

A scaffold with, against
May 11–July 30, 2022

Art
Museum

Works by

Jasmina Cibic, Caroline Monnet, and
Pejvak

Curated by Žana Kozomora

This exhibition is produced as part of
the requirements for the MVS degree in
Curatorial Studies at the John H. Daniels
Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and
Design, University of Toronto.

We gratefully acknowledge the continued
support of the Reesa Greenberg Curatorial
Studies Award and International Travel
Fund.

2022 MVS Curatorial Studies Projects

Homo on the Range

Curated by Logan Williams

May 11–July 30, 2022

University of Toronto Art Centre

A Guide for the Afflicted and Defiant

Curated by Nicole Cartier Barrera

May 11–July 30, 2022

University of Toronto Art Centre

The aleatory object

Curated by Shani K Parsons

May 11–July 30, 2022

University of Toronto Art Centre



um

A scaffold with, against



Cover: Jasmina Cibic, *Tear Down and Rebuild* (production still), 2015. Single channel HD video, stereo, 00:15:28. Photo by Ivan Petrović. Courtesy of the artist.

Top: Pejvak, *A Passage*, 2019. 2K video, single channel, 00:16:57. Courtesy of the artists.

Visionary plans often precede the construction of architectures, cities, and infrastructural projects, making imperative decisions of destruction and reconstruction. These decisions affect people and identities at various levels: land, community, and nation. The scaffold calls to mind a literal apparatus that draws our gaze to the structures that are erected, renovated, and destroyed before our eyes, but it also provides an apt metaphor for detecting what more invisibly supports and sustains projects of supposed progress. Considering the scaffold as a support for the future, we might ask, “Is the scaffold a temporary crutch rendered redundant upon the completion of such projects, or is it one that remains, sustaining other structures?”

This exhibition features artworks by Jasmina Cibic, Caroline Monnet, and Pejvak that take as their material the forms that prop up constructions of the future—processes that may appear elusive in the face of larger, seductive propositions for icons of progress. The works prod at this seductive fixation to bring closer the covert scaffold as implicitly tied to the conditions it continues to replicate. Beginning with references to material structures, the works expand to recognize the ambiguous scaffold as an apparatus across borders, eras, and political contexts. They invite us to recognize and question our

capacities and agencies to shift these scaffolds and generate new ones.

Cibic’s film *Tear Down and Rebuild* (2015) takes the sumptuous former Palace of the Federation¹ as a stage for a debate that introduces four women as allegorical figures: the Nation-Builder, the Conservationist, the Pragmatist, and the Artist/Architect. Collaging statements and speeches from controversial world leaders, architects, and critics spanning the past century, the discourse to shape the future of a nation emerges through justifications aimed at audiences primed for ideological shaping. The film masks the precise source of each statement, ranging from figures such as Thatcher, Stalin, Prince Charles and Reagan, revealing the fluidity of politically charged rhetoric that permeates today’s most urgent debates—ones in which architecture, monuments, and culture teeter between agents and instruments in the name of progress. At the Artist-Architect’s resolute call, the question of agency is turned towards the viewer.

Situated in the Meghri border region in southern Armenia, Pejvak’s film *A Passage* (2019) unfolds across the mountain and desert landscapes in which the township of Agarak is nestled and a copper-molybdenum mine operates. The rumoured construction of an industrial Free Economic Zone (FEZ) in place

of the defunct Soviet era Yerevan-Baku Railway emerges across episodic narratives that hint at larger infrastructural plans, initiating preparations for the neoliberalist revival of the regional economy. Choreographed drills in the film anticipate the increased militarization in the region that sparked a war with the bordering nation Azerbaijan in 2020.² The spectacle of violence obscures plans brokered between multinational entities for the control of natural resources and transport corridors. Oriented around reconstruction projects, the film reveals the permeability of borders for neoliberal operations alongside characters’ speculations towards a different future, even as they remain bound between territorial blockades and impending conflict.

Monnet’s *Marking the Underground* (2021) finds inspiration in Anishinaabe birchbark biting, transposing geometricized patterns as silkscreen prints onto waterproofing membranes. The porous patterns of ink reveal the names of corporate entities that produce materials engineered for home construction projects. Citing the sedentary European-style housing prompted by the assimilationist vision of the Indian Act in Canada, the artist considers over a century of legislation that has shaped deplorable conditions for Indigenous dwellings on reserves—policy that perpetuates generations of physical and psychological

harm in communities. Monnet’s reworking of Anishinaabe tradition into her own formal language is inscribed onto construction material, pointing to what remains invisible in the structures and systems that hold the body. Reminiscent of ubiquitous QR codes, city maps, and circuitry, the works are not wholly legible (not scannable on our devices), but initiate the reworking of inherited designs, providing a subliminal gesture for a future that can be made otherwise.

A scaffold with, against considers a break with the commitment to a floorplan or blueprint for the future,³ asking us to imagine multiple futurities beyond the disaster-oriented schemes that presently persist.

1. Located in the city of Belgrade, the Palace of the Federation was the headquarters for the Federal Executive Council of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Breaking with Stalin’s U.S.S.R. in 1948, Yugoslavia embarked on the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) alongside the state heads of India, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, and other postcolonial states in the 1950s and 60s. The building’s construction was completed in time for the NAM’s first summit in 1961. Today, it is known as the Palace of Serbia.

