



THIS IS THE
BROCHURE FOR

FLOURISHING

AN EXHIBITION
SERIES BY

TANGLED
ART GALLERY

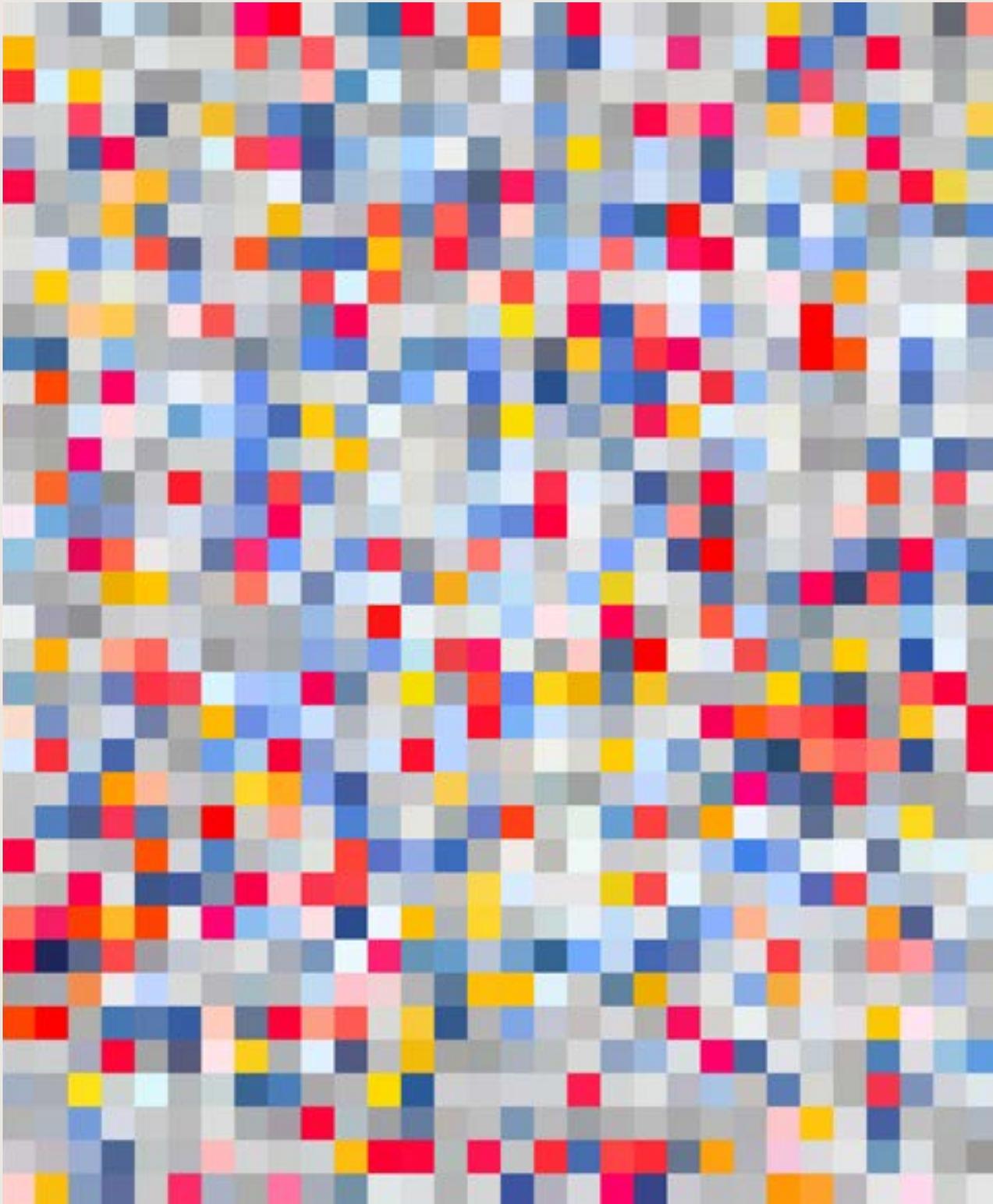


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WELCOME

Welcome to Flourishing, a series of commissioned exhibitions by Tangled Art + Disability

In early 2018, Tangled Art + Disability invited seven artists from across the country to respond to the theme of “Flourishing”. Altogether, their works constitute a new exhibition series that is part of a larger, multi-partnered initiative entitled “Human Flourishing in Worlds of Frailty and Suffering”. The larger project, led by the Canadian Association of Community Living, responds to Canada’s new Medical Assistance in Dying policy or MAiD. Within this context, the Flourishing exhibition is tasked with providing a Disability-centered perspective about the value and quality of human life.

Engaging with these exhibitions provides an opportunity to reflect on our cultural understanding of disability and how we experience the world. These artists have embraced their unique creative process to deconstruct barriers associated with Madness, Deafness and Disability. In so doing, they expose their flaws, fears, strengths, and aspirations. Their voices, presented both in solo cadence and choral harmony, substantiate and celebrate acts of justified creation, dignity, equality, understanding, and inclusion as a basic human right.

The work presented in Flourishing thus offers unique insight and emotional response to a topic that is - literally - of life and death significance. Creating the space for art in such discourse validates the importance of self-expression and creativity for both personal and social well being. Tangled is grateful for the opportunity to support these talented artists in developing their craft while contributing to such a pivotal societal conversation.

In trying to understand what Flourishing is, we at Tangled have arrived at a place of learning while unlearning, embracing an exploratory process where each individual can define the term for themselves. It is with this understanding and openness we are happy to share with you the Flourishing series, exactly as it wants to be expressed.



FLOURISHING: SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED

As our understandings of disability shift, we must consider how our definitions of the surrounding world must also shift. FLOURISHING: SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED evokes new dynamics of the disabled experience in its attempts to re-world the narratives of non-normative futures of embodiment. Featuring the work of Sarah Ferguson, Peter Owusu-Ansah, and Salima Punjani, each artist's lived experiences ground the starting point from which they explore their own version of flourishing.

SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED is more inquiry than proclamation. The three featured artists do not present simple answers but rather, transform the gallery into a forum unfolding debate within themselves, with each other, and with the audience.

Ferguson's work explores the Trans experience; how Trans individuals embody themselves and their environments. Owusu-Ansah's work as a Deaf artist seeks to deepen audiences' perception of visual art, and understanding of how Deaf folks navigate a hearing world. Punjani's work asks audiences to interact with their bodies and their surroundings in new contextual ways. Each artist uses their work as a springboard for us to challenge our understandings of bodies, both our own and those of others.



SARAH FERGUSON

SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED

September 7 - October 19, 2018

“As a genderqueer/trans person, the issue of how to represent myself, despite my “female” sexed body and its implications consumes me. Invisible forces related to mental illness and non-neurotypical ways of being compound this issue. Art provides a means.”

The desire to represent the self is the central theme of Ferguson’s art practice. Using masks and props, Ferguson dialogues with notions of the monstrous to give shape to invisible difference. Their series of photographs revolves around notions of camp, drag, and the abject, and relates to interactions with transgender and disability theory that forms the basis of Ferguson’s doctoral research at York University. Sarah’s representational approach is informed by one subject: their attempts to confront concepts of “high functioning” and assumed femininity. By externalizing invisible difference through the monstrous, Ferguson gives it agency. Art can be a vehicle for solving the problem of representation, by providing a means to transcend a cisgendered, heteronormative, neurotypical society.

“To restate, my physical being is limited or unable to articulate my identity, or my disability. It is equally limited by its capacity to express interior states.”

Photographs and other art forms offer a greater range of representations and possibilities. They are images freed from the body and social codes, and can represent momentary states. Ferguson’s photographs illustrate how the art object and its reception can hope to disrupt the restrictive assumptions that Western society imposes on an individual.



THIS IS SARAH FERGUSON

Sarah Ferguson has been a practicing artist since 1996 and received their BFA from the University of Regina in 2001. They graduated with an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies (Visual Art and Women’s and Gender Studies) from the University of Regina in 2017. Currently, they are pursuing their PhD in Women’s and Gender Studies at York University. Their artistic explorations revolve around socio-political issues, including feminism, gender, queer issues, the body, surrealism, and psychoanalysis. Sarah has worked with a variety of media, ranging from computer-based works and readymades, to paintstick, graphite, and digital collage. Currently, their work revolves around hybridized notions of photography, sculpture, installation, music, and performance involving the psyche, the body, activism, and queer theory. They are also a published poet and writer, hold a degree in journalism, and have worked as a political, legal, military, and arts writer in four different provinces over the past decade.

PETER OWUSU-ANSAH

SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED

September 7 - October 19, 2018

"The next great thing is always needing to be revealed. The world is always hunting for it."

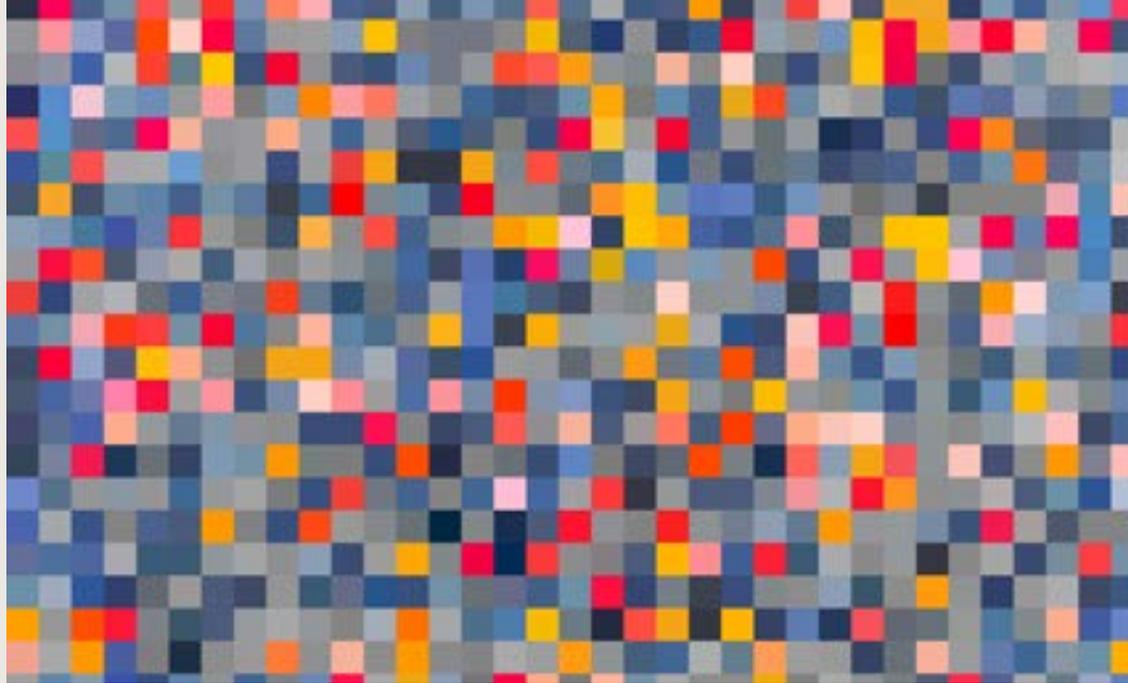
As a Deaf visual artist, Peter Owusu-Ansah feels hurt by how little to nothing the world, controlled by hearing and ableist notions, does to recognize the achievements of Deaf people.

Owusu-Ansah has felt a need to do something about these notions, even though he himself still faces many barriers. His work is created with the hope that when the viewer sees it, it will be ingrained into their mind - so that when they are searching for the greatest colors they have experienced, these are the works that appear in their memories.

Owusu-Ansah wants to feel connected to the world as a human being and this desire drives him to create. He believes that creating a work of art that evokes an honest emotional reaction in another person is a way to transcend the limitations of words alone.

"I am more observant of the world than I am of words."

Using photoshop to create color grids, Owusu-Ansah selects and isolates the the best areas. He then recreates the color grid with the cropped areas and then crops the best areas again. He continues this process of recreating and cropping until there is nothing for him to imagine that is greater to see.



THIS IS PETER OWUSU-ANSAH

Born in Ghana and based in Toronto Ontario, Peter Owusu-Ansah is a self-taught visual artist. At the age of twenty six, he had a flashback of his childhood, to how he had always been creative: drawing and making crafts with cans. He remembered how he saw the world and that he did not understand it from spoken words. He then began to be creative again. His goal as an artist was to express the excitement that comes out of seeing an image itself. He has experimented with painting, street photography, as well as pop art. He has shown his photography in and outside of Toronto. Although thankful for the experience, he wasn't satisfied and wanted to do something big that included the Deaf community, as he saw that they had typically been left out. He believes it is important for the world to know something about Deaf people, and to realize they are not here to just watch, they must create, and they must be reflected. For many years, Peter observed and read about the art world, searching for the right inspiration worthy of his time and creative energy. Then, in 2009, he zoomed in on a piece of his pop art work, and discovered with amazement a hidden world of intricate colorful pixels. He began to use photoshop to create interactive color works as an experiment. Today, Peter makes what he refers to as the greatest color work ever.

