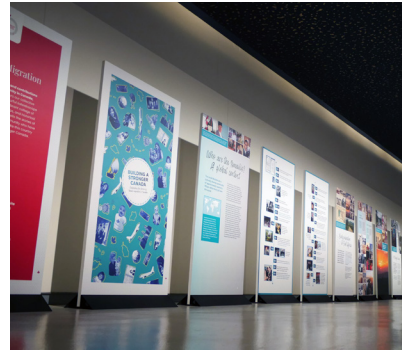
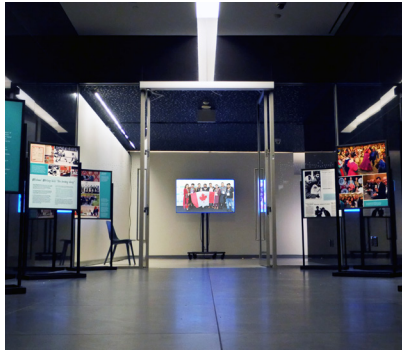


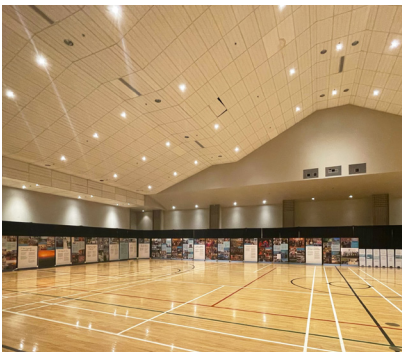
AQUIL VIDANI
AQUIL VIRANI



50 Years of Migration

Community art and storytelling exhibition, travelling across Canada. 2023.

“50 years of Migration” is a travelling exhibition of community storytelling, celebrating diverse participant stories of migration from the Ismaili Muslim diaspora in Canada – presented by artist Aquil Virani in collaboration with the Aga Khan Council for Canada with a debut at the Aga Khan Museum.



Combining text, archival photographs, visual artwork and audio-based interviews, the project marks the 50th anniversary of the 1972 “Ugandan Asian expulsion” by Idi Amin.



124

Digital artwork composed of digital photographs, 2023.

Presented in solidarity with Ontario's nurses and health care workers, this "124" project shows photographs from my recent hospitalization in Toronto.

I received wonderful care from nurses and health care workers over eight weeks in care with a rare neurological condition. I created this artwork as a way to document a personally tumultuous time while protesting Doug Ford's Bill 124 (currently in the court system) that restricted the wages of nurses who constantly go above and beyond what is asked of them to support a healthy Ontario.



"124 photos documenting my hospital journey and the brilliant contributions of Ontario's health care workers – in protest to Bill 124." Artist Aquil Virani. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. 2023.



Muslim American Writers At Home [Series in progress]

Acrylic paint, spray paint on printed anthology pages. 2021.

Canadian Muslim authors and creatives from the book, "Muslim American Writers At Home" – edited by Valerie Behiery, Kitty Costello and Hanan Hazime – are depicted here in a series of small-scale portraits that use the printed pages of the anthology as the background.

The format of the artworks – where the portrait subject is featured among their own published words – asserts the right of marginalized artists to be represented on their own terms, among their own expressions. Featured here are Hanan Hazime (top) and Hanaa Walzer (bottom). The artist also designed the book itself as a service to the community.





Dismantle the myth of the Muslim monolith [Series in progress]

Acrylic and spray paintings on custom-cut plywood. ~ 24 x 24 inches. 2022.

The “Dismantle the myth of the Muslim monolith” project is a series of painted portraits – acrylic and spray paint on custom-cut plywood boards – that illustrate the diversity of Muslim communities within Canada and Northern Turtle Island. The work is meant to humanize the face of Islam while building a counter narrative that promotes the representation of Muslims on our own terms.

Portrait subjects include individuals representing the breadth of the Muslim experience across lines of cultural identity, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and more.



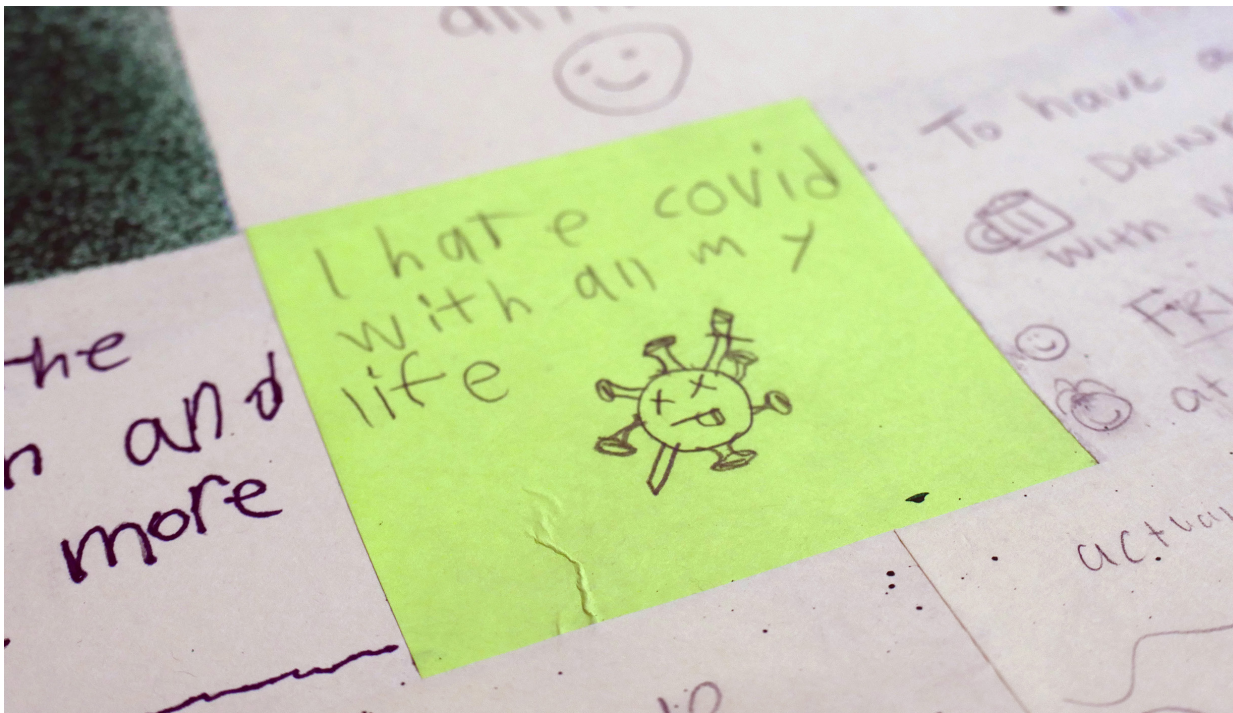
ROM: Things will get better

*Acrylic paint, ink, glue on sticky notes.
2023.*

In 2022, the ROM's #MyPandemicStory exhibition included a "response station" where visitors were invited to write responses to the prompt, "When things are better, I will..."

With the help of ROM curator Justin Jennings, Toronto-based artist Aquil Virani integrated hundreds of these sticky notes into a multimedia artwork, commemorating our collective early pandemic experiences and amplifying the diverse voices of participating community members.

"When people came to #MyPandemicStory, many shared their hopes for the future on sticky notes. Aquil's artwork does an amazing job of using those notes to both capture an important moment in Canadian history and help chart our way forward in a post-Covid world." – Justin Jennings, ROM Curator of the #MyPandemicStory exhibition





I will get out in the world and play with my friends

WE MISS YOUR BEAUTIFUL FACE

Life sucks. But that's OK. We can work on being better tomorrow

I Hate COVID

Understand People better!

We need Hope to survive!

Be more kind to myself and others

JE VEUX VISITER MA GRAND MERE

When things get better

When things get better I will dance

I will finally hug my friends and all go travel

SMILE

Not go back from working at home!

I do not like COVID-19

I will have a LOT OF CAKE

I am so tired of COVID-19

This Museum was GREAT!

LOVE

I'm about the pandemic is almost over.

Thank you Canada

Online school sucked & I felt like I missed out on so much & lost my first year of university & lost my year of high school because of it. But I finally got to go in person so my well-wishers are right. I'm so happy & not so much missing people. It does get better keep your head up!

Hello! P.R.

IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY

Amazing

LAST DAY OF COVID-19 MANDATES!!
Thames, O.A.
March 20th 2022

Trust the process

I LOVE YOU



MEAT CAUSES ALL PANDEMICS

When things are better I will enjoy traveling for fun. I WANT TO BE RICH. SOMEONE ADOP ME?

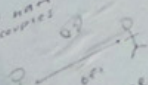
Chris Covid

First time Best place to a From



Live Laugh Love

No more X



HU

LIVE

GO TO THE BEACH

travel unapologetically & see more parts of the world

GO TO A MUSIC FESTIVAL

COVID ZWAND GOAWY

Wear your MASK!

Wishing Covid will end soon

I have fear I have PTSD

With everything will get better

COVID is scary

I want to hug my girlfriends

When I grow up I want to be an Artist

Do things now don't wait for things to happen

BE YOURSELF

LAST DAY OF COVID-19 MANDATES!!

Connection Inspiration Re-ignited

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

See my class from last year

Tell people what they mean to you

I'M INTERESTED NOT MUCH CHANGED I THINK YOU HEALTHIER WORKERS!

When things are better I will hug my friends

Travel the world!

come empty

business the income - entrepreneur

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

Wonder!

celebrated 21st birthday

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

See how much you have grown!

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I'M INTERESTED NOT MUCH CHANGED I THINK YOU HEALTHIER WORKERS!

When things are better I will hug my friends

Travel the world!

come empty



Be Safe

Don't Lose Hope

They will get better

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

Stay well with love

MEOW

Be Kind Always

I will travel with my family!

Still love each other

You can be sad It's okay.

Be in Canada! for a solo trip

Young woman, BRAZIL, PHY :D

Obrigada Thanks

By Taysh

We will get through this

Love from NYC

Love from NYC

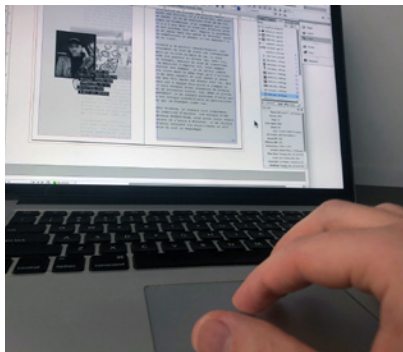
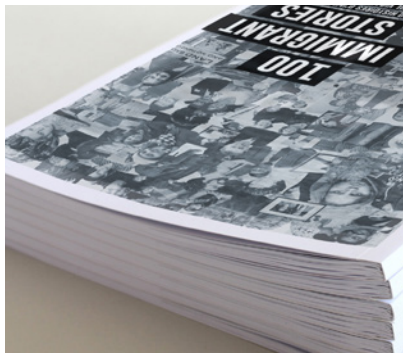
Love from NYC

Love from NYC

Our Immigrant Stories

9-minute animated film, 6 digital artworks (each 24 x 36 inches), and a book design. 2022.

"Who are the immigrant heroes in your life? What have they contributed to Canada? How have they helped you personally?" Participants across Canada were invited to submit their stories and amplify their hero's contribution through writing, photographs, or video. As part of his artist residency at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, artist Aquil Virani integrated the public submissions into an animated collage, a series of 6 multimedia artworks, and an anthology book of the submitted stories.

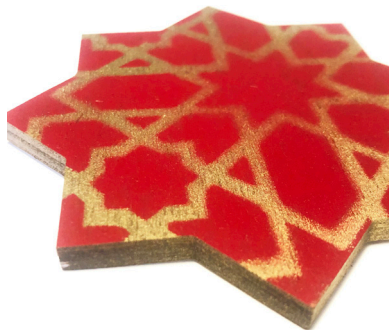


Merry Khushali

Mixed media, acrylic and spray paint on cardboard. 2022.

This project presents a series of Christmas-style ornaments honouring the Ismaili Muslim celebrations called Khushali (or Khushiali) – one of which takes place on December 13. Building on memories of the artist's upbringing as a Muslim in somewhat-secular Canada, the work references the assimilationist approach of the Ismaili diaspora.

Painted in the style of hand-made decorations, these objects feature the colours of the Ismaili flag that happen to be the colours of Christmas: red and green. This coincidence allows these celebratory items to “blend in” with the prevalent winter holiday aesthetic. Whether this tongue-in-cheek display is cultural erasure or pluralist fusion, “Merry Khushali” asks us what kinds of diversity are hiding in plain sight.





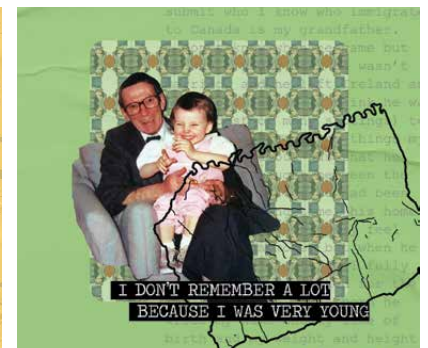
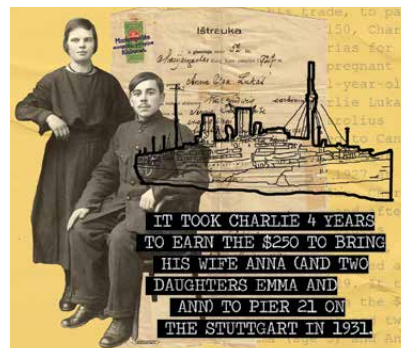
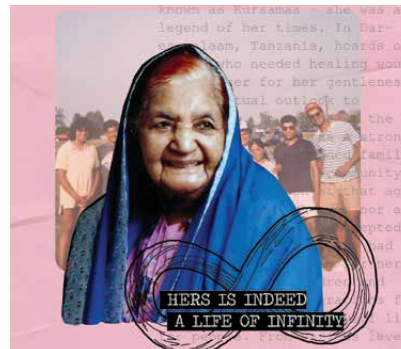
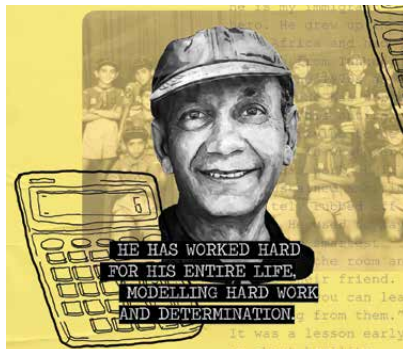
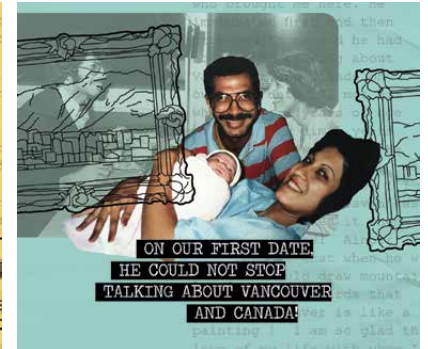
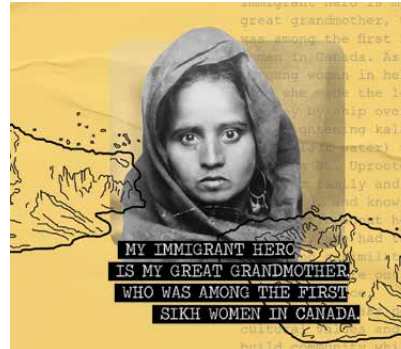
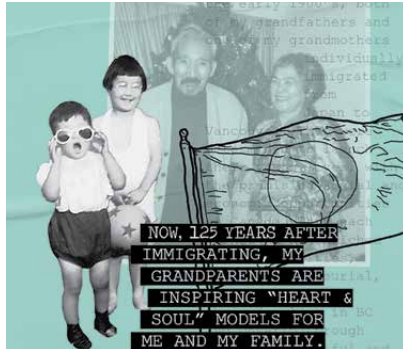
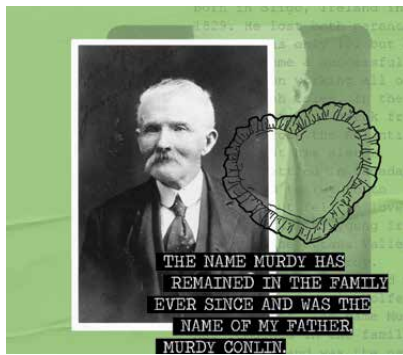
... in the early...
... their communit...
... WW II Internment. [...] Now 125 years after immigrat...
... My mom Dilshad Punjani is 74 years old and still wo...
... left Uganda fleeing Idi Amin's regime. [...] I am...
... and appreciate the joy and everyday wonder...
... my wonderful mother. [...] People loved...
... And for very good reasons / Her warmth, g...
... and brightness. / She supported her frien...
... didn't judge their character. [...] • Michael...
... her was in WWII, after the war was over, I...
... yed in Germany with the occupation Arm...
... il about early 1947. [...] When he came...
... k home, he went to work at the Halifax w...
... ront as a checker. At times, he was asked...
... go to Pier 21 to help translate as the im-...
... grants arrived. He was my Hero. • Faith Pic...
... and, John, (Giovanni Piccolo) came to Canad...
... through Pier 21 when he was not quite 3. He...
... arrived with his mother Rosina and his sister...
... Mary, on the Vulcania, out of Naples. Their fa...
... ther, Santo had arrived 2 years earlier [...] Th...
... Piccolo's experience was a typical immigr...
... story of that era. There was great pov...
... ter the war, and very little work t...
... As a volunteer tour guide at Pi...
... shared in many other immigr...
... every day you see people, som...
... alies, come through the door...
... their eyes. [...] As a voluntee...
... to share in those stories, tho...
... Verheyen: My grandmother...
... Wiebe (Fineberg) and she was...
... Bride and immigrated to Cana...
... er finding 110 love letters that...
... before her sailing, I found myse...
... in London, England, 67 y...
... grateful for the insp...
... she was

... ed from Japan to Vancouver. [...] The...
... through both the bountiful and difficult years inclu...
... models for me and my family. • Salima Punja...
... C. She immigrated to Canada to join her fam...
... ped me with is to learn how to recognize m...
... k you for reading this story of Yocheved, I...
... manda Arella: My immigrant hero is my...
... grandfather, Aldo Arella. He immigrated to...
... Canada as a teenager from Italy, travelling l...
... himself. As he crossed the Atlantic (to ever...
... ally arrive at Pier 21), he joined, and won...
... dancing competition on the boat. He lear...
... o speak English and French, started a busi...
... ess, raised a family, and built a life and cre...
... ed a community in a country where he had...
... connections. I want to follow his example...
... dancing joyfully in the face of unknown ch...
... enges. • Rawan Ali: Today is my dad's first...
... day at a law firm as a paralegal. Baba, who w...
... ce a lawyer, a PhD holder, and a former...
... as a paralegal. [...] Baba starte...
... and he is my immigrant hero...
... Pont: My story is not partic...
... or adventuresome. [...] I w...
... had a profession that Cana...
... ded at the time. [...] My ro...
... in NZ, and although I h...
... ome now, I am often di...
... I am so fortunate an...
... choice of either count...
... oth equally. • Cindy...
... Pat Cunningham (née...
... ed) was a British war...
... Howard Cunning

31 Immigrant Heroes

Digital illustrations based on publicly-submitted photographs. 2022.

As part of a residency at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, I illustrated 31 immigrant stories, published online on my 31st birthday. Each collage features a photograph and a pull quote from the submitted story.





**“Ugandan Asians”
land in Montreal,
1972 [Series in
progress]**

*Acrylic paint, spray paint on plywood,
2022.*

This series of paintings depicts various scenes from the Longue Pointe army base in Montreal, Quebec, in 1972 when Ugandan refugees expelled by Idi Amin began a new life in Canada.



Unpacking Ismaili baggage, 1972

Acrylic and spray paintings in vintage suitcases. Various dimensions. 2022.

Supported by a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, this series of suitcase-paintings explores themes of migration, identity, and settler relationships with indigenous people in Canada. 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1972 presidential decree from Ugandan dictator Idi Amin that nationalized the property of tens of thousands of "Ugandan Asians" and expelled them from the country.







Tu es géniale. You matter.

Ballpoint pen on paper. 2021.

Created for the LoveMail project, this illustration integrates crowdsourced words of encouragement surrounding the pandemic. Phrases include: "You will get through," "We rise by lifting others," and "Je crois en toi (I believe in you)."

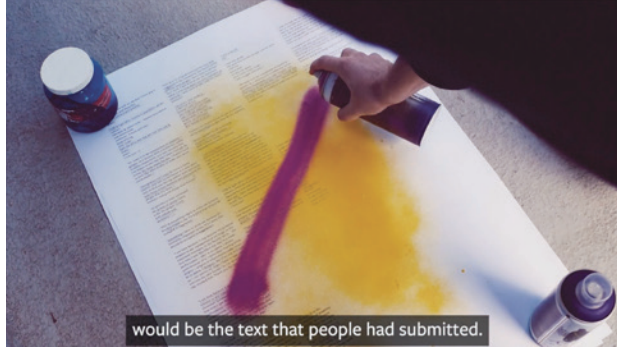
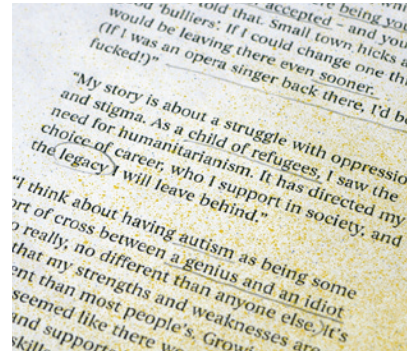
Amplified Opera: Stories worth amplifying

Series of multimedia acrylic and spray paintings and art book (5 x 8 inches), 2020.

In collaboration with Toronto-based Amplified Opera, we asked audience members which stories “they live to amplify,” integrating their responses into a series of visual artworks depicting diverse performers from the inaugural season of performances.

The paintings were included in a book design collaboration titled “Microphone” and a process-illuminating video.

The featured performers here are: Laurie Rubin, Teiya Kasahara and Kenneth Overton.



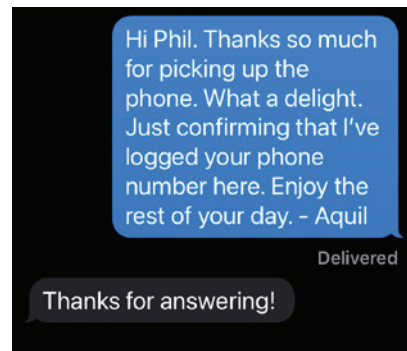
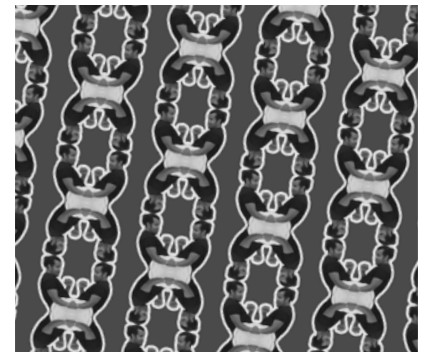
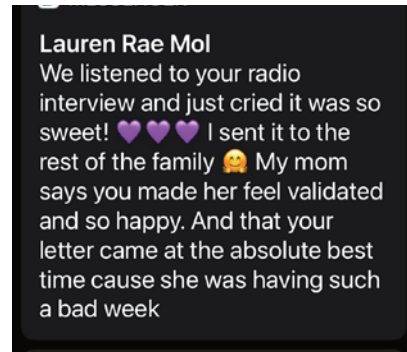
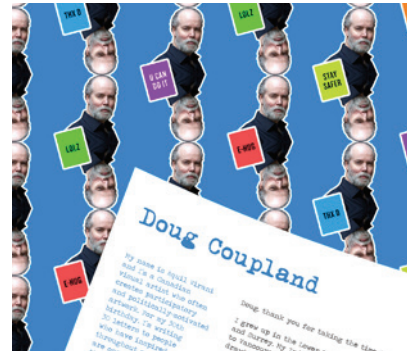
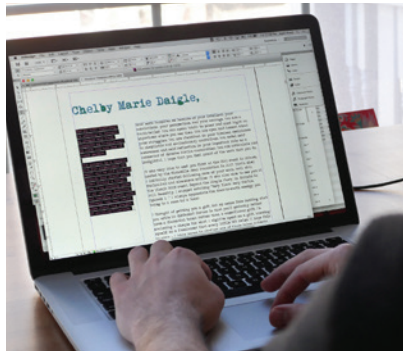
30 Letters

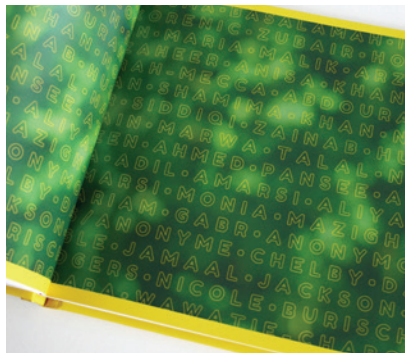
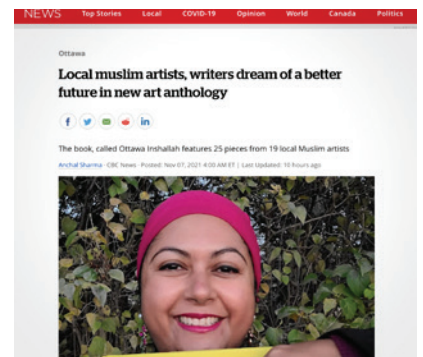
Letter-writing campaign and pattern design project. 2021.

For the artist's 30th birthday, he wrote 30 letters to people who had inspired him throughout my life. The project was a simple and fun experiment to reach out to old and new friends and "share good vibes during a tough time."

Among the better known recipients were the likes of Kent Monkman, Syrus Marcus Ware, Patsy Van Roost, Chelby Marie Daigle and Laurent Duvernavy-Tardif. Each letter included a customized pattern created from a digital photograph.

In addition to coverage in the Ottawa Citizen and APT613, the project was featured in a 40-minute radio documentary that aired on CBC Radio One's The Doc Project.





Ottawa Inshallah

Bilingual art anthology of Ottawa-based Muslim artists and writers. 2021.

Ottawa Inshallah is a bilingual art anthology that features 25 artworks from Ottawa-based Muslim artists who dream of a better future.

With a grant from the City of Ottawa and support from the Silk Road Institute, the artist took on the role of organizer to amplify the voices of other Muslim creatives, prioritizing accessibility, diversity and empowerment. Selected artists received a modest honorarium and a free copy of the anthology.



Reach.

Digital artwork. 2021.

In collaboration with #GGARTS2020 award winner Zainub Verjee, I created a collaborative artwork remotely with youth in Edmonton through the Ismaili (Muslim) Council of Alberta. Participants submitted words that exemplified their hopes for the year as we moved into a new phase of pandemic uncertainty.

We created limited edition prints with the image that were given as gifts to VIPs and friends of the community.





Gerrard India Bazaar: Street-level installation

Backlit acrylic vinyl signage on street-side lamp posts. 2021.

On a stretch of Gerrard Street in Toronto called the Gerrard India Bazaar, curator Tasneem Bandukwala juried a street-level exhibition of artists of South Asian descent. 20 panels feature 20 different illustrations of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi culture. This artwork features a hand adorned with mendhi (or henna) with a nod in the background to Islamic geometry.



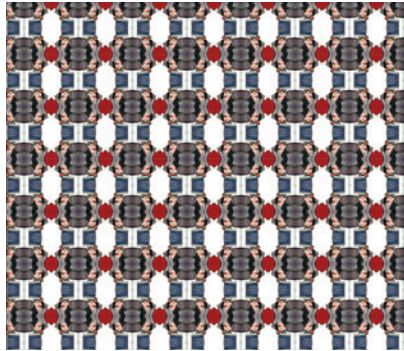
Artur Aniol :
 I landed in Montreal on Sept. 27, 1982. When Marshall Law was declared by gen. Jaruzelski in Poland on Dec. 13, 1981 to eliminate the opposition I was living in Vienna, Austria. I lost my hope in an efficient rebuilding of democracy in that very unstable region of Europe dominated by Russia. The decision was made to seek a civilized and peaceful Land that would offer the best conditions for the future generations. And I found it! After a brief stop in Montreal our Swiss Air airplane continued its flight to the final destination from Zurich to Toronto. I was speechless when we landed not only because I could not say a word in English. I could not believe I have gone so far from my homeland. It felt like



Artist residency at the Canadian Museum of Immigration

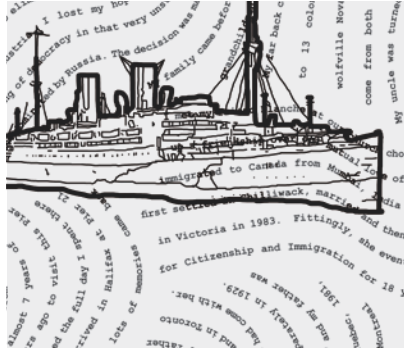
Digital artworks. 2021.

As part of my (ongoing) artist residency with the Canadian Museum of Immigration, I asked the public to submit stories of the "immigrant heroes in our lives." I created "experiments" or digital art exercises with the submissions, leading up to the final artwork reveal in February 2022.



Submitted by Emma Rothschild from the traditional territory of the Lekwungen, Songhees, Esquimalt, W̱ANWEC peoples (Victoria, BC).

I met my friend Blanche at our church choir. We struck up a friendship over our mutual love of music. Blanche immigrated to Canada from Mumbai, India in 1980. She first settled in Chilliwack, married and then ended up in Victoria in 1983. Fittingly, she eventually worked for Citizenship and Immigration for 18 years. Being bilingual (French/English), she often led the singing of "O Canada" during citizenship ceremonies. To me, she is brave, kind, thoughtful and a wonderful person.





Gerrard India Bazaar: Street-level installation

Backlit acrylic vinyl signage on street-side lamp posts. 2021.

On a stretch of Gerrard Street in Toronto called the Gerrard India Bazaar, curator Tasneem Bandukwala juried a street-level exhibition of artists of South Asian descent. 20 panels feature 20 different illustrations of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi culture. This artwork features a hand adorned with mendhi (or henna) with a nod in the background to Islamic geometry.





The Snow Spray Series

Digital photographs of biodegradable spray paint on snow. 2021.

I used biodegradable spray paint to spread poetic messages on the streets during the first pandemic winter. Some were snowed over. Some were peed on by dogs. Some of them didn't last long. But each "snow tag" was a message in a bottle, sent out to sea.

The poem shown: "Be kind to yourself / Eyes closed gently / Imagine your future / Hugs aplenty."

And the phrase in the bottom photo: "Patientez SVP" (Please wait, or please be patient, in French, used often in formal or impersonal contexts – like websites that are loading, for example).





Le 29 janvier: Commemorative portraits of Quebec City Muslims

*Acrylic, spray paint, on canvas.
30 x 65 inches. 2020.*

Ezzedine Soufiane. Mamadou Tanou Barry. Khaled Belkacemi. Abdelkrim Hassane. Ibrahima Barry. Aboubaker Thabti. Say their names.

This commemorative art project features painted portraits of six Muslim men killed at the *Centre culturel islamique de Québec* on January 29, 2017. These artworks were created according to the permission of the victims' families.



Les portraits commémoratifs en espace public

Digital photographs. 2019-2021.

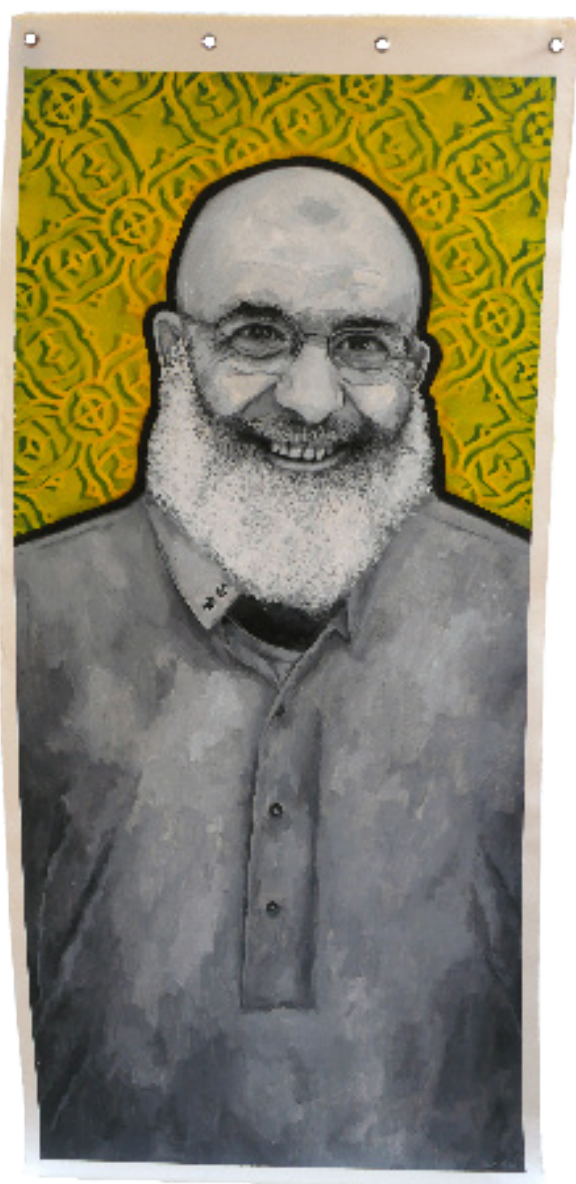
Ezzedine Soufiane. Mamadou Tanou Barry. Khaled Belkacemi. Abdelkrim Hassane. Ibrahima Barry. Aboubaker Thabti. Say their names.



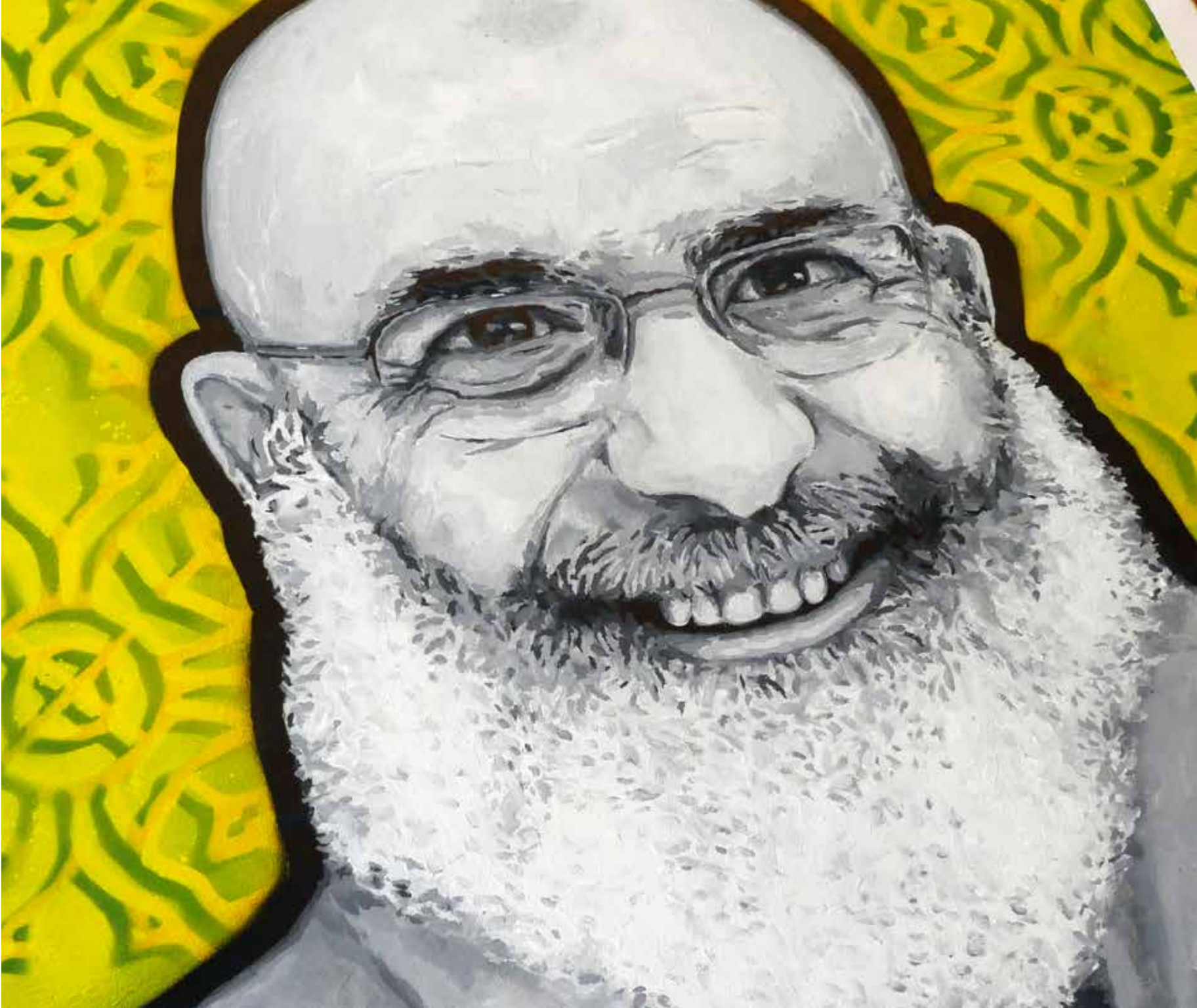
This commemorative art project features painted portraits of the six Muslim men killed at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec on January 29, 2017. These artworks were created according to the permission of the victims' families and gifted to them after being exhibited at the mosque in 2022.



These photographs feature the artist holding up the commemorative portraits of the Quebec City Mosque Attack in public spaces in Canada.













29 messages à Québec

Limited edition booklets.

Version A – hand-sprayed.

3.5 x 5.5 inches. 66 pages. 2020.

Version B – digitally printed.

5 x 8 inches. 42 pages. 2020.

For the 3rd anniversary of the Quebec City Mosque Attack, I created and delivered booklets containing 29 messages of hope, healing and solidarity, crowdsourced from the public all over the world and illustrated using stencils and black spray-paint.



Southridge School's 25th Anniversary Mural

Acrylic, spray paint, paper, ink on canvas. 72 x 108 inches. 2020.

Artist Aquil Virani asked each of the 680 Junior and Senior School students at Southridge School to draw on a sticky-note that was integrated directly into the participatory artwork. The doodle expressed what each student loves about the school, collaged among the chorus of voices to create a visual metaphor for community.



La discrimination: « c'est comme ça qu'on vit. »

Anti-Bill-21 poster and mailout campaign. 2019.

I created a satirical poem in French and a series of accompanying images critiquing Quebec's Bill 21 that prohibits the wearing of religious symbols for many public sector workers such as police officers and teachers.

The quoted section of the title, "c'est comme ça qu'on vit" (translated as "It's how we live"), refers to a direct quote from an explanation of Bill 21 by Quebec Premier François Legault. As part of a mailout campaign, I mailed it to various relevant politicians and the leaders of cultural institutions in Quebec. I also produced posters for anti-Bill-21 rallies. The slogan, "Neutre pour qui?" asks "Neutral for whom?" while the phrase below says, "Don't tell me what to wear."





NEUTRE
POUR
QUI ?

NON A LA
RENOUELEE
VOULEE

NON AU
PROJET
DE LOI 21

NEUTRE
POUR
QUI ?

NON A LA
RENOUELEE
VOULEE

NON AU
PROJET
DE LOI 21

NEUTRE
POUR
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NON A LA
RENOUELEE
VOULEE

NON AU
PROJET
DE LOI 21

NEUTRE
POUR
QUI ?

NON A LA
RENOUELEE
VOULEE

NON AU
PROJET
DE LOI 21



1
Mom & Dad
I want to thank my mom and dad for everything they do for me. They are the best parents in the world and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



13
Aliza & Zaheda
I want to thank Aliza and Zaheda for everything they do for me. They are the best friends I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



11
Nabil El-Dirge
I want to thank Nabil for everything he does for me. He is the best person I could ask for and I love him so much. He always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have him.



20
Jubilee Arts
I want to thank Jubilee Arts for everything they do for me. They are the best organization I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



14
Rebecca, again
I want to thank Rebecca again for everything she does for me. She is the best person I could ask for and I love her so much. She always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have her.



12
Courtney Dingley
I want to thank Courtney for everything she does for me. She is the best person I could ask for and I love her so much. She always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have her.



9
Salim & Boyana
I want to thank Salim and Boyana for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



6
Andy Lind Simon
I want to thank Andy for everything he does for me. He is the best person I could ask for and I love him so much. He always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have him.



15
La famille Pattinier
I want to thank the Pattinier family for everything they do for me. They are the best family I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



19
Nolger & Morten
I want to thank Nolger and Morten for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



18
Les Artistes Pour La Paix
I want to thank Les Artistes Pour La Paix for everything they do for me. They are the best organization I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



16
Anna & Melissa
I want to thank Anna and Melissa for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



28
Thank you
I want to thank everyone who has supported me over the years. I'm so lucky to have all of you and I love you all so much. Thank you for everything.



24
Xavier et le CAP
I want to thank Xavier and the CAP for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



22
Team Syria
I want to thank Team Syria for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



23
Kanion'kehá:ka Nation
I want to thank the Kanion'kehá:ka Nation for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



7
Esmée & Larry
I want to thank Esmée and Larry for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



17
Maell Low Falls
I want to thank Maell Low Falls for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



27
Adrienne & Tommy
I want to thank Adrienne and Tommy for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



8
Michele Charrier
I want to thank Michele for everything she does for me. She is the best person I could ask for and I love her so much. She always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have her.



Rebecca
I want to thank Rebecca for everything she does for me. She is the best person I could ask for and I love her so much. She always supports me and makes me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have her.



Drawing Board
I want to thank the Drawing Board for everything they do for me. They are the best organization I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



25
Power of the Arts
I want to thank the Power of the Arts for everything they do for me. They are the best organization I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.



5
Claudia & Simon
I want to thank Claudia and Simon for everything they do for me. They are the best people I could ask for and I love them so much. They always support me and make me feel like I can do anything. I'm so lucky to have them.

28 thank-you's

Online gratitude campaign.
28 posts, 2019.

I'm proud of the work I'm trying to do, but it's definitely not all me; I am so lucky to benefit from the support of so many. For my 28th birthday, I shared 28 thank-you's.

Preparing for the End Times

Participation in workshop series.
Toronto. 2019.

I participated in the workshop series titled "Preparing for the End Times and the Beginnings of Our Collective Freedom" guided by Syrus Marcus Ware and presented by C Magazine in association with the Toronto Biennial of Art.



A few initial takeaways from "Preparing for the End Times and the Beginnings of Our Collective Freedom," guided by Syrus Marcus Ware, presented by C Magazine in association with Toronto Biennial of Art. Page 1 of 2.

Each of us has skills and each of us has needs.

Our survival in the apocalypse relies on our ability to accept that we all have needs and to navigate our interdependence.

Do you think it's the end?

There is no singular "end." The apocalypse happens for different people at different times. For some, it is right now.

Setting boundaries is important for self-care, and can be understood for the benefit of the group too.

When asserting your needs, say: "I need to be good to be good to you."

Surprise, surprise – the institutions will be slow to act if you're not a white, upper-middle-class traditional family unit.

Anticipate that those most marginalized will experience the End Times first.

There are many ways to preserve foods – vinegar, sugar, salt, drying, etc.

The main goal is somehow remove water content and to heat the food to kill bacteria.

Jerusalem artichokes are indigenous to this land.

How do we change the culture so that it is more used and desired?

In the Parable of the Sower, one of the kids ends up "squealing" to the



Musée des beaux-arts de Mont-Saint-Hilaire : Un défi de la paix

Collaborative art event, workshop and performance. 2019.

I was invited by Chantal Millette – curator of the Musée des beaux-arts de Mont-Saint-Hilaire – to run a creative workshop-performance on the International Day of Peace that challenged spectators and participants to collaborate, sometimes unknowingly, in the completion of creative challenges. Called “Le défi de la paix” (roughly translated to “The challenge of peace”), participants were handed a small card with a secret challenge and a time limit. In designing the games, I was able to make statements about lived experience, diversity, artistic integrity and empowerment. We debriefed after each round to discuss what we did and what we learned.





Copenhagen Poetry Club

Left: "Vi ikke jeg." Spray paint on paper. 8.5 x 11 inches. 2018.
Right: "Humans without borders (detail)." Ball-point pen on paper.
8 x 10 inches. 2018.

I crowdsourced creative slogan ideas on the theme of "celebrating difference" from the Copenhagen Poetry Club in English and Danish to produce a collaborative drawing (on the page to the right) and a series of spray-painted prints (on this page). Left as gifts throughout the city, the artworks explored the power of a concise phrase to communicate something clear and meaningful.



Beauty is multitudinous

All det videlen

Without differences,
stagnation.

Google Oversæt

Acrylic, spray paint, collage on paper.
24 x 60 inches. 2018.

Google Oversæt means “Google Translate” in Danish. I wrote a poem in English and google-translated it into Danish, installing it guerilla-style at various local bus stops. The writing explored themes of intergenerational belonging and national identity. The translation distorts the original in unexpected ways, illustrating the frustration resulting from an imperfect transition between languages and cultures. In the context of “integration,” if you can’t understand me and I can’t understand you, who wins? Who loses?





Asylbørn fremtid (Freedom for asylum-seeking children)

Acrylic and spray-painted sandwich boards and poster campaign. 2018.

Trampoline House is an independent community centre in Copenhagen that provides a place of support, community and purpose for refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark.



After I spent some time in the community, the folks at "Trampolinehuset" asked me to combine collaborative art and activism to create wearable sandwich-board-signs for demonstrations and public activities. Constructed with the help of adults and children living in these asylum camps, the paintings' aesthetic fits into the branding of a specific petition launched by the People's Movement for Asylum-Seeking Children's Futures. In the months following, the campaign achieved its goal of over 50,000 signatures.

CelebrateHer

*Portrait series and sound play.
Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

CelebrateHer is a feminist portrait series and immersive installation presented in collaboration with playwright Erin Lindsay, director Micheline Chevrier, and Montreal's Imago Theatre. Centering twelve publicly-nominated inspiring women, CelebrateHer explores the diversity of experiences within womanhood, respectful representation and the complexities of allyship.

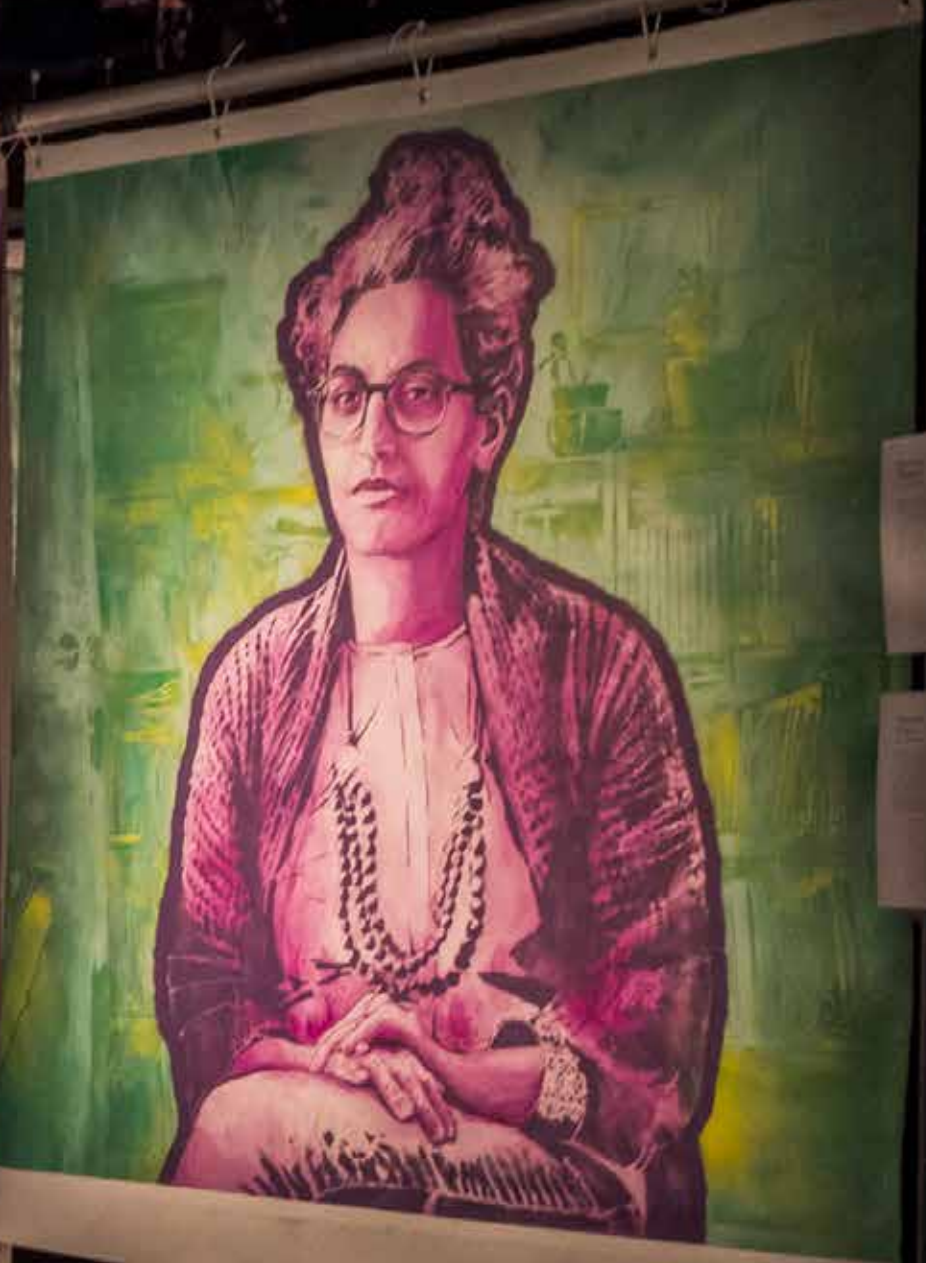






Two small white cards are hanging vertically on the left side of the image. The top card has the number '17' and a small circular logo. The bottom card has the number '18' and a similar logo.





111

111



CelebrateHer at Collège Rosemont

*Portrait series and sound play.
Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*





CelebrateHer at the 2020 Feminist Art Fest at OCAD U

*Portrait series and sound play.
Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

CelebrateHer – Naomi Tatty

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Naomi tells it how it is. She's an Inuit woman, a mother, a daughter, a seamstress, and, as her nominator Anna Bunce puts it, "a spoke in the wheel, connecting people and communities together." She works in community health outreach for the Department of Public Health in Nunavut. I had hoped I would be lucky enough to meet Naomi in person while she was visiting Ottawa to accompany her father on a health-related trip, but fortunately, they found what they needed locally.

Chatting over the phone with a 3-second time delay proved to be a wonderful exercise in patience and trust. In our conversation, Naomi was very giving of her time and her experiences. On social media, one of Naomi's latest posts reads, "Takualugilli niruaqtaulautunga, one of the 12 nominated and selected [for the CelebrateHer project.] It's finally sinking in."





CelebrateHer – Bochra Manai

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Bochra is a super smart lady with an incredible story. Alia's nomination describes her, among other things, as an "one of the brightest spirits she's ever met." She gives you her full attention. She is a researcher, a professor and an engaged citizen with a PhD in Urban Studies from the INRS-UCS. She's a Muslim woman who chooses not to wear the hijab. She fled from political turmoil in Tunisia and eventually ended up in Montreal via France about ten years ago.

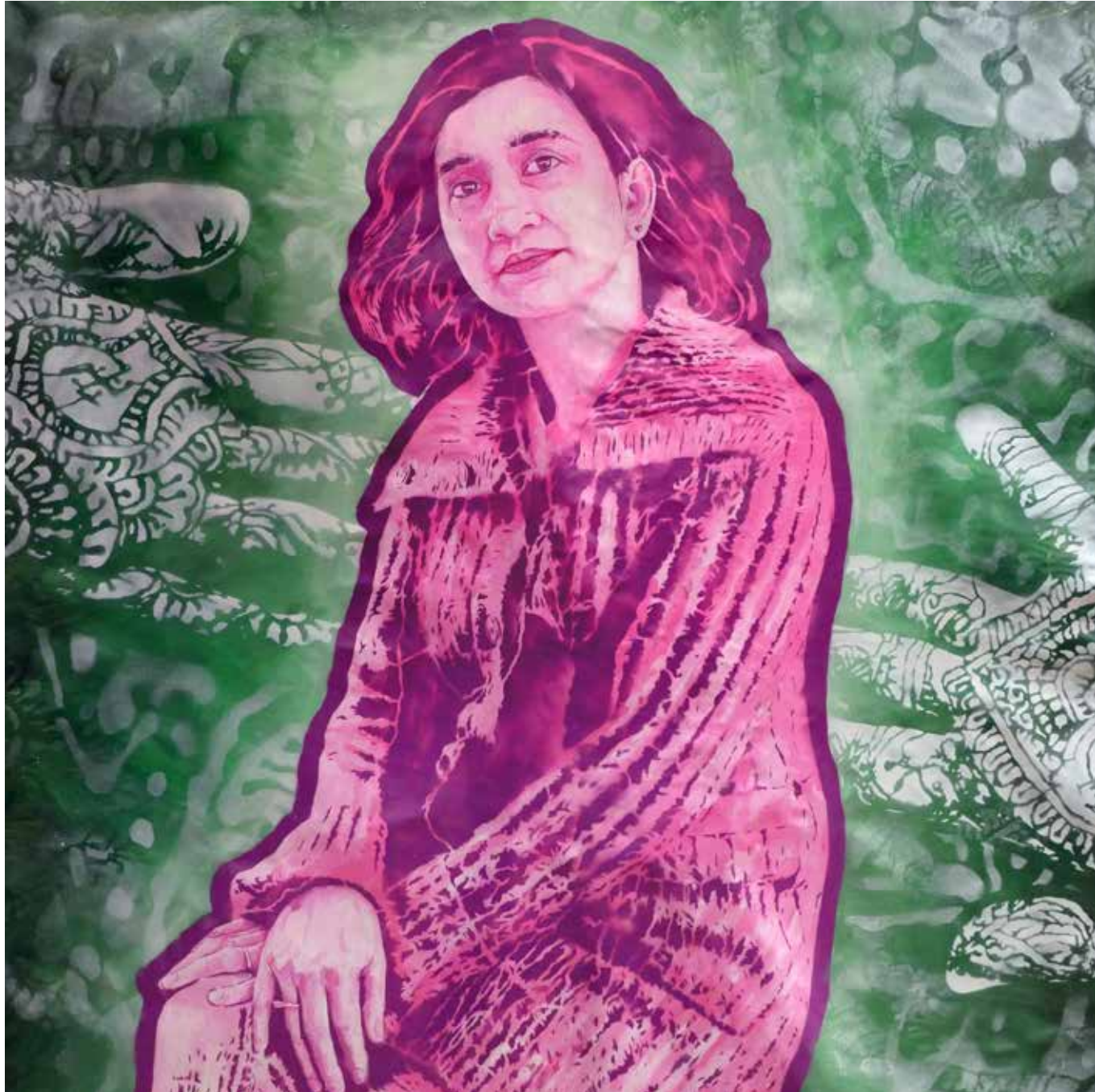
The backdrop of her home office – with all of its book-filled shelves and messy, planted greenery – visually represents her academic passion fused with her domestic commitments as a young mother. The only book in the background that is legible among the spray-painted texture is "Aime comme Montréal."

CelebrateHer – Shweta Khare

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Shweta started to cry when we surprised her just a few steps from here back in February. I interviewed her for about ten minutes under the pretence that I was an employee from McGill asking questions to mature students and their families. Shweta strikes me as someone incredibly grateful for the life she has, even if it's not perfect. Family is so important to different Indian cultures, and her family loves her so much.

My own mother moved to Canada and worked while raising a family in Vancouver. To do it all away from the familiarity of your home base is extraordinary. The spray-painted rendition of the henna designs in the background (that she originally created) is meant to elicit questions about what traditions we keep and what traditions we're allowed to do away with.





CelebrateHer – Romita Sur

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Romita is a badass woman of colour. She's almost done with her transsystemic law degree – in both civil and common law – at McGill University. When I visited Rom's apartment, I was reminded of my hospitable Indian "aunties" who would offer me everything they had without hesitation. "We have water, juice, milk, some leftover iced tea. I just made some food, do you want some?"

Romita is especially proud of her work with the *Contours* journal that promotes the voices of women in law. She co-founded the Women of Colour Collective that built a community around racialized women in her faculty. A banner that the WOCC commissioned features the words, "Survival, Resilience, Solidarity," so I got in touch with the talented Oakville-based illustrator Izabela (Izzy) Stanic to see if I could remix her artwork into the painting. Izzy was delighted. (Check out izzystanic.com.)

CelebrateHer – Joannie Verreault

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Joannie spends more time behind the camera than in front of it. Her knowledge of photography made me a bit nervous to interview her and take reference photos. I knew that she would notice the compositional choices of her portrait in a way that others might not. The home she has made with her partner Rumi felt like a treasure hunt of art projects.

Joannie knows the opportunity she has as a teacher to shape the lives of her students. She is centred, both literally and figuratively, among the painted background that combines two of her passions in a symmetric way. The colour palette positions her against the stereotypical expectation of “girls wear pink.” I meant to include a subtle reference to an angel’s halo that emerges from the circular rings of the camera lens.





CelebrateHer – Kama La Mackerel

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Kama has this boisterous and contagious laugh; she lets the world know. She has a lot to say; her sentences flow into one another. Sometimes, I'm not sure where the personal ends and the persona begins. She is fabulous, and when it comes to style, she can definitely pull it off.

Kama is an artistic ocean of art-making and storytelling; I really wanted to incorporate the positive, political assertions in her work by illustrating one of her banner objects in the background. She explains beautifully that her experience of gender is fluid, like waves of water – it comes and it goes, and it comes, and it goes.

erious
distraction.
your work.
ver and
being.”
(R. 1975)





CelebrateHer – Rachel Zellars

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Rachel talks and you listen. She's a single mother, a researcher and educator, and an anti-violence activist. I find her command of language mesmerizing. She holds a PhD in the Department of Integrated Studies within the Faculty of Education at McGill University.

I first met Rachel in passing during organizational meetings of the first Manif des femmes (Women's March) back in January 2017 when she was serving as the Executive Director of Girls Action Foundation. In addition to her intellect, the humanity and warmth in her leadership style made you feel like, "I want to be on her team." And yet, perhaps unexpectedly, Rachel is a farm girl. Her favourite quote pays tribute to her scholarly pursuits, floating among the earthy backdrop of farmland in Moravia, New York.

"The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being."
– Toni Morrison, 1975

CelebrateHer – Zévida Bendjeddou

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
65 x 65 inches. 2018.*

Zévida is a woman who commands respect. Her daily work seems grounded in her relationship with others, with herself, and ultimately, with God. Zévida sees herself as apolitical, a simple volunteer for the good of the community. As I was leaving the mosque where we held the interview, I asked her what kind of art she likes; she said she used to draw stars and flowers as a child. A simple Islamic-style pattern felt fitting to contribute to the richness of the portrait while keeping true to the modest nature of her demeanour.

Zévida's portrait was awarded the "Certificate of Achievement (Top 10)" at the Portrait Society of Canada's Miracle of the Portrait exhibition.







Official banner of the Manif des femmes à Montréal

Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
~65 x 120 inches. 2017.

The organizers of the Women's March in Montreal invited me to paint an official banner to serve as a backdrop for the diverse list of speakers and performers at the Manif des femmes at Place des Arts on January 21, 2017.

Following the event, the banner was eventually donated to the permanent collection of the McCord Museum in Montreal.



Official banner for the 2nd Manif des femmes à Montréal: #ÇaPassePu

Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
~65 x 120 inches. 2018.



The main text of this banner, “#ÇaPassePu,” is a Quebecker slang variation of “#ÇaPassePlus,” translated roughly to “It’s no longer acceptable” or “Time’s Up.” Following the final speech at the event, attendees were invited to sign messages onto the banner that is now housed by the Fédération des femmes du Québec.



The background also subtly features a quote by Kimberlé Crenshaw; the painted hand-cut stencil of the quote used to create the banner was later gifted to Crenshaw.



“It’s not about supplication, it’s about power. It’s not about asking, it’s about demanding. It’s not about convincing those who are currently in power. It’s about changing the very face of power itself.” – Kimberlé Crenshaw



JAN MONROUGE

eggs for sale

WE KNOW
WHAT WE'RE
WO ♀

eggs for sale
eggs for sale
eggs for sale

WHY
JO

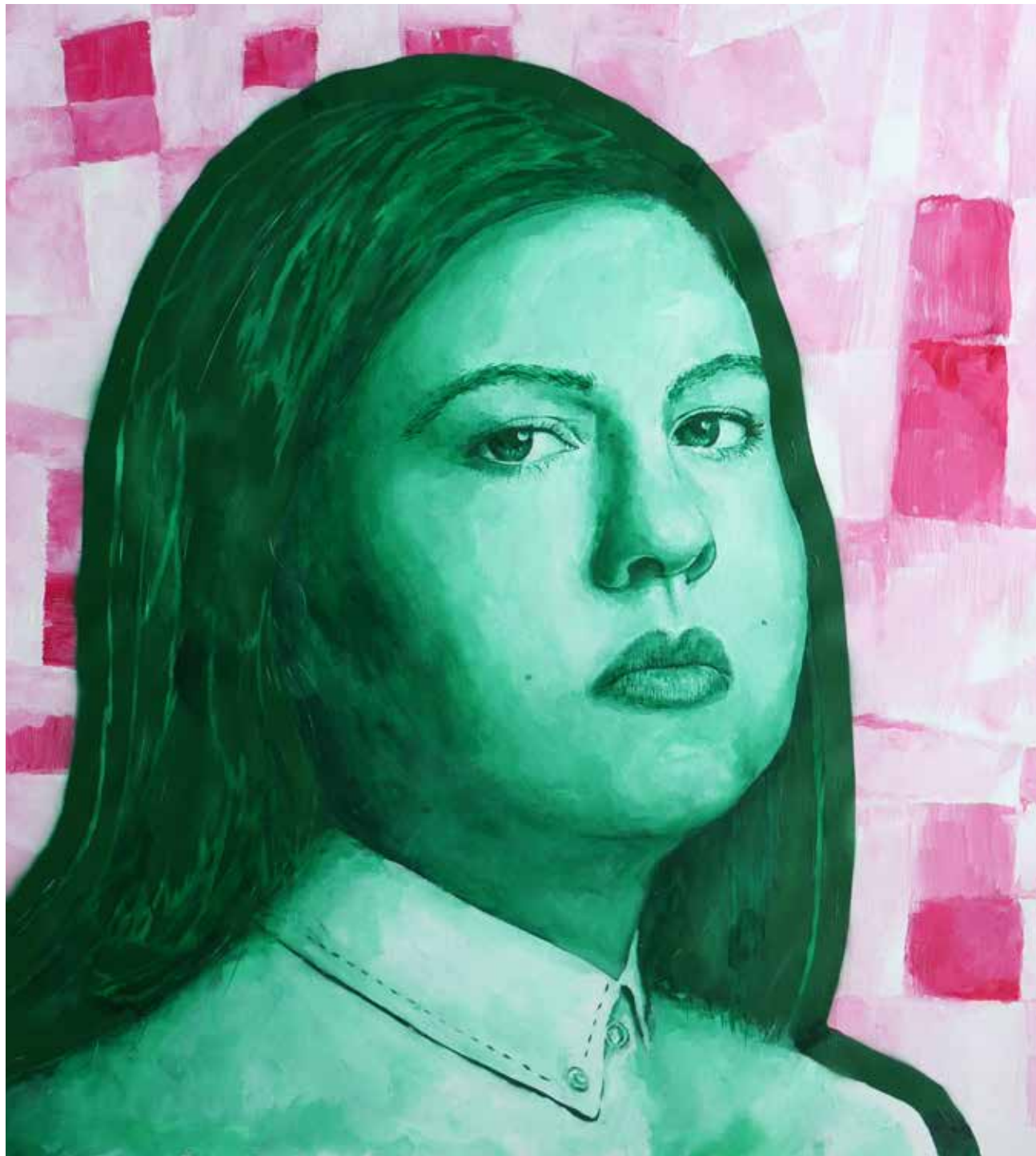
WAX



D.J. Mausner

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas.
22 x 28 inches. 2018.

D.J. Mausner is an award-winning Canadian stand-up, sketch, and improv comedian. I chose to paint D.J. for more than her sharp wit and unapologetic talent. Mausner turned down a paid, nationally-broadcasted television taping of her stand-up comedy at the 2018 Just For Laughs Festival in Montreal to protest JFL Founder Gilbert Rozon and the lack of action his corporation had taken in support of the women who he allegedly assaulted over a 30-year period.





Ela é uma mulher incrível

Installation: spray paint on balloons. 2018.

That's Portuguese for "She is an incredible woman." While in Lisbon, I visited LX Factory to spray-paint the phrase alongside a quick stencil of my friend, Sara Meleika, onto bright yellow balloons, sticking them to poles and railings in an artsy area of the city. I watched how the public engaged with the balloons with kids who pummelled them before stopping to read and young women who posed for a picture or a selfie, playfully pointing towards themselves.

Le manifeste pour la paix : la paix est possible

Ball-point pen on paper.
12 x 12 inches. 2018.

I was invited by artist André Michel to contribute a set of prints to the "Manifeste pour la paix" ("Manifesto for peace" in French). I asked the public for sentences starting with the word, "Peace..." and integrated them into a unified drawing. The main phrase at the centre of the artwork is pulled from the manifesto text itself: "La paix par la paix pour la paix est possible." The subtlety of its visibility is symbolic. If we look for peace – if we try hard enough – it's possible to find it. The manifesto, with this artwork included, was presented at the Conseil des arts de Montreal, the Musée des beaux-arts de Mont-Saint-Hilaire and the Festival de la Paix de Victoriaville.



Aquil Virani 2 hrs · 🌐

Finish the sentence: Peace...

Nnra Zarkandi, Juniper Glass and Nicole Kurceba 19 Comments

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Aquil Virani Pro tip: Use any language you'd like. Usually, specific is more interesting than general. But do whatever. 🙄

Like · Reply · 3h

↳ Christian Hudson replied · 2 Replies · 10 mins

Keri Tomlinson ...will be hard work, we must persist

Like · Reply · 3h

André Moreau Peace... out homies, I'm headed to Copenhagen?

Like · Reply · 3h

↳ Aquil Virani replied · 1 Reply

Esmée-Larry Rothschild-Jones ful as leaves with a slight breeze

Like · Reply · 3h

Florence Paré ...order and good government. 🙄

Like · Reply · 3h

Becc V KR Nerd

Like · Reply · 17m

Write a reply...

Da Bck ... must begin within ourselves

Like · Reply · 3h

Rebecca Jones Peace requires compassion, humility and patience

Like · Reply · 3h

Daniel Bear-esh Fuckers.

Like · Reply · 2h

Daniel Bear-esh (this is the name of a running drill)

Like · Reply · 30m

Tanya Tee Is not constant but an adapting, oscillating, equilibrium.

Like · Reply · 1d

Joshua Budman Out! *mic drop*

Like · Reply · 1d

Nicole Kurceba ...resides in each of us, but we must quiet the ego to find it.

Like · Reply · 1d

Anna Bunce is unconditional love.

Like · Reply · 1d

Annie Rochon Peace is accepting yourself, loving yourself and forgiving yourself.

Like · Reply · 1d

Aquil Virani Anonymous submission: peace will come with the dismantling of false constructions that lead to othering and dehumanization. [Thanks, friends! Feel free to add some more!]

Like · Reply · 1d

J-p Audet would be lit 🙄🙄🙄

Like · Reply · 1d

Mark Mishel Can be achieved despite popular opinion.

Like · Reply · 1d

Aliya Kanani That's the end of the sentence. Simple.

Like · Reply · 1d

Pandora Hobby is a verb

Like · Reply · 1d

↳ Pandora Hobby replied · 1 Reply

Nema AL Shamal Starting from inside us (from heart) When you deal with people with love and tolerance you will see peace and goodness everywhere 🍀

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

Mee Zur ...up! A-town.

<https://youtu.be/OxBSyx85Ko8>

Usher - Yeah! ft. Lil Jon, Ludacris

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · 23h

Sally Habebah

أنت إنسان عظيم عظيم. وفنان رائع أنتهى لك التفوق والتفاجؤ. بأمانتية لسلام اعتقد أن السلام والخالص أهم من أي سلام.....

Like · Reply · See Translation · 22h · Edited

Aquil Virani From a wonderful friend: السلام الداخلي أكثر أهمية من أي سلام = "Internal peace is more important than any peace."

Like · Reply · 22h

Natty Richards within to quell the turmoil without.

Like · Reply · 13h

Lynn Susan Pigage Be with you

Love · Reply · 12h

Pierre Pattinier est l'affaire de tous.

Like · Reply · 1h



Portrait of Chief Doris Bill

*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
36 x 48 inches. 2017.*

This is Chief Doris Bill of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. She was elected in March 2014 and re-elected in March 2017, bringing over 30 years of experience as a former journalist for the CBC and First Nations media. The colours reference the logo of

the First Nation's logo, matching the warmth of Chief Bill's character. She worked with notable programs such as Fifth Estate, the National, Newsworld, Absolutely Canadian and Northbeat--becoming one of the most recognizable faces across the north.



Portrait of Chief Kristina Kane

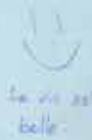
*Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
36 x 48 inches. 2017.*

This is Chief Kristina Kane of the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council. She was elected in October 2012 and re-elected in October 2015, previously serving as Councillor for three years. The painted colours mirror the branding of the Council's logo. In 1902, Chief Kane's

great-grandfather, Chief Jim Boss wrote to England and the Commonwealth to articulate the need for First Nations government to be respected. His message was clear: protect the rights of citizens and the power of the Ta'an Kwach'an self-government.



going today and enjoying
with the camera and taking
pictures and making me very
happy. You are the best
friend I have and the
most beautiful in the
world.



be the best
belly.



A love message
from a student
to a teacher
who is the
best in the
world.

But if you don't
like it, you can
change it.



50 years in the
history of Gray
Mountain - the
first among England
island.



is the best
in the world
in the world
in the world



I really like
you. It is
good to
know you
are there.
I love you
and your
family.

The landscape
plains and hills
it is beauty,
brown and life.



I really like
you. It is
good to
know you
are there.
I love you
and your
family.



culture. It
= the great
escape!

white
horse

light

I really
like it



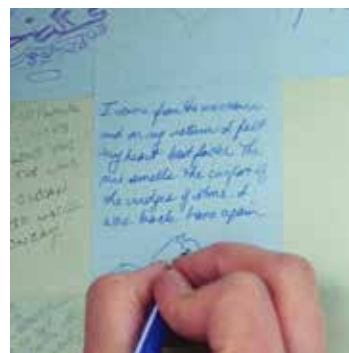
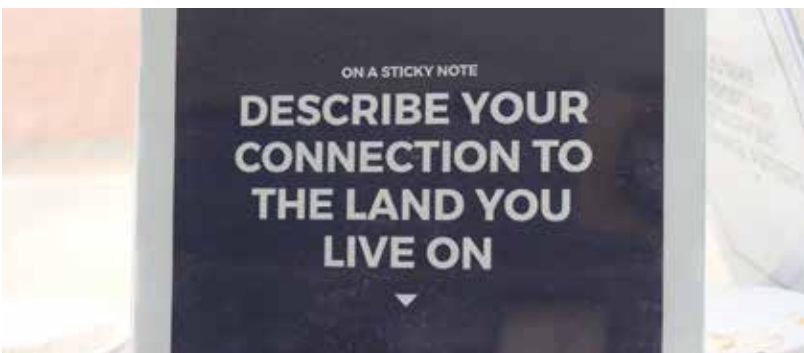
I really
like you
and your
family.



What is your connection to the land you live on?

*Acrylic, spray paint, paper on canvas.
30 x 40 inches. 2017.*

At a live, collaborative painting at the Arts Up Front festival in Whitehorse, Yukon, the public was asked to reflect on their personal connection to the land they live on, writing their answers on a sticky note that was collaged directly onto the canvas.



Postering Peace

Anti-islamophobia poster campaign and documentary film. 2017.

Supported by a grant from the Michaelle Jean Foundation and the Silk Road Institute, youth from diverse Muslim communities across Quebec submitted slogans to combat islamophobia and advance inclusion. Based on these ideas, artist Aquil Virani created posters that humanize the face of Islam and assert Muslims' right to be represented on their own terms.

The project's documentary premiered at the Aga Khan Museum and the Toronto Reference Library as part of Nuit Blanche 2017. Prints from the project were acquired into the McCord Museum's permanent collection in 2018.



MONT-ROYAL



**TOUS
ENSEMBLE
CONTRE
L'ISLAMISME!
UNITÉ
FRATERNITÉ
L'EMONDE
ENTIER**



**THE MORE
COMMON
MUSLIMS
YOU MIGHT
EXPECT
THE MORE
THEY
TALK**



**SCARED
ISLAM?
OFTEN
FEAR
WE DO NOT
UNDERSTAND**



**SCARED OF
ISLAM?
WE
OFTEN
FEAR
WE DO NOT
UNDERSTAND**



Learn more at
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De l'art comme outil pacifiste au MBAM

Caroline Montpetit
17 février 2018
[Culture]

Pour Aquil Virani, tout art est politique.

« Même la décision de ne pas utiliser son art à des fins politiques est une décision politique », dit-il. L'artiste Aquil Virani participe jusqu'au 18 février au forum Le pouvoir des arts, qui se déroule au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, en collaboration avec la Fondation Michaëlle Jean, sous l'égide de la directrice du MBAM, Nathalie Bondil, et du cinéaste Jean-Daniel Lafond, cofondateur de la Fondation.

Aquil Virani est cet artiste qui a fait notamment le tour du pays pour réaliser son projet Autoportrait du Canada. Dans le cadre de ce projet, il a demandé à 800 personnes de lui dessiner ce que représentait le Canada pour elles. L'un des carrés de l'oeuvre finale, qui a réuni tous ces dessins, a été laissé blanc. Il représente deux choses, explique l'artiste : le passé des autochtones qu'on a tenté de rayer, et l'avenir.

Ce week-end, Aquil Virani participera à deux événements du forum : l'un portant sur la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones, et l'autre portant sur sa pratique en tant qu'artiste musulman.

Né en Colombie-Britannique d'une mère d'origine française et d'un père d'origine indienne, Aquil Virani sait ce que c'est que le sentiment d'exclusion. Élevé en anglais, il ne maîtrise pas parfaitement le français, donc n'est pas tout à fait considéré comme Français. De peau blanche, il n'est généralement pas identifié comme musulman, mais son nom n'est pas de consonance européenne.

« Parce que j'ai toutes ces identités, j'ai beaucoup d'empathie pour les gens qui proviennent de communautés différentes. Parce que j'ai l'air d'un Blanc, je ne souffre pas beaucoup d'islamophobie, mais j'éprouve de l'empathie pour ceux qui en souffrent », dit-il.

Différentes croyances

Au lendemain de l'attentat meurtrier à la mosquée de Québec, l'hiver dernier, Aquil Virani a demandé à différentes personnes, musulmanes et non-musulmanes, d'inventer des slogans pour combattre l'islamophobie. Parmi les slogans récoltés, son préféré est le suivant : « On n'a pas besoin de croire la même chose pour avoir foi l'un en l'autre. »

Pour lui, les musulmans ne forment pas une communauté, mais des communautés, parlant différentes langues, provenant de différentes parties du monde, ayant différentes croyances. Il croit que chacun devrait avoir un ami musulman avant de parler de l'islam.

Dans le cadre de sa présentation, Aquil Virani parlera aussi des erreurs qu'il ne referait plus s'il recommençait par exemple le projet Autoportrait du Canada. « Je serais plus patient » envers les communautés autochtones, dit-il, « pour légitimer mon projet ».

Le forum Le pouvoir des arts en est à sa quatrième édition cette année. Il réunit des acteurs du monde de la culture, de la politique, des affaires, de la santé, de la justice et de la société civile au MBAM. Soixante activités, ateliers participatifs, conférences, tables rondes et performances artistiques, s'y dérouleront durant trois jours. En 2016, le forum s'était penché sur les jeunes Noirs victimes de racisme et en 2017, s'est intéressé aux musulmans en situation d'exclusion. Cette année, le forum se déroule sur le thème « Les arts, des armes pour la paix ».

