In the Interstices
of Our Palms
May 1–July 26, 2025

Art
Museu

Works by
Rihab Essayh, Tanya Lukin Linklater, Anouk Verviers

Curated by
Sophie Dubeau Chicoine

Location
University of Toronto Art Centre

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

The Art Museum gratefully acknowledges additional project support from the Reesa Greenberg Curatorial Studies Award and International Travel Fund, and the Yellowhead Institute.

2025 MVS Curatorial Studies Graduating Exhibitions

Whispers of Resistance
Curated by Sibei Du
May 1–July 26, 2025
University of Toronto Art Centre

Careful Crossings
Curated by Abisola Oni
May 1–July 26, 2025
University of Toronto Art Centre

Dwelling Under Distant Suns
Curated by Yantong Li
September 3–December 20, 2025
Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

In the Interstices of Our Palms

Cover: Anouk Verviers, *What can you build on land that keeps moving* (still), 2022. Single-channel video with stereo sound, 06:00 min. Image courtesy of the artist.

Above: Tanya Lukin Linklater, *This moment an endurance to the end forever* (still), 2020. Single-channel video with sound, 23:17 min. Image courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.

"I am writing you so we can think together about what it means for us to build livable lives together in the wreckage."[1]

The group exhibition *In the Interstices of Our Palms* explores ways to build, hold and share community in times of disruption. Navigating the personal and collective challenges of communal efforts, three artists mobilize processes of (re)assembly. Through the use of fragile materials, arrangements or embodied forms, they expose their vulnerability to past and current upheavals that have shaken their communities. This exposure is coupled with strong resilience, an essential quality for ensuring the sustainability of their endeavors. The artists provide a space for hope, insisting on the possibilities of healing and renewal while simultaneously reckoning with distinct layers of historical wounds and continuous hardships. This echoes scholar Joseph R. Winters's concept of *melancholic hope*, which asserts that the possibility of a better world emerges from our heightened capacity to confront legacies of loss, erasure and damage.[2] Through sustained, careful gestures, the artists guide us toward reflective modes of collectivity.

Rihab Essayh's large-scale installations imagine possibilities for social reconnection by crafting temporary spaces of softening. Made in response to the unfolding genocide in Gaza, her installation *Livin' in ruins of a palace within my dreams* (2024) is an assemblage of delicate, suspended organza evoking a sense of haunting, that of the many losses engendered by neocolonialism. Haunting, in Essayh's work, affirms the persistence of ruins even in our softest conceptions of futurity. The installation's central sculptural element, a table, traditionally associated with hospitality and community, has turned into a disjointed, spectral form that yet refuses to vanish. Amid this sheer blue landscape, the voids created by the missing architectural fragments become the loudest voices in the room, waiting to be heard.

Seeking to bring obscured histories to light, Anouk Verviers's multifaceted project explores the challenges faced by those who establish, lead, or sustain collective initiatives. Verviers's video work *You gave me your beans cooking pot (letter to my grand-mother)* (2022) provides a personal reflection on the erosion of a communal tradition and the significance of its loss today. Verviers is seen making bricks from raw clay and soil collected on the project site, their form suggesting the potential for consolidation while their materiality implies the need for continual remodeling. Her video work *What can you build on land that keeps moving* (2022) expresses a desire for collective care, hoping that overworked bodies can find relief through the shared experience of exhaustion. The video shows the artist carefully weaving a structure from hay, then leaving the form unfinished, as if inviting others to intervene. Both videos are displayed on a partial reproduction of the Canadian Pavilion from the 1886 Colonial Exhibition in London. Meant to showcase the "wonders" of Canadian agriculture, the pavilion omitted the fact that the country owed much of its agricultural progress to the labor and knowledge of women and Indigenous peoples. Verviers's plywood replica of the pavilion stands as a hollow, fragile prop of a colonial and patriarchal framework on the brink of collapse.

As Tanya Lukin Linklater's embodied practice attests, both the resilience and the vulnerability of the body are essential to community-building. Her work is rooted in Indigenous peoples' lived experiences, ideas and relations to (home)lands. *Indigenous geometries* (2019), a mobile installation developed in collaboration with architect Tiffany Shaw, features spine-like curved pieces that absorb words spoken nearby. A space for performance, this "felt structure" speaks to the dismantling of Indigenous social structures by colonial forces and the ongoing efforts of Indigenous peoples to restore their languages, families and identities. Lukin Linklater's accompanying video, *This moment an endurance to the end forever* (2020), evokes breath and corporeal structures. The video culminates in gestures of release as one of the performers' breath and movement reaches toward the infinite sky.

Together, Essayh, Verviers and Lukin Linklater translate into form the ongoing struggle and care needed for (re)assembly. Their works are deeply personal, attending to the needs of their communities while carrying their stories of disruption, resilience and survival. Bringing their gestures into conversation, the exhibition aims to forge alliances across fragmented histories of melancholic hope. Amid the wreckage, the artists invite us to envision novel ways of fostering collectivity.