2. Рита Соколовская, “A Passage: An Interview with Pejvak Collective and an Online Screening of Their Film,” Syg.ma, Syg.ma/The Prince Claus Fund, June 15, 2021, <https://syg.ma/@rita-sokolovskaya/a-passage-an-interview-with-pejvak-collective-and-an-online-screening-of-their-film>.

3. Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2005), 216–17.

About the Curator

Žana Kozomora works across curatorial and visual practice. She has curated exhibitions with Cambridge Art Galleries and Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, and sits on the Program Committee and Board of CAFKA (Contemporary Art Forum Kitchener + Area). Her writing has been published in ASAP/ Journal and C Magazine. Originally from Sarajevo, BiH, she grew up in Kitchener, Ontario, the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. (zanakozomora.ca)

Curator’s Acknowledgments


I extend my deepest gratitude to Barbara Fischer, Frances Loeffler, Luis Jacob, and Dr. Sara Saljoughi for their invaluable mentorship and critical insight. Many thanks to the Art Museum staff and technicians, as well as Kate Whiteway and Saša Rajšić, for their knowledge and collaboration in realizing this show. I am immensely grateful for the companionship of my fellow pandemic curatorial cohort Nicole, Shani, Logan, and our studio friends. I could not have done this project without the generosity and trust of the artists, whose practices are endlessly inspiring. Finally, thank you to my dear partner Michael for supporting me on this journey.


Staff

Barbara Fischer, Executive Director/Chief Curator
Sarah Robayo Sheridan, Curator
Mik Migwans, Curator, Indigenous Art
John G. Hampton, Adjunct Curator
Seika Boye, Adjunct Curator
Maureen Smith, Business Coordinator
Heather Darling Pigat, Collections Manager
Esther Simmonds-MacAdam, Exhibition Coordinator
Marianne Rellin, Communications Assistant
Daniel Griffin-Hunt, Lead Exhibition Preparator
Kate Whiteway, Exhibition Coordinator, Master of Visual Studies (Studio Art + Curatorial Studies)
Melody Lu, Front of House Coordinator
Hana Nikčević, Public Programming and Outreach Assistant
Kaitlyn Simpson, Digital Communications Assistant

Brand Design: Underline Studio
Printing: Flash Reproductions
Copy Editor: Ruth Jones

Visiting the Art Museum

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery 
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
416.978.8398

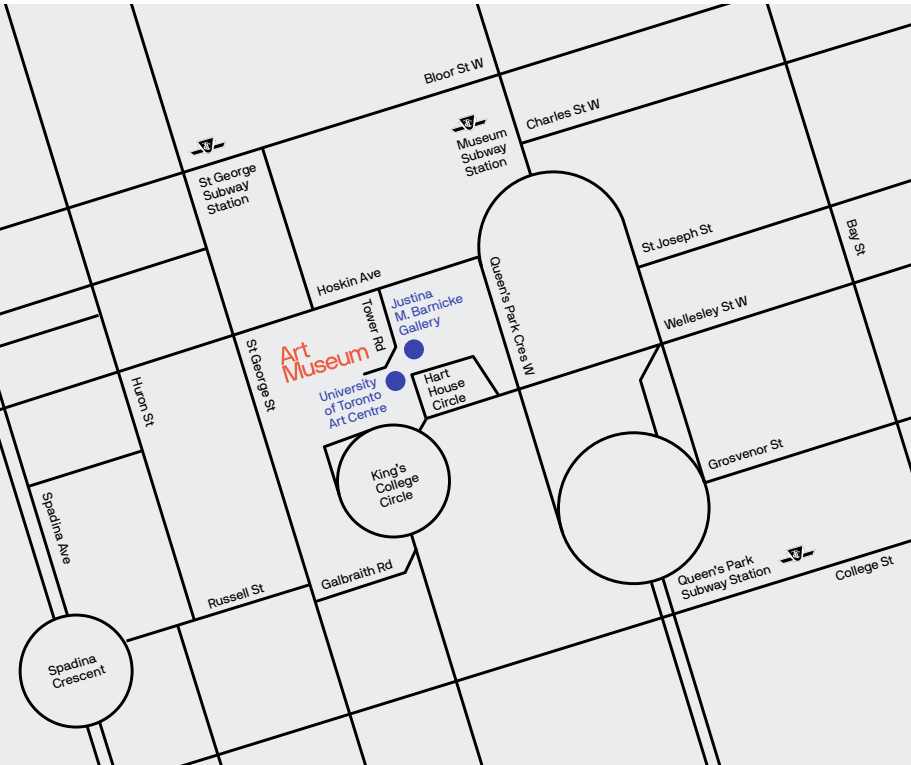
University of Toronto Art Centre 
15 King’s College Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H7
416.978.1838

Tuesday	12 noon–5pm
Wednesday	12 noon–8pm
Thursday	12 noon–5pm
Friday	12 noon–5pm
Saturday	12 noon–5pm
Sunday	Closed
Monday	Closed

Closed on statutory holidays.
Admission is FREE.

Access between the University of Toronto Art Centre and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery has changed due to construction for the University of Toronto Landmark Project. For more information, please contact staff at artmuseum@utoronto.ca or visit artmuseum.utoronto.ca/visiting

artmuseum@utoronto.ca
[@artmuseumuoft](mailto:artmuseum.utoronto.ca)



Art Museum
University of Toronto

—

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
University of Toronto Art Centre

7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
artmuseum.utoronto.ca



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

HartHouse



UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE