### 10. Documentation of Installation - *Stories of Us* (2018 – ongoing)

A collection of images showing the details of the installation – *Stories of Us*, an ongoing newcomer story-telling project created by the Department of Imaginary Affairs.

Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi) & Laiken Breau







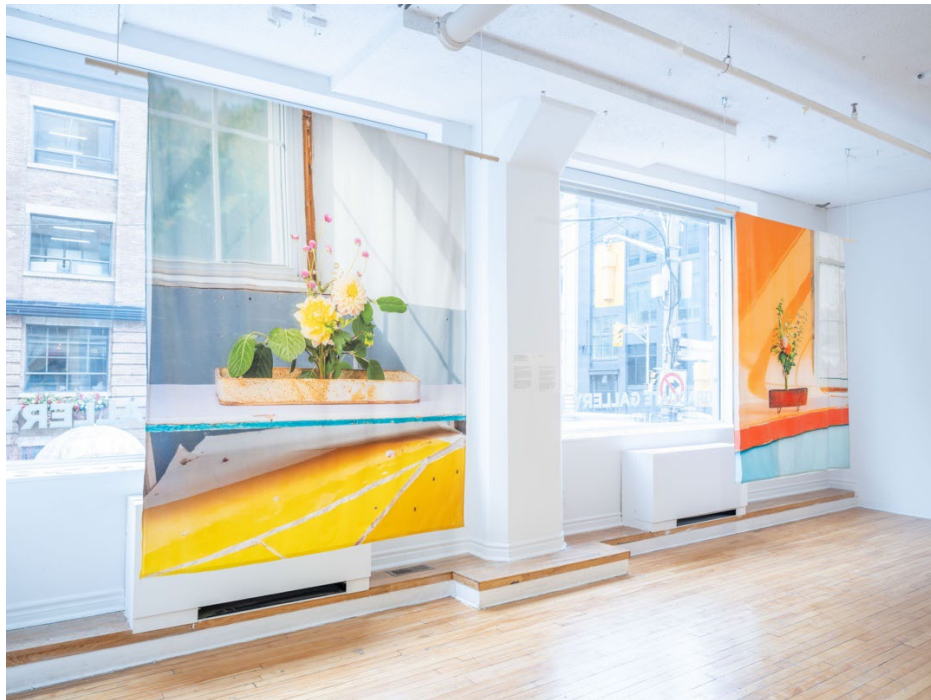




### 11. Documentation of *Flowers for* (2021) (in gallery)

A collection of images showing the installation view and details of *Flowers for Anesian Issa* (left), *Flowers for Sajeda Almarad* (right), created by Waard Ward in collaboration with Nicolas Fleming and Darren Rigo.

Photos by Darren Rigo



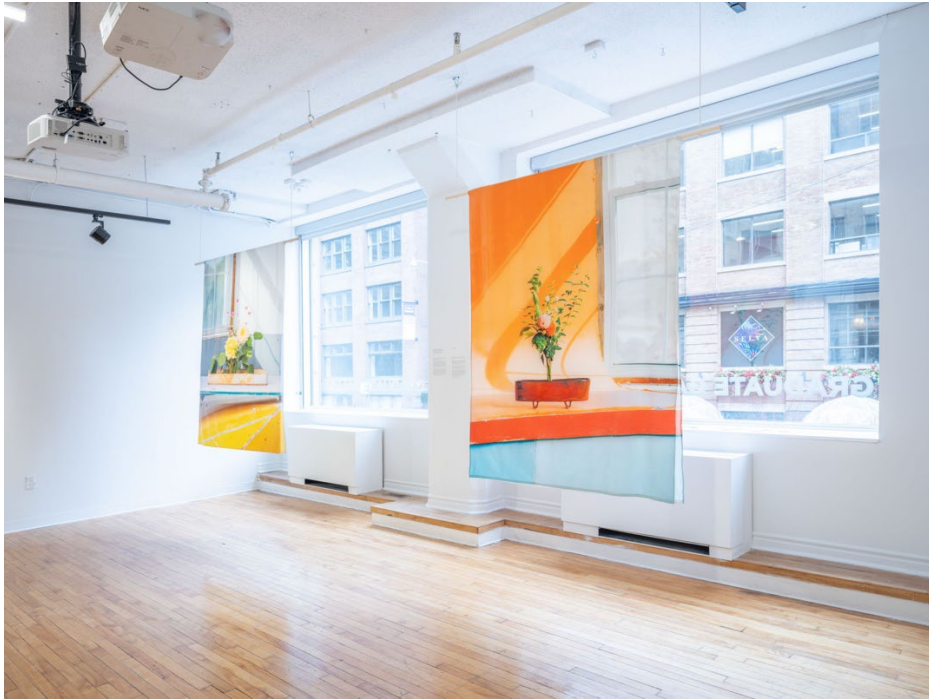


Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



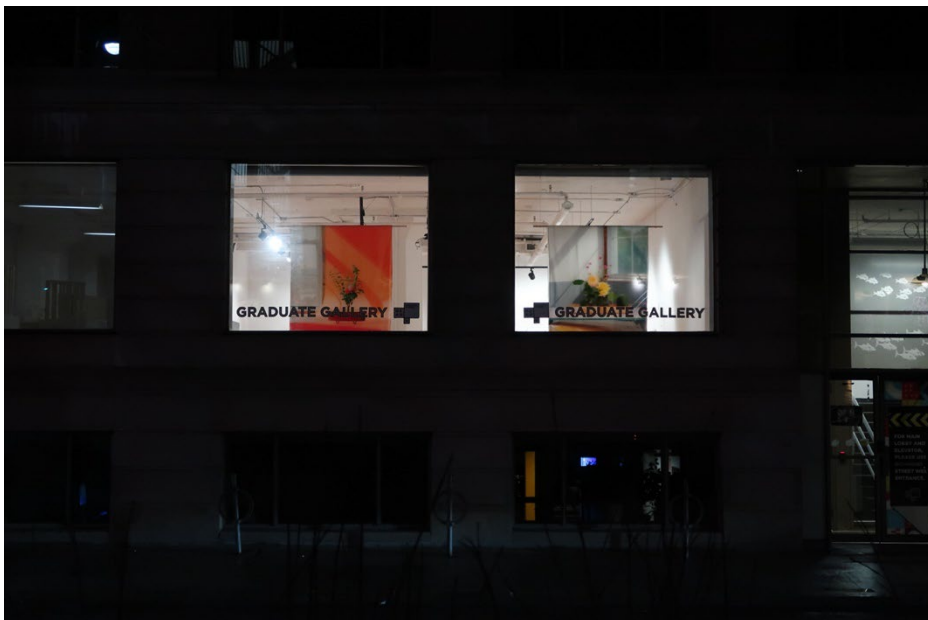
## 12. Documentation of *Flowers for* (2021) (outside of gallery)

A collection of images showing the outdoor view of *Flowers for Anesian Issa* (left), *Flowers for Sajeda Almarad* (right), created by Waard Ward in collaboration with Nicolas Fleming and Darren Rigo.

Photo by Darren Rigo



Photo by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)





### 13. Documentation of the Wall-mounted Quote from *A Story by Zhenyi* (2019)

A collection of images showing the different perspectives of viewing the wall-mounted quote extracted from *A Story by Zhenyi*, one of stories from “The Stories of Us” project.

Photos by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

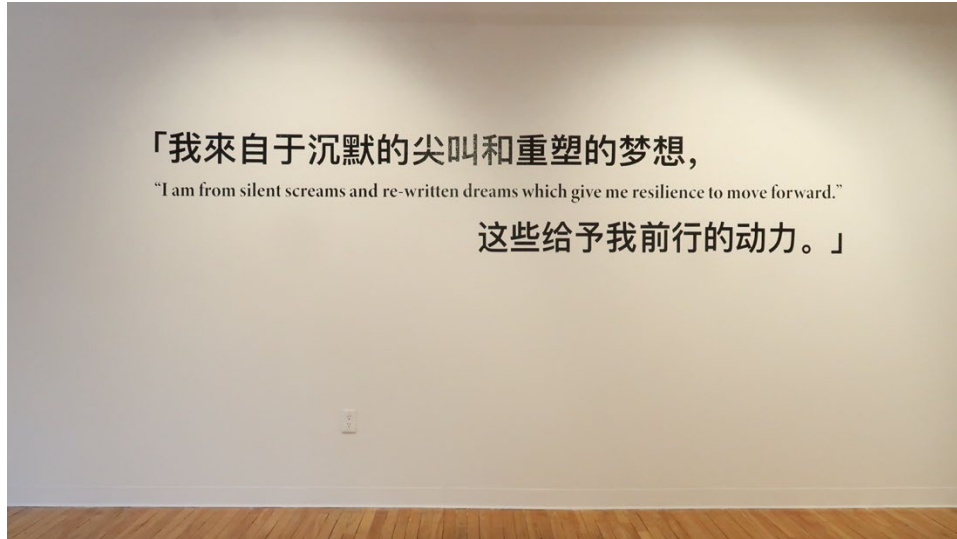


Photo by Laiken Breau



#### 14. Documentation of the Community Space

A collection of images showing the detailed set-up of the community space: four seating cushions, a small table with the demonstrated flower arrangements created by the two members of Waard Ward, books and magazines that informed my research, and a 40" TV playing the photo documentation of the flower arrangement workshops.

Photos by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)



## 15. Documentation of the Flower Arrangements

A collection of images documenting the changes of the flower arrangements that were displayed on the shelves throughout the exhibition period.

Photos on March 1 by Anne Layacan, March 4 by Laiken Breau, and March 6 by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

Flower Arrangements on March 1, 2024:



Flower Arrangements on March 4, 2024:



Flower Arrangements on March 6, 2024:





## 16. Documentation of Visitors Interactions

A collection of images capturing visitors at the Opening Reception on March 1, 2024, and other occasions when they were interacting with the works in the space.

Photos by Sin Tung Ng (Steffi)

### Opening Night



Shots During the Exhibition Period

