

Little and Often

May 7–August 1, 2026

Art  
Museum

**Works by**

Miguel Caba, Maureen Gruben,  
Meech Boakye and Bhavika Sharma,  
Rachel Crummey, Rana Nazzal Hamadeh

**Curated by**

Chloe Gordon-Chow

**Location**

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

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. Additional project support was generously provided by UTERN.

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**2026 MVS Curatorial Studies  
Graduating Exhibitions*****Blind Spot***

Curated by Gia Liapi  
May 7–August 1, 2026

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

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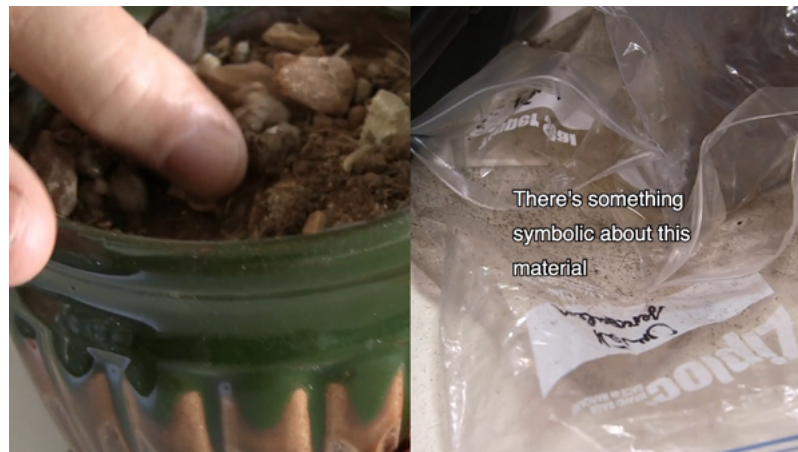


## Little and Often



Cover: Meech Boakye and Bhavika Sharma, *imprecise monuments*, 2026. Process photo; wild fennel and grass in NE Portland. Image courtesy of the artist.

Above: Maureen Gruben, *Nuna Aliannaittuq*, 2025. Process photo; 4,800 clay beads, cotton thread. Photo by Kyra Kordoski.



Rana Nazzal Hamadeh, *Something from there*, 2020. Still from video, 07:00 mins, Arabic, English (with subtitles in English). Image courtesy of the artist

*Little and Often* traces how our relationships to land, material, and one another are sustained within disturbed ecologies and conditions of precarity. In the work of Maureen Gruben, Rana Nazzal Hamadeh, Rachel Crummey, Miguel Caba, and Meech Boakye and Bhavika Sharma, life continues to be negotiated amidst ecological, political, and social disturbance. Working with seeds, soils, mushrooms, and plants, these artists hold onto something at risk of being severed. Their works are collaborative efforts between communities of people, more-than-human beings, and place.

Resilience sits at the core of this investigation, as a form of wayfinding. Amidst ecological, colonial, and capitalist ruin, resilience emerges as an act of ongoing adaptation and flux. It is a moving target, responsive to conditions that try to delimit life. Forging continuity amid change, practices of resilience open a portal to the past and provide a pathway through the present.

Looking around rather than forward, across disparate geographies and varied plant-person relations, the artists in the exhibition do not imagine utopic futures, nor do they propose concrete resolutions. These are not practices of preservation (which assumes a stable original to protect) or restoration (which

assumes a prior state to return to). They are shifting assemblages, reconfigurations of human-ecological entanglements and place-based relations on unstable terrain.

Each artist's distinct context and personal histories shape how they relate to land, resource, and community. They nurture relations to people and place against forces that threaten to completely sever them: land occupation, eroding shorelines, geographic displacement, fungal decay, and colonial logics of purity and exclusion. Yet these are active interconnected struggles. From Palestine to the Philippines, Tuktoyaktuk to Toronto, resilience is enacted as a collective, relational practice, continually shifting under constraint.

Maureen Gruben's *Nuna Aliannaittuq* is composed of thousands of clay beads sourced from sites of coastal erosion, prepared by Gruben, her family, and community members, and woven together in strands. Her community in Tuktoyaktuk faces the imminent threat of relocation due to thawing permafrost. The work is an attempt to hold the land a little while longer before it is gone. Rana Nazzal Hamadeh is a Palestinian artist and filmmaker. Her film, *Something from there*, contemplates the material substance

of the land, exploring its importance amidst systemic attempts by the Israeli government to deny Palestinian presence, culture, and life. Rachel Crummey collaborates with Reishi mycelium as a collaborator and co-conspirator in the art-making process. Her works emerge through slow processes of consumption, tending, and transmutation, the artist is closely attuned to fungal life. Miguel Caba, a Boston-based artist, recreates photographs of his family's gardens sent by his mother and grandmother, from Toronto and the Philippines respectively, collapsing distance across diaspora. Through painting and sculpture, Caba reconfigures his relationship to place despite borders, geographic distance, and the limitations of the screen. In the installation, *imprecise monuments*, Meech Boakye and Bhavika Sharma work with "invasive" or migrant plant species to resist the colonial logics that code certain bodies, plant and human, as foreign, invasive, and in need of eradication. They make kin with three species characterized as "invasive"—Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*), Wild Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*). Working with plant pulp and soap to make a series of small sculptures, they sit with sit with and learn from the disturbance of involuntary migration and unanticipated flourishing in distant lands.

The phrase "little and often" is a common refrain in gardening. It describes a practice of nurturing through consistent, modest attention. The work is never finished; it simply continues, season after season. It as an ethic as much as it is a method, to trust that small acts of showing up, sustained over time, can produce something lasting. This exhibition explores the sticky work of holding on and holding together. It highlights the stakes of making (and living) amidst disturbance, foregrounding the plants, bodies, landscapes, communities, and practices that persist in spite of attempts at denial and dispossession. There is grief here, old ways slipping through a tightly clenched fist, but there is life too, new relations pushing insistently through the cracks. In the words of Dr. Sophia Azeb, "Making freedom by making place is the refusal of unbecoming in the face of catastrophe, the continued cultivation of our being (the soil) and continued becoming (its rotations)."<sup>1</sup> We make freedom through the work of maintaining place. We refuse erasure by continuing to tend to life, wherever that may be.

1. Sophia Azeb, "We May Never Return Again (A Celebration of Our Aliveness)," *The Funambulist Magazine*, February 13, 2025, <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/return/we-may-never-return-again-a-celebration-of-our-aliveness>.

## About the Curator

Chloe Gordon-Chow is a Chinese-Canadian curator and researcher based in Toronto. She is an MVS candidate in Curatorial Studies at the University of Toronto and holds a BA in Art History and Sociology from McGill University. Her curatorial practice explores human, non-human, and spatial entanglements. Her research is rooted in collaboration and interdisciplinary experimentation, mobilizing exhibitions and public programming as forms of speculative world-building and critical intervention.

## Curator's Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisory panel: Barbara Fischer, Larissa Lai, Gareth Long, and Wanda Nanibush, for their guidance and thoughtful insight. To the Art Museum staff for their continuous support and knowledge. To Maureen, Rachel, Rana, Miguel, Meech, and Bhavika, for letting me into their artistic practices with trust and openness. To my cohort and classmates, it has been such a pleasure and relief navigating this process with you. And to my friends, family, and community, thank you for holding me down every step along the way.

## Public Programs

### Opening Reception

Wednesday, May 6, 6pm–8pm  
Justina M. Barnicke Gallery

Free and open to the public.  
For more information and to register,  
visit [artmuseum.utoronto.ca/programs](http://artmuseum.utoronto.ca/programs).

### Exhibition Tours

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Copy Editor: Hana Nikčević  
Layout: Maegan Fidelino

## Visiting the Art Museum

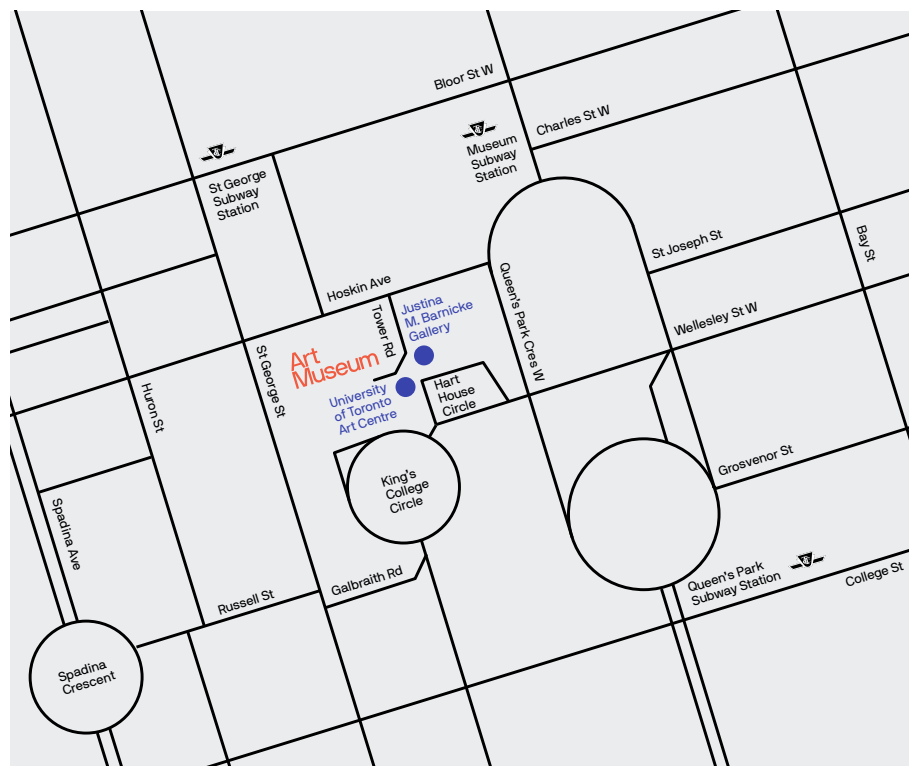
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Tuesday	12 noon–5pm
Wednesday	12 noon–8pm
Thursday	12 noon–5pm
Friday	12 noon–5pm
Saturday	12 noon–5pm
Sunday	Closed
Monday	Closed

Closed on statutory holidays.  
Admission is FREE.



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