On y abordera donc l'art en lien avec une foule de situations et de problématiques : de l'art-thérapie à l'art communautaire, du graffiti comme mode de participation démocratique, ou de l'art comme mode d'inclusion des nouveaux, ainsi que de l'encouragement de la pratique critique.

Le tout s'inscrit parfaitement dans l'orientation du MBAM, qui « prend en considération les publics exclus ou empêchés », souligne Nathalie Bondil. Par cette approche, le MBAM veut « repenser l'art comme une force de cohésion sociale et de bien-être individuel ».

DÉCOUVREZ LE PAVILLON
POUR LA PAIX MICHAL ET
RENATA HORNSTEIN

Révolution

LOVE & LOVE
LE MARIAGE POUR TOUS
ZILLEN JEAN PAUL GAZDAR

MUSEE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE MONTREAL THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

Entree

VOUS
COMPRENEZ
L'ISLAM
VRAIMENT
OU
ZERO
AMIS
MUSULMANS?
SAIS
COMMENT?



Stronger together

Acrylic, spray paint, ink on board.
48 x 48 inches. 2017.

On January 30, 2017, Montrealers held a candlelight vigil in solidarity with the Québec City Muslim community where I painted a live, collaborative artwork depicting two hands in prayer with prayer beads, known as the tasbeeh. More than one hundred attendees wrote messages of hope in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

The supportive thoughts are embedded in the artwork. "One love. Fort ensemble. We are with you in your grief. We stand with you. Un Québec libre est un Québec uni." The painting was later delivered to the Centre culturel Islamique de Québec (CCIQ) as a gift from the artist. Photographs of the process were exhibited as part of a travelling group show at the Peel Museum and Art Gallery (PAMA) in Brampton, Ontario.





HOPE & LOVE DON'T BE FEARED OF WHO YOU ARE

ALL WE NEED IS LOVE
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime



We are one, we are the same

HOPE & LOVE
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

RECOGNISE ALL HUMANS AS ONE
Mettez forget that
See what happen today?
It a proud of Hope
Sit waiting

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

WE LOVE AND RESPECT YOU
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

PEACE IS ALL WE NEED
NO WAR
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

WE LOVE AND RESPECT YOU
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

ONE PEOPLE
L'AMOUR C'EST LA VIE
A man apparentment
craft was his man in haime

Mural Festival: Why support underrepresented artists?

*Acrylic, spray paint, paper, ink on
canvas. 48 x 72 inches. 2017.*

At Montreal's Mural Festival on Saint-Laurent Boulevard, hundreds of public participants answered the question, "Why is it important to support underrepresented artists?" The goal was to draw attention to the predominantly white and male roster of artists being featured. Artist Aquil Virani collaged these multilingual responses into the background of a live painting, depicting Montreal-based actor and comedian Sehar Manji.



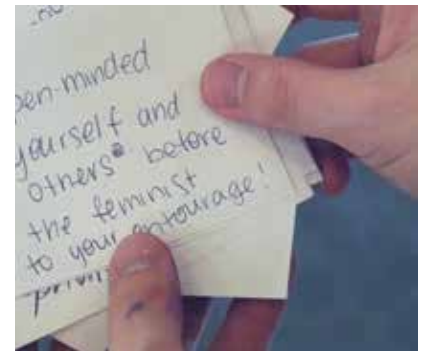




Law Needs Feminism Because

*Acrylic, spray paint, ink on canvas.
36 x 60 inches. 2017.*

Artist Aquil Virani asked over a hundred attendees what concrete steps all of us can take to further the cause of feminism, transcribing these responses throughout the day onto a portrait of Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, the first appointed black judge in Quebec history. Phrases included “Speak up when I’m most afraid. Believe and support sexual assault survivors. Ne pas accepter les commentaires sexistes.” The painting was purchased by the Faculty of Law at McGill University.



Tronald Dump

Street intervention and short film.
2016.

I created satirical “Tronald Dump” balloons to display my disapproval of Donald Trump’s calculated and xenophobic behaviour during his Republican nominee campaign. I created a short film on the streets of Toronto, featuring the general public’s thoughts and reactions to the balloons.

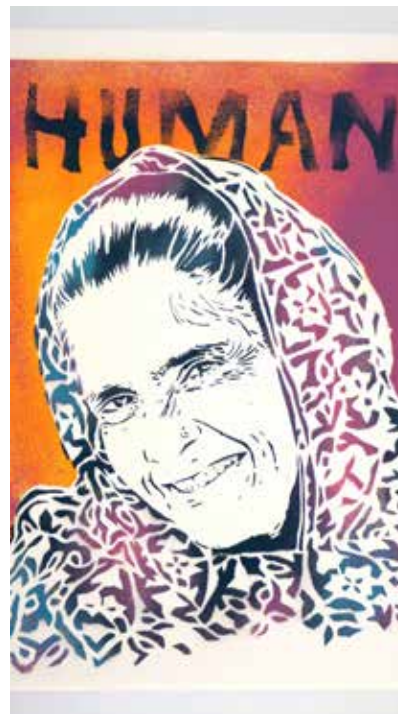




26 adjectives describing inspiring women

*Spray-paint on paper.
18 x 24 inches. 2017.*

I asked the public what adjectives describe inspiring women, selecting one word for every letter of the alphabet (A-Z) to create a set of 26 spray-painted prints. The subject of the image, presumably in a hijab or a sari, smiles at the viewer and doubles as a resilient, narrative-changing response to sexism and islamophobia. Many of the prints were donated to feminist causes throughout Montreal; for example, some were given away at the Manif des femmes à Montréal. Remaining prints were later acquired by the McCord Museum in Montreal.





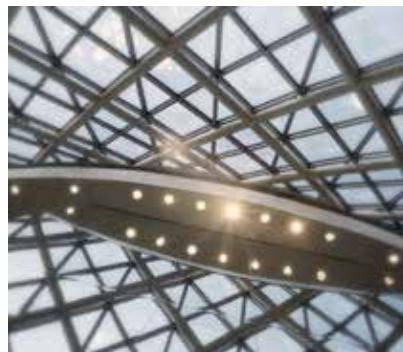
TEDxHEC: Qu'est-ce qui vous fait vous sentir chez vous ?

Acrylic, spray paint on canvas.
36 x 60 inches. 2016.

Created at a TEDx conference at HEC in Montreal, this collaborative artwork features the public's bilingual answers to the question: "What makes you feel at home?" These responses were juxtaposed with a Canadian First Nations child to make a statement about who is allowed to feel at home in Canada and what luxuries and rights we take for granted. Answers included: "Home cooking. Cuddling. Un bain. Family. Dancing. Safety."



CENTER CRE...
 TIMACY ADMIRATION/UNITY/LAMOUR...
 OF FAMILY IS/MA FAMILLE/CAT/KEY...
 FORT-JUDGMENT-FREE-ZONE/SOUL...
 MOUNTAINS/BEING ACCEPTED FOR WHO I AM (LOVE)/WARMTH/SPORTS/HER/MY FRIENDS/
 CHAMBRE/MON CAFE DU MATIN/SEX DROGUE ALCOOL/FAMILY/DANCING/BEACH&COCONUT TREES/
 FAMILY/MY OWN OWN AND FAMILY/SECURITE SAFETY/FAMILY/BE YOURSELF/FEELING SAFE/...
 MAKE A WUG A FRIEND/FOOD/MUSIC PLANTS PILLOWS INTIMITE/LE SILENCE/LA LUMIERE/...
 IS THERE A RIGHT ANSWER?/APPRECIATION/ACCEPTANCE/UN BAIN/A DEEP FEELING OF PLACE TAKING OVER/
 WALKS/SMELL OF COOKIES/LA LIBERTÉ DE CHOIX/AVOIR LA CRISSE DE PAIX/JAZZ/HAVING A LUP OF COFFEE
 S ON THE WALL/HOME COOKING/CUDDLING/OUVERTURE/AVOIR UN FOUL RIRE/ENVIE DE REALISER/
 MOUNTAINS PILLOWS FUD WITH DELOVE/TRANQUILITE/HAVING A LAUGRINS-FIX/
 FAMILY/SMELL OF BACON/



Love letters to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Acrylic, spray paint, ink on canvas.
36 x 60 inches. 2016.

During the TSO's inaugural New Creations Festival, artist Aquil Virani asked hundreds of attendees to write a loving message, starting with "Dear TSO." Their words were re-written and integrated into the live painting. The artist was visited post-performance by Neil Deland, the Principal Horn player of the TSO. Special thanks goes to Sam Jacobs for the invitation and to Jordana Weiss for her help during the event.

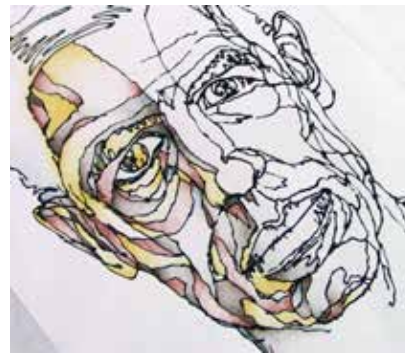


100 artworks in 1 week

Fine art marathon. Various mediums and sizes. 2016.

25 x 4 = 100. That's how many artworks I challenged myself to create over seven days during a fine art marathon at Galerie Mile End to celebrate my 25th birthday.

Artworks included, for example: a portrait of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau painted amid a collage of the 94 Calls-to-Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; a crossword puzzle built from questions relating to the artist's identity and personal passions; a sign on a chair that read, "Reserved for a beautiful pregnant woman;" and a heat map data visualization of the artist's trackpad mouse activity over the course of the week. The event was sponsored by Red Bull.



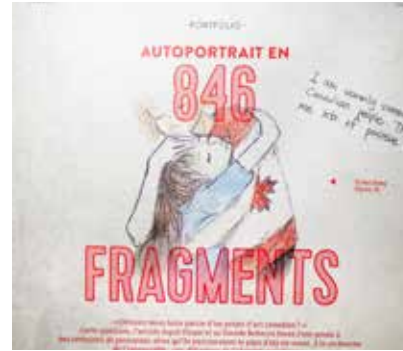


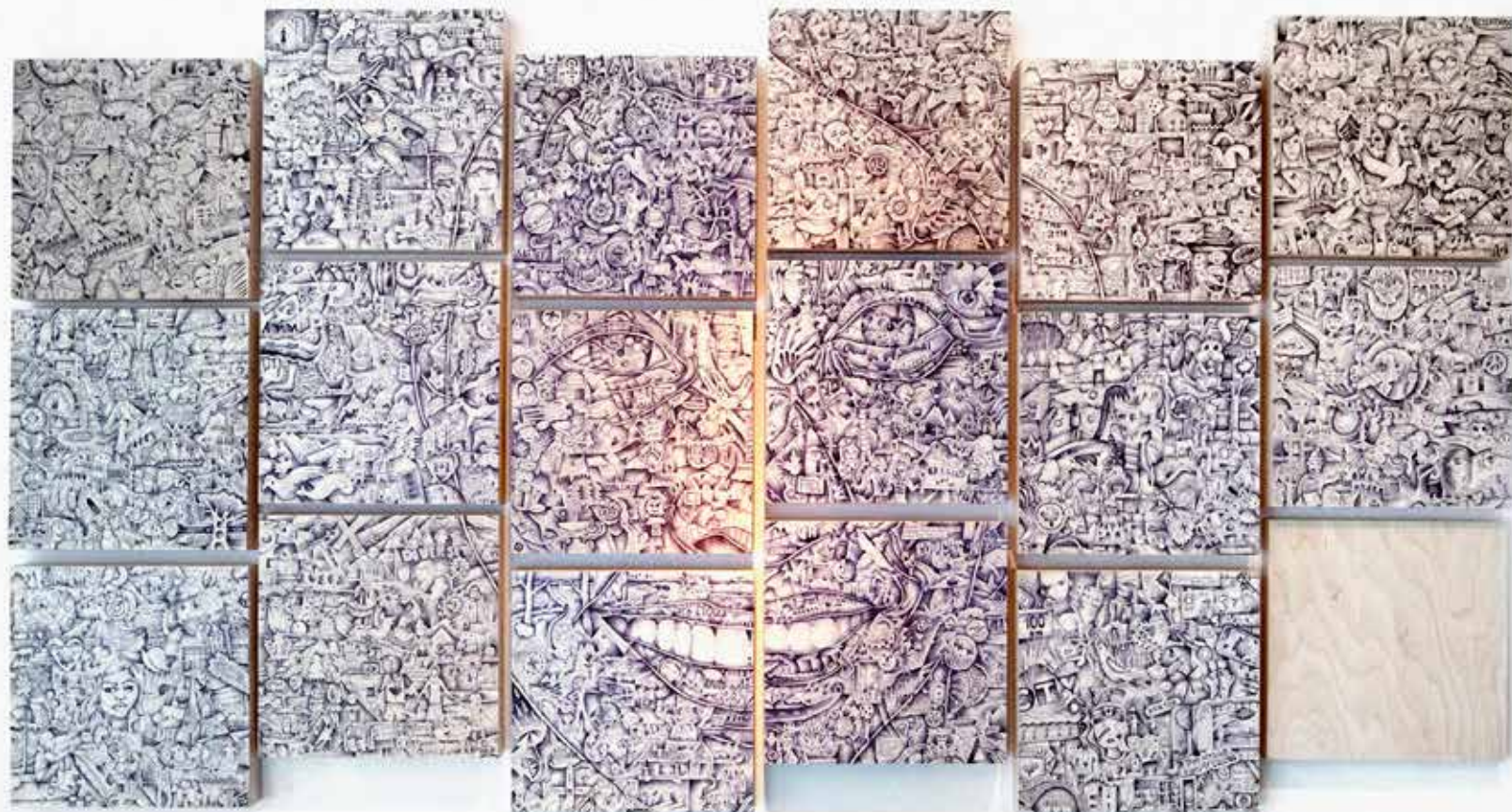
Canada's Self Portrait

Ink on birch wood.
32 x 65 inches. 2015.