1. This sentence is taken from written correspondence between Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson for their book *Rehearsals for Living* (Haymarket Books, 2022), 20.
2. Joseph Richard Winters, *Hope Draped in Black: Race, Melancholy, and the Agony of Progress* (Duke University Press, 2016), 7.

About the Curator

Sophie Dubeau Chicoine is an emerging curator and art writer from Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. Her practice is rooted in anti-capitalist visions, slow methodologies, and queer utopias. Recent essays include "A Degrowth Future for the Arts?" and "Art Labor: Communal Land Protection in the Face of Industrial Protection," both published by *Esse arts + opinions*. She is currently completing a SSHRC-funded Master of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto.

Curator's Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Barbara Fischer, Gareth Long, Neera Singh and Emelie Chhangur for their generous guidance throughout this process. To the Art Museum team for their support and knowledge. To Tanya, Rihab and Anouk for allowing me to be in relation with their practice. To my classmates for all the moments of laughter we shared. To my partner Lily for her constant words of encouragement. And to my family and friends, old and new, who have made this whole experience worth it.

Public Programs

Opening Reception
Wednesday, April 30, 6pm–8pm
University of Toronto Art Centre

In the Interstices: a conversation on memory and archives
Saturday, May 24, 2pm–4pm
University of Toronto and Senior Common Room, University College

Featuring a musical performance by Sassa Linklater at the University of Toronto Art Centre followed by a discussion with artist Tanya Lukin Linklater, performance and dance educator Seika Boye, food historian Salma Serry, and Indigenous literary scholar Johannah Bird at the Senior Common Room.

Curatorial Tour
Friday, May 30, 3pm–4pm
University of Toronto Art Centre

All programs are free and open to the public. For more information and to register, visit artmuseum.utoronto.ca/programs.

Exhibition Tours

The Art Museum offers in-person guided exhibition tours for classes and groups. For more information or to book a tour, email artmuseum@utoronto.ca.

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Visiting the Art Museum

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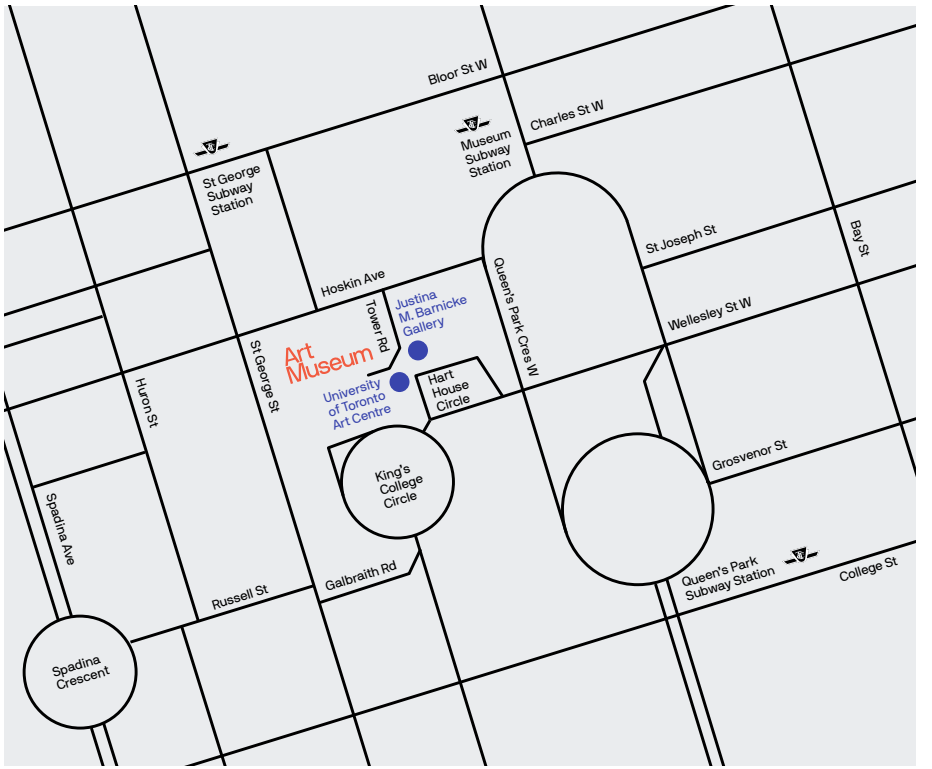
Tuesday	12 noon–5pm
Wednesday	12 noon–8pm
Thursday	12 noon–5pm
Friday	12 noon–5pm
Saturday	12 noon–5pm
Sunday	Closed
Monday	Closed

Closed on statutory holidays.
Admission is FREE.



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