SALIMA PUNJANI

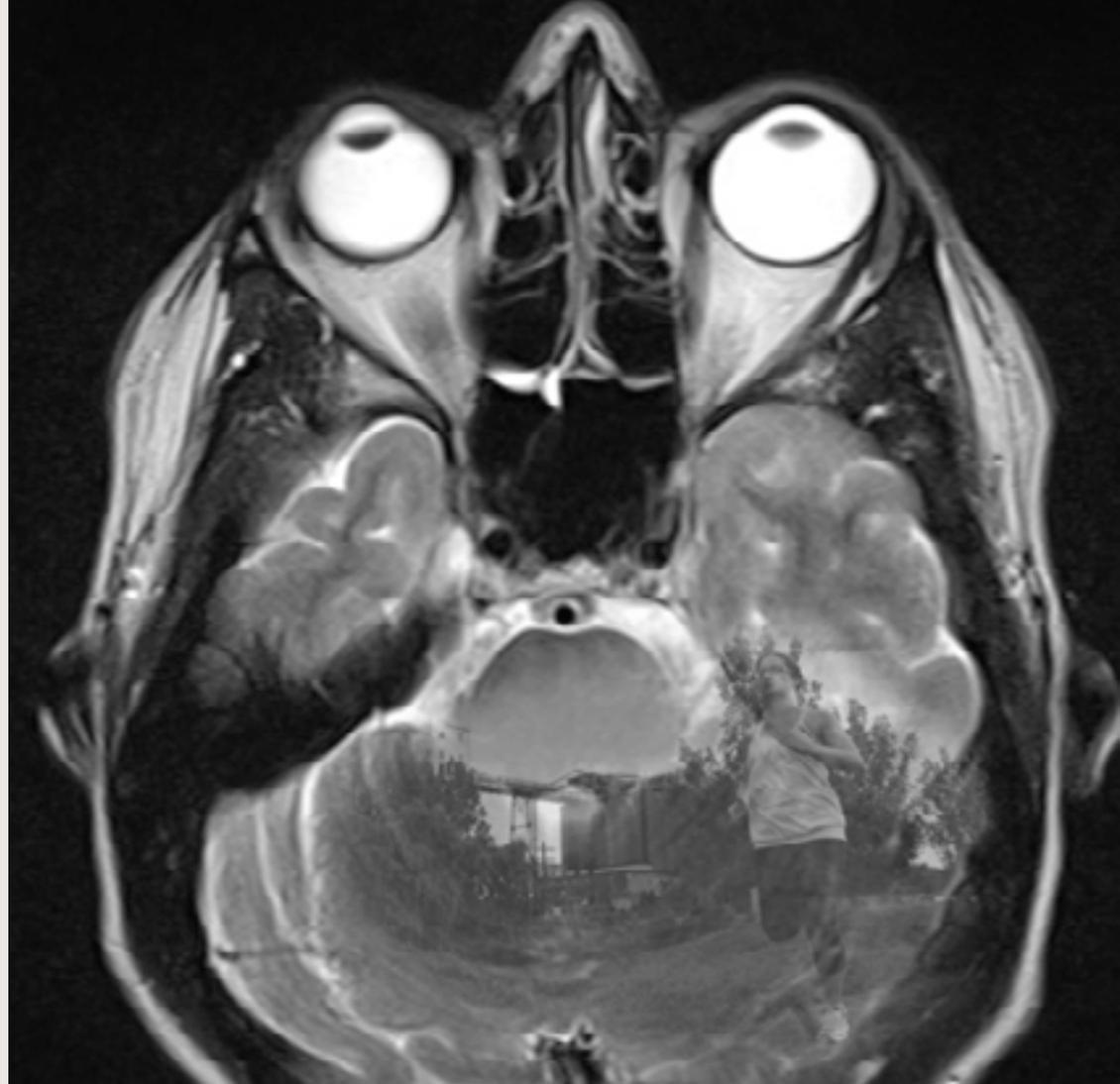
SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED

September 7 - October 19, 2018

As a disabled storyteller and social artist, Salima Punjani often thinks about the question: How can we create meaningful human connections without over-emphasizing or ignoring health and social challenges? What resulted was Progression, an interactive multi sensory installation reflecting the stories that people living with multiple sclerosis wanted to share.

Hyper aware of the stigma and gaze of pity associated with the illness, Punjani used to keep her diagnosis a secret. She wanted to create an opportunity for people living with multiple sclerosis to reclaim and define their own narratives. When creating Progression, she asked people how they would like to be seen. Working together, they developed a portrait which she framed with MRI scans of each participant's brain. From dealing with cognitive decline and unpredictability to navigating the dating world, each participant had agency over their story.

Agency and interaction are essential elements in Punjani's work today. With the desire for the audience to play an active role in their own experience of the exhibition, we invite you to connect with the stories, vibrations and sensations in Progression in whatever way feels best for you.



THIS IS SALIMA PUNJANI

Salima Punjani is a social artist based in Montreal, Quebec. She is interested in using multimedia storytelling to explore the intersections between science and art. Her recent projects include Konbit Anba Soley, an interactive documentary exploring a social movement in Cité Soleil, Haiti, as well as Moms of Montreal, a photographic storytelling project that provides an intimate glimpse into the lives, recipes and stories of different families in Montreal. A key element in Salima's recent work is ensuring people actively participate as both subjects and viewers. Her work has been exhibited in Quebec City, Montreal, Vancouver, Ethiopia, and Japan.

ART SPIN HOLDING PATTERNS

As part of FLOURISHING, Tangled is proud to be partnering with Art Spin to present Aislinn Thomas' THREE WINDOWS, at Art Spin's exhibition Holding Patterns. Art Spin is a Toronto based organization that creatively mediates relationships between the art community and the general public. The primary goal of their events is to produce new creative content in alternative venues and to bridge the gap between the art world and the general public. Their events aim to be accessible, inviting and fun, while also being educational, critically engaging and thoughtfully curated. Art Spin is driven by a strong sense of commitment and passion for presenting contemporary artworks in alternative, everyday spaces in order to make its audience's experiences with art more engaging and exciting.