Created in collaboration with Rebecca Jones, Canada's Self Portrait is an award-winning collaborative art piece that integrates over 800 participant drawings about Canadian identity into a single artwork. Public submissions from every province and territory were collected over the course of many months. The blank 18th panel represents the untold story of Canadian identity as it relates to indigenous genocide and silencing.

The final piece took over 200 hours of drawing. Canada's Self Portrait won the Applied Arts Conceptual Illustration Award in 2016 after being exhibited at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax.







Maple
24/10/18



Paul Smith's College

Collaborative artworks during yearly week-long artist residencies (2012-2019)

To kick off the school year for seven straight years, artist Aquil Virani visited upstate New York to create a collaborative artwork with each freshman at Paul Smith's College's Welcome Week. Each communal painting features drawings from approximately 200 students integrated into a unified composition.

Virani's involvement also includes a keynote address to all students about the art he makes and why he makes it; he speaks to his younger self while sharing advice for kicking off the school year on the right foot. Participatory art is used as a metaphor for community living with each voice being heard and different perspectives respected.







Our Values
INTEGRITY
SELF-CORRECT
ETHICAL LEADER
RESPONSIBILITY

Our Values
EXCELLENCE
TOLERANCE
COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

LSM
COLLEGE

LSM COLLEGE
GRADUATION
2024

LSM COLLEGE
GRADUATION
2024



2019 • Speaking at the “Beyond the Single Story Media Retreat” run by the National Council of Canadian Muslims.



2019 • The exacto knife used to hand-cut stencils for various painting projects.



2019 • A private commission is unveiled at a family dinner in Richmond, BC.



2019 • “Hands in prayer” hangs in the *Createurs de la paix* group show at the *Écomusée du fier monde* in Montreal.



2018 • Featured in the promotional video played across all convocation ceremonies at McGill University.



2018 • An intervention of CelebrateHer portraits at *La Table Fleurie d'Algerie* at an iftar event in Montreal.



2020 • Acquisitions by the McCord Museum in Montreal are featured in their 2018-2019 Annual Report.



2019 • Detail of the “Hands in prayer” painting, visibilising Muslim culture in the wake of Bill 21 in Quebec.



2016 • A private art commission of a couple on their wedding day.



2016 • Used stencils from a live painting commission from the NHL's Ottawa Senators.



2016 • Prints from the “Potentiel” series and “Three Sisters” series up at Galerie Mile-End in Montreal.



2019 • Speaking at the 9th anniversary of Montreal's Confabulation storytelling event at Centaur Theatre.



2018 • Stenciled quotes about inspiring women pulled from audio interviews from the CelebrateHer project.



2011 • Collaborative drawing at the season finale of Concordia University's University of the Streets.



2014 • The Canada's Self Portrait project featured here on CTV Morning Live in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



2018 • Accepting the "Artiste pour la paix 2018" award from renowned artist and president André Michel.



2018 • McCord curator Christian Vachon and Eugenie Marciel acquire "26" prints for their permanent collection.



2016 • Live painting at CSFX16 in Toronto, asking attendees: "When was your last creative moment?"



2018 • Presenting the collaborative artworks to the Copenhagen Poetry Club at a live reading event in Denmark.



2018 • "Sit with me," an immersive, informal installation set up at the Rialto Theatre in Montreal.



2007 • My first collaborative artwork: a line connecting every student in my high school.

“His approach, which aims not simply to assert a personal point of view on a pressing social issue, but also to facilitate opportunities for others to express themselves freely – to speak and be heard – is characteristic of all of Aquil’s work.”

— Céline Le Merlus,
Former Chief Curator,
Stewart Hall Art Gallery

“One doesn’t typically associate the high academia of a university like McGill with talented, driven artists. There are, however, those standout individuals who make the effort to follow their artistic ambitions despite their environment; Aquil Virani is one of them.”

— Garret Cosgrave,
Leacock’s Magazine



2011 • Posing at a live painting performance at TEDxMcGill. Photo by Alex Tran.



2013 • Collaborative art at a L’Oréal hairdressing event in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.



2015 • I created 24 artworks in 24 hours to celebrate my 24th birthday as seen here on CBC News.



2018 • Portrait of Sherin Khankan, Denmark’s first female imam and co-founder of Mariam Mosque.



2009 • Detail of an artwork exploring a dense, cross-hatching drawing style.



2012 • Live painting at a L’Oréal event using Matrix hair colour products on canvas.



2016 • Speaking at a McGill Alumni event at Galerie MX in Montreal.



2018 • Speaking on a filmmaker panel at the Jubilee Arts International Film Festival in Lisbon, Portugal.



2009 • Responses to “What makes you happy?” written in the shape of a smiling portrait during Nuit Blanche.



2015 • “Human/Nature” created for the Canada’s Self Portrait exhibit at Galerie Mile-End in Montreal, Quebec.



2010 • Detail of an artwork using stream-of-consciousness drawing.



2016 • A private art commission depicting two romantic elephants.



2015 • I created 24 artworks in 24 hours to celebrate my 24th birthday as seen here on CBC News.



2016 • Portrait of the artist’s mother, created for her 65th birthday.



2018 • Book cover design exercise with students in Copenhagen, Denmark.



2018 • A collaborative art gift to the Human Library Organization in Denmark.



2018 • The Drawing Board Collective at the Artiste pour la paix awards at the Conseil des arts de Montreal.



2015 • A painting titled “Warmth” acknowledging Canada as a relatively safe haven for many settlers.



2015 • A live, collaborative artwork, remixing the logo of the Babson Entrepreneurship Forum in Boston.



2010 • The doodles of 600+ students at Southridge School integrated into a collaborative art project in Surrey, BC.



2013 • Detail of an artwork created using a single ball-point pen on paper.







2011 • MINDFCUK exhibition at the Fridge Door Gallery in Montreal, exploring the “art of visual trickery.”



2017 • Study for spray-painting interventions on snow in Montreal.



2016 • Collaborative artwork at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax for Canada Day.



2016 • Participants completed the sentence, “My Canada...” with their responses re-written onto the canvas.



2011 • MINDFCUK featured many artworks with repeated stencils to form confusing images and optical illusions.



2017 • This commemorative artwork is reproduced at a group show at the Peel Art Gallery and Museum Archives.



2017 • Portrait of Kathy Malas, exhibited as part of “150 Muslim Contributions to Canada” at PAMA in Brampton, Ontario.



2018 • Presenting the “Here is a gift” documentary at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts’ Power of the Arts Forum.



2019 • Live, collaborative painting at a wedding in Lachine, Quebec.



2018 • An artist profile in Quebec’s Le Devoir: “Art as a tool for peace at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.”



2018 • An article in Quebec’s Le Devoir newspaper: “Art as a tool for peace.”



2013 • Live painting at a fundraiser for Dans la rue, a non-profit supporting homeless youth and youth at risk.



2017 • Presenting to Wish150 attendees, hosted by TakingITGlobal and Galerie Mile-End.



2017 • The complete Wish150 artwork for Montreal with my contribution as the end of the tail (bottom-right).



2017 • My Wish150 contribution: "You have more in common with Muslims than you might expect."



2017 • The Postering Peace film playing at the Aga Khan Museum as part of Islamic History month.



2017 • The stencil of Anna Politkovskaya, an assassinated Russian journalist, writer, and human rights activist.



2019 • A private commission for a client's 70th birthday gift to his father.



2016 • 600+ answers to "What defines your perspective?" were re-written into this live painting at TEDxMontreal.



2018 • The "Here is a gift" biography posted at the Jubilee Arts International Film Festival in Lisbon, Portugal.



2017 • Presenting a portrait to Homa Hoodfar, a professor formerly detained in Iran for "dabbling in feminism."

« Aquil s'éloigne de l'image traditionnelle du créateur seul dans son atelier. Il préfère révéler l'artiste qui sommeille en chacun de nous. Ses oeuvres sont donc le fruit de plusieurs centaines de contributeurs. »

— Julie Chaumont,
URBANIA Magazine



2018 • Reading my poem, “Google Oversaet” (Google Translate) in Copenhagen, Denmark.



2018 • The last entry of a completed sketchbook, full of notes, sketches and documentation.



2017 • Participants create a mosaic-style collaboration at the Stewart Hall Art Gallery in Pointe-Claire, Quebec.



2015 • I created 24 artworks in 24 hours for my 24th birthday as shown here on CBC News.



2016 • Presenting work to over 500 attendees of the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Vancouver.



2016 • “The Life Jacket” project is unveiled at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Vancouver.



2014 • Resource-sharing campaign with diversity education non-profit ENSEMBLE *for the respect of diversity.*



2014 • A digital illustration of Martin Luther King Jr.



2018 • A communal artwork, titled “Build Love,” created in Sofia, Bulgaria.



2014 • Performance wave to the crowd at ARTPROV, Montreal Improv's first ever art-and-improv show.



2014 • At ARTPROV, there was art about improv and improv about art.



2014 • This ARTPROV artwork features the improv phrase: “Yes and,” meaning to accept and add to another’s idea.

“Aquil Virani est un artiste engagé, fasciné par les questions sociales et la richesse de la diversité. Une diversité qu’il incarne lui-même, avec des origines française, indienne et ismaélienne. Il a déjà été récompensé pour ses initiatives remplies d’humanité, notamment avec le prix Applied Arts pour son oeuvre Autoportrait du Canada et avec le prix d’Artiste pour la paix.”

— Éric Clément, La Presse



2019 • I collaged 10-year old notes and paper scraps for the STUFF Project.



2019 • “Does it spark joy” refers to the KonMari method for sorting belongings popularised by Marie Kondo.



2019 • After collaging the drawings and notes, I centred short phrases related to stuff, ownership, and memory.



2012 • A public art commission at the McConnell Engineering Building of McGill University.



2016 • The Giveaway Project offered free art to the Montreal public at bus stops throughout the city.



2016 • Giveaway artwork came with a note explaining the idea behind the project, linking to an online video.



2016 • Live, collaborative painting in Mississauga, Ontario for Ronald McDonald House Charities.



2016 • I asked attendees of the RMHC fundraiser, “What helps you feel at home?”



2019 • ... is another man's treasure: a phrase I spray-painted on old boards and canvasses that I left around the city.



2015 • A still from a film created in collaboration with ENSEMBLE for the respect of diversity.



2020 • A collection of student letters from Alfred B. Dixon Elementary in Richmond, BC to Quebec City Muslims.



2017 • Artwork donated to a fundraiser: "La diversité est la richesse du monde."



2017 • Opening shot for a film selected to play in Lisbon, Portugal for the Jubilee Arts International Film Festival.



2012 • A stream-of-consciousness drawing using ball-point pen on paper, called "Solipsism."



2018 • Painting a quick self-portrait for a fundraiser for LE CAP (Centre d'Apprentissage Parallèle) in Montreal.



2018 • The last names of grandparents and relatives in my family.



2018 • The final artwork was displayed at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts during a fundraiser exhibition.



2018 • A geometry and typography study in my sketchbook.



2017 • Detail of a live, collaborative artwork completed at a fundraising event for Special Olympics Canada.



2018 • Still from short film, "27 seconds with Clare Byarugaba."



2018 • Posing with ZILON, a well-known street artist at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

We are all artists

Acrylic paint on canvas.
24 x 48 inches. 2012.

The "We Are All Artists" Project has taken me across North America and it started with this painting; the McGill University edition of the project includes hundreds of contributions from various members of the McGill community in Montreal. Ultimately, my goal was to include the general public in the process of art creation. I often say that if you have the motor skills to write 'a, b, and c' on a piece of paper, then you have the motor skills to draw.

This painting was featured in a short film by Fatherly Films and on Global News Montreal as part of the COPYCAT exhibition at the Fridge Door Gallery on campus.