Art Spin's Holding Patterns will take place in a storage locker facility located in Toronto's south Junction neighbourhood from October 11 - October 21, 2018, animating a series of storage locker units with a wide array of art projects. Recognizing the shifts, upheavals and transience that storage lockers often suggest, Holding Patterns will explore movement, space, belonging, material culture, and transition as themes that animate personal narratives and histories of place more broadly.

"These issues are particularly important for artists with lived experiences of site-lessness, displacement, or exclusion."

The partnership between Art Spin's Holding Patterns and Tangled Art Gallery's FLOURISHING, offers a unique opportunity to contemplate the relationships between belonging and exclusion, flourishing and suffering, how these human conditions exist in both harmony and in opposition, and how these conditions are integral parts of our collective lived experiences.



AISLINN THOMAS

THREE WINDOWS: FLOURISHING

October 11 - October 21, 2018

Aislinn Thomas' THREE WINDOWS seeks to playfully reclaim domestic space as a site of imagination and possibility. For this exhibition, she creates a video installation from footage taken of three windows in her apartment. Over the duration of the video the curtains move gently in and out. At times the movement is barely perceptible, at others it is sudden and vigorous. We hear the sounds of the curtains being sucked against the window screen as well as the ambient sounds of her own neighbourhood. Thinking of windows as thresholds between domestic space and the rest of the world, a site of permeability, exchange and chance, Aislinn remarks that the movement of the curtains and faint glow of light is oddly mesmerising.

While making this piece, Aislinn thought about how we ascribe value to a human life. So often a person's sense of worth and belonging comes from what they do, make, earn and contribute. These videos wonder if a more receptive mode of being might also be of value, if there is meaning in simply observing what is around us, taking in and bearing witness to the play of sensation that is right here, right now.

Aislinn invited three writers, Anna Bowen, Laura Burke and Catherine Frazee, to respond to the videos by translating them into spoken language, creating an alternative audio description that functions as a piece in itself. Described video by nature is to-the-point, missing visual detail that are not essential to the narrative and action. The sense is that these women's voices will make tangible another threshold -- that between a person's inner life and their external surroundings.



THIS IS AISLINN THOMAS

Aislinn Thomas is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice includes video, performance, installation, and text-based work. Culling material from everyday experiences and relationships, she explores themes of vulnerability, empathy, possibility, and failure. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. She is also the recipient of several grants and awards, including a C.D. Howe Scholarship for Arts and Design, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Masters Scholarship, in addition to grants from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. Thomas currently lives in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

FLOURISHING: SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC

FLOURISHING: SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC is the second exhibition in this series, featuring Maanii Oakes and Richard Harlow. Hailing from opposite sides of the country, these two artists converge to present work illustrating the inescapable impact of one's environments, natural and human. SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC offers the audience glimpses into the artists' efforts to navigate potentially overwhelming terrain, negotiating their own versions of landscapes in which they are able to thrive. We can never truly escape our past or the forces that have brought us to the here and now, but perhaps in looking honestly and unflinchingly at who and where we are, we open ourselves up to the potential of co-creating of what will be.

Drawing from the senses to invigorate new ways of experiencing visual art, this joint exhibition embodies an interdependent exchange of processes that uproot the narrative of the gallery setting. Oakes uses the performance of skin stitching and handpoke tattooing, as well as sculpting with artificial red and black sinew sewn through raw deer hide. Harlow uses painting to evoke and invite new sensations through touch. The two met for the first time at the Flourishing artist retreat in Halifax and quickly connected as artists and friends. What started as a reciprocal interest in each other's disparate experiences progressed to sharing sculptural painting techniques and Indigenous teachings. Their 3D butchery scene is a tactile combination of their exchange of skills and knowledge.



MAANII OAKES

SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC

November 2 - December 19, 2018

Through the performance of skin stitch and handpoke tattooing for community members, as well as sculpting with artificial sinew sewn through raw deer hide, Maanii shapes human faces and limbs marked with ancestral and contemporary tattoo designs. Maanii notes how for their nations, as well as many others, these symbols are the language used to communicate the honour of war and spiritual gain, as well as their place among the community. They hold stories.

Oakes aims to make public the contemporary flourishing of cultural identity as expressed through traditional tattooing, rather than use this exhibition as a platform to share teachings surrounding ancestral designs customarily tied to personal growth and healing. The choice to present these tattoos on animal hide as opposed to human flesh reflects her respect for the growth and dignity of those for whom these designs are traditionally intimately entwined. The disembodied nature of these pieces represents more than just the tradition of respect for private acts of healing. By applying both traditional and original work onto inert materials, Oakes critiques the commodification of indigenous suffering. She suggests that there is no line between trauma and its reproduction for mass consumption.

Rather than presenting people as primary sources of this particular historical moment, Oakes allows her representation of trauma to merge with the deeply chaotic sense of humor developed by her people under the pressures of capitalism. In doing so, she hopes we witness and celebrate the beauty of these designs, while maintaining respect for people too close to this space to be treated fairly.



THIS IS MAANII OAKES

Maanii Oakes is a working nineteen year old Swampy Cree Anishnabek and Kanienkehaka cultural tattoo practitioner and visual artist in the mediums of skin stitch, handpoke, pencil crayon and most recently raw hide sculpture. Her work is influenced by her home of Eeyou Istchee, as pressed by her late grandfather in enacting Cree ways of governance and being. She tattoos both traditional and contemporary designs pulling from her own archival research and the strong material culture of her ancestors including bulrush weaving patterns and the painted caribou blankets of James Bay. In contrast her figurative pieces address recent history and present day colonialism, not pandering to loss of what she never had but rather looking to engage the stark reality of living culture seeping through layers of assimilation. Her practice also includes a variety of public speaking engagements and mentorship in community arts centering environmental justice and indigenous stewardship demonstrating her commitment to community and cultural exchange.

RICHARD HARLOW

SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC November 2 - December 19, 2018

“If I didn’t have my community, inspiring nature around me, and sheer determination, perhaps I wouldn’t be Flourishing.”

Richard Harlow’s work presents a unique perspective on life experiences, especially considering his perspective or view is distorted due to vision loss. He draws inspiration from activism, accommodation, and accessibility. Initially classically trained, he began playing with different textures and vibrant colours after losing his sight. He settled on a more impressionistic and gestural style, bringing his work in line with the postmodern style. He strives to find a balance of aesthetic and kinesthetic, to bridge the gap between sighted and blind, bringing new experiences to the fully blind, and allowing partially sighted people to enjoy art. He incorporates layers, increased color saturation, and various objects to encourage tactile interactions, and to more clearly see what he is painting. Tactile paintings allow people to experience the work through sight and touch, creating unique multi-sensorial memories.

Harlow’s installation for Tangled plays with light and colour and has been sculpted to allow the viewer to touch and feel the layers of paint, an invitation to feel his connections to the west coast of Canada and his hometown.

Richard enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with Maanii.

“In the process, I learned what butchery means. It’s a passing on of knowledge about hunting and how it’s not just a trophy to her culture, from the death of an animal comes the life and preservation of her community. Deer get butchered methodically so that nothing is unused.”



THIS IS RICHARD HARLOW

In 2010, Richard Harlow, an apprentice painter attending Emily Carr University, was diagnosed with Lebers Hereditary Optic Neuropathy, a rare optic nerve disease that affects 1/250,000 people with no cure. Harlow stopped creating art for years. Newly aware of the isolation, poverty, discrimination, and ableism of disability, he dedicated his life to helping others with disabilities. Harlow hosted a TV show called App TV on AMI and became a dedicated CNIB board member. He dabbled in stand-up comedy, modelling, and acting before gathering the courage to create art again. In 2017, he reinvented his art style and enrolled in senior art classes at Vancouver Island University. With his “Accessible Art” he aims to eliminate the barriers in the art world. Commonly hanging paintings at an accessible height, Harlow encourages people to touch his works. Presenting in public art galleries makes his art financially accessible to those living in poverty. His work aims to convey that no person has limits to what they can accomplish and that having a disability is not the end, it’s only the beginning of a new chapter.

LAURA BURKE

MAD ONES: FLOURISHING

November, 2018

MAD ONES is a new theatrical script written by writer/actor/poet Laura Burke. Burke was awarded creation and dramaturgy funding from Arts Nova Scotia for the development of a piece under the same name in 2016. After meeting with the facilitators and other artists at Tangled Art + Disability this past spring, Laura decided to reimagine a new story, using most of the same characters as the original script.

This reinvention of MAD ONES is set in the famous Bedlam (Bethlem) Asylum in London in 1825. It is the story of Guen, a mad woman, and her lover Tsura, who meet on a ship of fools – a place representing the dangerous yet inspired, liminal space of Guen’s mind. This imaginal setting is juxtaposed with the harsh realities of Bedlam, and Guen’s relationship with Dr. Jack Williams, a well-meaning physician whose privilege and training are at odds with his high ideals for the treatment of asylum inmates. The play’s exploration of the origins of Moral Treatment poses many of the same questions psychiatry is faced with today: How can a mad person fully reclaim self-determination and volition if decisions about their reality are made for them? MAD ONES explores the difficult choices that mad folk, particularly mad woman, have faced throughout our lineage of medicalizing anomalous experience. In this play, Guen must choose between accepting help that denies aspects of her agency and autonomy, or a difficult path where her choices and her values remain her own. It is a piece filled with sadness, grit, humour, and hope.



THIS IS LAURA BURKE

Laura Burke is a mad-identified writer, actor, and performance poet based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. She debuted her first play entitled ‘Voices’ in San Francisco in 2011. Since then, she has written ‘Heartwood’, a confessional one-woman show about her journey as a psychiatric survivor and her path toward giving back to others who suffer in similar ways. ‘Heartwood’ has toured across Canada, including the Mayworks Festival and as part of Neptune Theatre’s open spaces program with Doppler Effect Theatre. An excerpt from her play ‘Iris’ has been presented at the Soloicious Festival and The Women in Theatre Festival in Halifax. Laura was a 2017 member of the Eastern Front Theatre Playwright’s Unit, and is a new member of the Bus Stop Theatre Playwright’s Unit. Laura likes to make work about vulnerable, often misunderstood characters who fight through their marginalization to reclaim their otherness as their birthright. When she is not writing or working on stage, she works as a psychotherapist. She also likes to spend time in the north end of Halifax with her 12 urban chickens.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS

HALIFAX WORKSHOP

In early June of 2018, a weekend long workshop was held in Nova Scotia for the FLOURISHING artists. The goal of this workshop was to provide the artists with context surrounding the inception of the Human Flourishing project, and give them time to create work and collaborate together. Taking place on the Bay of Fundy, the workshop was led by Yousef Kadoura, Cyn Rozeboom, David Bobier, and Catherine Frazee. Artists learned about VibroTactile and other accessible technologies, and the impact of Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada. In and outside of the sessions, the artists contemplated and discussed what Flourishing meant to themselves personally, how it might differ from person to person, and how it manifests in society as a whole. This workshop, and the conversations within, informed the creation of the shared exhibition spaces that, together, make up the entirety of the Flourishing series.





ARTIST WORKSHOPS

An important component of the Flourishing project is a series of community workshops held by participating artists in their home communities. These workshops allow the artists to showcase their skills, share their insights, and spark local conversations about the themes of Flourishing across Canada. Workshop activities have been tailored to suit the individual needs and interests of each artist, and range from showing work in progress, to hosting a community forum, to leading a workshop on a topic related to their craft. Representatives from the Canadian Association of Community Living have joined to give context to the artistic activities. The resultant content generated through discussion and connection is valuable both artistically and socially.

ARTIST TALKS

Each exhibition in our Flourishing series will include an artist talk with the featured artists. Please join us as we explore the techniques, backgrounds, and subjects employed by the artists that have brought these incredible exhibitions to the gallery. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the work and connect in person with members of the Tangled Arts community.

SECOND SATURDAY SOCIALS

To enhance opportunities to experience the exhibitions at Tangled Art Gallery, Tangled hosts social events on the second Saturday of the month centering the interests of our Blind and low vision communities. Second Saturday Socials include live description tours, interactive experiences, and art-making workshops. The artists from each exhibition within FLOURISHING will be invited to share insights into their creative process.

FLOURISHING SCHEDULE

SOMEHOW WE STAY ATTUNED

September 7 - October 19, Tangled Art Gallery

September 7, 6:00 - 8:00 pm: Opening Reception

September 15, 12:00 - 2:00 pm: Community Session (Peter Owusu-Ansah)

September 22, 2:00 - 4:00 pm: Artist Talk (Salima Punjani, Sarah Ferguson, Peter Owusu-Ansah)

October 13, 2:00 - 4:00 pm: Second Saturday Social

THREE WINDOWS

October 11 - 21, Artspin's Holding Patterns, 1165 Dupont Street

October 11 (see www.artspin.ca for time): Opening Reception

October 20, 2:00 - 4:00 pm: Artist Talk at Tangled Art Gallery

*More details about Holding Patterns at www.artspin.ca

SOMEWHERE WE STAY AUTHENTIC

November 2 - December 19, Tangled Art Gallery

November 9, 6:00 - 8:00 pm: Opening Reception

November 10, 2:00 - 4:00 pm: Second Saturday Social

December 8, 2:00 - 4:00 pm: Artist Talk (Richard Harlow)

MAD ONES

November 2018, Tangled Arts Basement S 30, 401 Richmond Street West

Full listings, when available, will be listed at tangledarts.org. For the most up-to-date information, follow us on twitter, join our Facebook page or sign up for our newsletter.





YOUSEF KADOURA

2018 CURATOR IN RESIDENCE

Yousef Kadoura is an emerging Canadian theatre artist. Born in the United States to Canadian and American Lebanese parents, his work is rooted in identity, necessity, and radical storytelling. Trained at the National Theatre School of Canada (Acting Class of 2017) in Montreal, Quebec, Yousef has developed work as an actor and writer in Toronto.

“As an artist, I am compelled by storytelling and the body, the ways in which we move, express ourselves, and communicate with one another. Storytelling is at its core one of our oldest methods of communication. From a young age it shapes our individual ethics, and teaches us to question what we observe. If our stories are being told by only a fraction of society then we are causing irreparable harm to our collective consciousness. The world demands a diversity of experiences, of cultures, of minds, and of bodies. It is by embracing these diversities that we can fully express and explore the worlds in which we exist. I am incredibly grateful to be working at Tangled Art + Disability, as it is here I have found new stories, new people, and a strong community where diversity of experience is applauded, and supported.”

During this residency Yousef has contributed his expertise in live performance and storytelling to the development of FLOURISHING. Working alongside the rest of the Tangled staff, he has been integral to supporting participating artists in developing their art and telling stories which we, as a society, need now more than ever.

DAVID BOBIER

INDEPENDENT CURATOR

David Bobier is a media artist who has been active in and for Deaf and Disability Arts for over two decades. He is the parent of two deaf children and lives in nature on the outskirts of London, Ontario. His creative practice is incorporating research and development of vibrotactile technology as a creative medium. This vibrotactile technology, originally developed for the Deaf, is essential in Bobier's artistic practice for developing more accessible ways of creating and experiencing art in its many forms. This work led to his establishment of VibraFusionLab (VFL) in London, Ontario in 2014, a creative multi-media, multi-sensory centre researching and supporting inclusive technologies for arts practice and for greater accessibility to the arts.

He is also Founder and Past Chair of London Ontario Media Arts Association (LOMAA), Member of the Board of Media Arts Network Ontario (MANO/RAMO), and Founder and Co-chair of Inclusive Arts London.

Bobier's work has received funding from Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), Ontario Arts Council (OAC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), Grand NCE (National Centres of Excellence) and British Council Canada.

He has served in advisory roles in developing Deaf and Disability Arts Equity programs for both CCA and the OAC. He was an invited participant in the Canada Council for the Arts - The Arts in a Digital World Summit, Montreal, and a panel presenter at the Global Disability Summit in London, UK. Bobier has twice received Canada Council for the Arts funding to do ongoing research of the Deaf and Disability Arts movement in the United Kingdom and the United States.



ENVISIONING FLORA

When I began working on this project in November of 2017 the first question which was posed to me was “What is Flourishing, and how would you define it?”,

I tried to answer immediately, speaking around the idea, confident that I had somewhere in my mind a definition, as this was of course simply a word. However, as I circled myself with repetitive non-answers, I finally began to understand that flourishing held a complexity which I did not yet comprehend. Sure, the word conjured in my mind images of flowers, gardens, things which I could say were flourishing. These images, however, when applied to people felt inherently flawed. With our diversity of bodies, minds, and experiences how could I compare a person to flora? So I searched for answers in the dictionary. Frankensteining words, and sifting through ideas of people smarter than me with the hope of enlightenment, I found no solutions.

It was only when I began writing the Call for Submissions that I had a moment of clarity. As we sought artists who expressed Flourishing, we realized we could not define it for them. Instead, we asked everyone who applied three questions, “First, who are you? Second, what is your current arts practice? Third, tell us about your journey as an artist.” So began the conversations. A staggering number of people came forward, offered themselves up in stories of successes, joys, hardships, and failures they had experienced.

It was throughout these conversations I realized that I cannot define flourishing. It is not my role to say what flourishing is or is not, as it is to be defined by the individual. One can suffer and still flourish. Hardships may be experienced but they do not themselves prevent flourishing. In other cases, suffering can be a catalyst or even a necessary part of someone’s flourishing, providing perspective, and placing one firmly in the world in which they exist.

Our bodies, our minds, our environments may rebel against us, or demand of us our time and energy, but they do not prevent us from being us. They are all aspects of who we are, and how we experience the world. If I were forced to define flourishing, I would speak only for myself. However for the vast majority of humanity who is not me I would instead pose questions. What is necessary? What do you need, and what do you strive for?

When I think of flourishing, I envision flora. Environments shift, they become inhospitable, and a plant will experience much in its life, but it will flourish when and where it can, and in that it will have done exactly what it needs to.

Yousef Kadoura

Tangled Art + Disability 2018 Curator in Residence

A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

I have always abided by a truth that art, in all its many manifestations, has the power of and is integral to building a healthy and inclusive community.

Art is a way of connecting with each other when other forms of communication fail. It is a language and means of communication that surpasses written and oral languages and has the capacity for bridging disparity, diversity. Art, in its purest desire, in its integrity, in its multiplicity of forms and disciplines and in its resonance has the power to connect emotionally and therefore to be transformative! Seven incredible artists make and 'own' this project called FLOURISHING.

The hybrid work of the artists presented in this exhibition is representative of a movement of artistic practice in the Deaf and Disabled Arts community being done across Canada. It embodies a significant force and commitment away from the centre towards inclusive and experiential processes and outcomes that adds to the confirmation that disability arts is "the last avant garde movement" as remarked by Turner Prize nominee Yinka Shonibare.

Nanaimo artist Richard Harlow, Regina artist Sarah Ferguson, Kitchener artist Aislinn Thomas, Toronto-based Peter Owusu-Ansah and Maanii Oakes, Salima Punjani from Montreal and Halifax artist Laura Burke are representative of the most innovative, progressive, and socially charged Mad, Deaf and Disabled Arts practice in Canada. What is equally exciting and encouraging is that this project attracted approximately 90 submissions from across the country providing an insight into what is current and what is to come creatively from the Deaf and Disabled communities when we equalize the platform for individual expression.

Flourishing in its most generic use and, more importantly, in terms of this project, is representative of a continuous process without a definitive outcome. With respect to the non-normative body it is as ongoing as time and as familiar as daily life. Through the duration of this project the artists have investigated the process of invention, self-determination and artistic creation and, in so doing, the process of flourishing. Through the remarkable works developed through this project we have been gifted a unique insight into the resonating experiences of these seven artists and the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their individual acts of 'flourishing'.

My gratitude goes to these artists!

David Bobier

Independent Curator, FLOURISHING

FLOURISHING, RE-IMAGINED

The Human Flourishing Project was launched in 2017 by the Canadian Association for Community Living, along with its member associations and partners in academia, human rights and the arts and culture sector. The partnership with Tangled Art + Disability is central to this endeavour, and is rooted in a mutual commitment to value the lives, honour the struggles and support the full expression of Canadians with disabilities.

The conversations about human flourishing that this project animates are unfolding in a pivotal moment of our social history, at a juncture of powerful cultural forces that shape how our communities understand and respond to disability, human frailty and suffering.

Historically, one of the running narratives in our culture, a cornerstone misperception at the root of disability stigma and discrimination, is one that equates impairment with suffering. Persons who live with frailty, incapacity, or any deviation from the prized capital of fitness, intellect and self-reliance, are presumed to suffer, sometimes bravely, always without reprieve. Such lives, according to popular stereotype, are inherently diminished and undignified, burdensome to ourselves and to others.

Disabled peoples' emancipation, our rise from this social shame and the pity it breeds, pushed back against the false narrative of certain lives as utterly abject and unbearable, offering up in its place, stories of resistance and resilience, ingenuity and imagination, aspiration and entitlement. "Piss on Pity" became the rallying cry of a social movement claiming its power and place in our politics and culture.

At the same time as we press this claim, we honour the important nuance of a complex human story. For the truth is, we do suffer. Suffering is part of the human condition. The truth is, we are vulnerable.

Disabled people are not distinctly, pathologically vulnerable, but like every living being, we are vulnerable because, as Martha Fineman writes, we have bodies.

Today, those tired old stories about "suffering from" – stories about the indignities of dependence and the overwhelming losses of illness, impairment and decline, are still with us. More than ever, they imperil us in a social ethos which calculates the value of life against the cost of extended care and needed supports. Embedded in our language and our discourse, such stories are the backdrop for a politics of austerity and abandonment and for technologies ranging from prenatal screening to medical assistance in dying.

The old narrative of prejudice is still with us, unchanged. Our counter-narrative, however, has matured. It is not a flat-out denial of suffering, loss, or indignity, but rather a robust and authentic account of the lives that we live and the conditions within which we live them. It is an examination of how our communities respond to suffering and what is needed to enable and support flourishing, especially where it is unexpected, in lives that might otherwise be considered "beyond the pale".

We invite you to help shape a culture and polity of human flourishing.

Catherine Frazee

Professor Emerita, Ryerson University School of Disability Studies and Content Director, Human Flourishing Project

UPCOMING AT TANGLED ART + DISABILITY

CRIPPING THE ARTS/STAGE

January 24, 25, 26, 2019, Harbourfront Centre

In partnership with Ryerson University, Harbourfront, Creative Users, and British Council, Tangled will explore Disability aesthetics and issues. In the evenings, Crippling the Stage activities will showcase Disabled artists work, presenting a Crip Cabaret and theatrical performance.

CONSTRUCTED IDENTITIES

Opening January 17, 2019

McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton

Marking the 2016 launch of Tangled Art Gallery, this distinct display of Persimmon Blackbridge's hand-crafted figures has toured around the country, landing in Hamilton as part of The Socrates Project.

BRUCE HORAK: THROUGH A TIRED EYE

January 24- February 24, 2019, Tangled Art Gallery

Retino-blastoma, monocular tunnel-vision, extreme light-sensitivity, floaters, flashers, blepharitis, capsular opacification... a thousand words. Through a Tired Eye is Bruce Horak's interpretation of how he sees the world.

OUTLIERS ON TOUR

March 8 - April 19 2019, Tangled Art Galley

Responding to this year's Myseum Intersections theme of (Re)visionist Toronto, Tangled will invite the "outliers" in, addressing the porous narratives that shape the city and re-imagining the dominant narratives of those on the periphery through disability aesthetics.



TANGLED ART + DISABILITY

Tangled Art + Disability is boldly redefining how the world experiences art and those who create it. We are a not for profit art + disability organization dedicated to connecting professional and emerging artists, the arts community, and a diverse public through creative passion and artistic excellence. Our mandate is to support Deaf, Mad and Disability-identified artists, to cultivate Deaf, Mad and Disability Arts in Canada, and to enhance access to the arts for artists and audiences of all abilities.

ACCESSIBILITY AT TANGLED ART GALLERY

- The gallery is wheelchair accessible and all work is hung at an accessible level
- All visual work includes audio description
- Service animals are welcome at the gallery
- All exhibit openings and events include ASL interpretation, on site attendant care, and captioning when necessary
- All exhibits are free
- All exhibits include touchable art
- Tangled works with artists, audience and community members to provide a scent reduced environment

VISITING TANGLED ART GALLERY

Tangled Art Gallery is located in studio 122 on the main floor on the 401 Richmond Building. The closest accessible subway station is at Osgoode Station. The closest accessible streetcar stop is the 510 Spadina Queen Street West Stop (Queen Street stop going south from Spadina Station, Richmond Street stop going north from Union Station.)

TANGLED ART GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday-Saturday
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

School, group, and private tours are available by appointment. To book or for more information, contact: info@tangledarts.org



TANGLED ART + DISABILITY

STAFF

Cyn Rozeboom, Executive Director

Sean Lee, Gallery Manager

Kristina McMullin, Communication and Design Coordinator

Yousef Kadoura, 2018 Curator in Residence

Victoria Anne Warner, Access to Funding Coordinator

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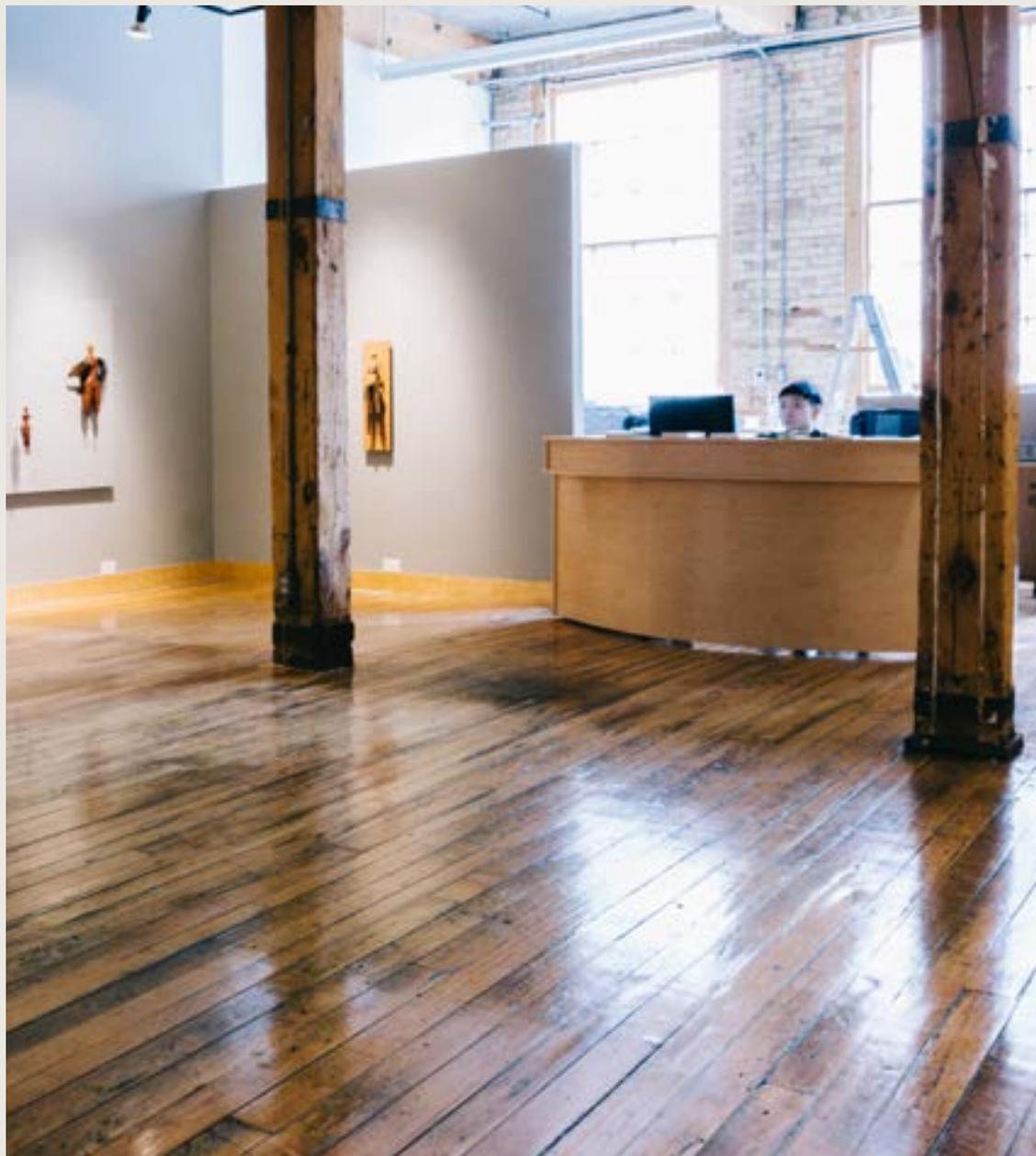
Tangled Art + Disability

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Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3A8

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IMAGES IN THIS BROCHURE:

- 2** Untitled #150 by Peter Owusu-Ansah
- 7** From Progression Series by Salima Punjani
- 9** Transmutation #6 by Sarah Ferguson
- 11** Untitled #151 by Peter Owusu-Ansah
- 13** From Progression Series by Salima Punjani
- 14** Site Visit for Holding Patterns
- 17** Still from THREE WINDOWS by Aislinn Thomas
- 19** Vision of Paradise by Richard Harlow
- 21** Cree Design 'Jamin' by Maanii Oakes
- 23** Eyes #2 by Richard Harlow
- 25** Still from Heartwood by Laura Burke
- 26** Richard and David by Salima Punjani
- 28** Montreal Workshop by Yousef Kadoura
- 31** Cover, The Peak Magazine, Land Issue by Maanii Oakes
- 32** Yousef by Salima Punjani
- 35** David Bobier credit unknown
- 43** Flicker Doll by Persimmon Blackbridge; Photograph by Della McCreary
- 47** Tangled Art Gallery by Kathy Toth
- 49** god among us by Maanii Oakes



DONATE TO TANGLED ART + DISABILITY

Tangled Art + Disability depends on the generous support from our donors. We appreciate support from a broad spectrum of donors including private donors, foundations and government agencies.

If you would like to help, please consider a charitable donation. 100% of your gift will go towards our programming cultivating Disability Arts in Canada and supporting access to the arts for artists and audiences with disabilities. We provide charitable tax receipts for all donations of \$20 and above.

For more information about donating to Tangled Art + Disability, email info@tangledarts.org, call 647- 725- 5064, visit our website, or come out to one of our events and talk to us. We're very friendly and would love to welcome you to our community of support.

Tangled Art + Disability is a registered
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TANGLED THANKS OUR SPONSORS AND FUNDERS



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THANK YOU TO OUR FLOURISHING PARTNERS



For more information about the Human Flourishing Project, please visit www.humanflourishing.ca

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Andrea Charise
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Won Lee

A large, abstract pink shape on the right side of the page, resembling a stylized letter 'R' or a similar form, set against a dark teal background.

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