

Design  
TO 10 Years

# Annual Report 2019–2020







DesignTO Festival is Canada's leading (and largest) annual design festival that celebrates design as a multidisciplinary form of creative thinking and making, with over 100 exhibitions and events forming Toronto's design week each January.

Over the past decade, we welcomed over 600,000 visitors, worked with 4,500 artists and designers, and reached 15 million users through print and digital media.

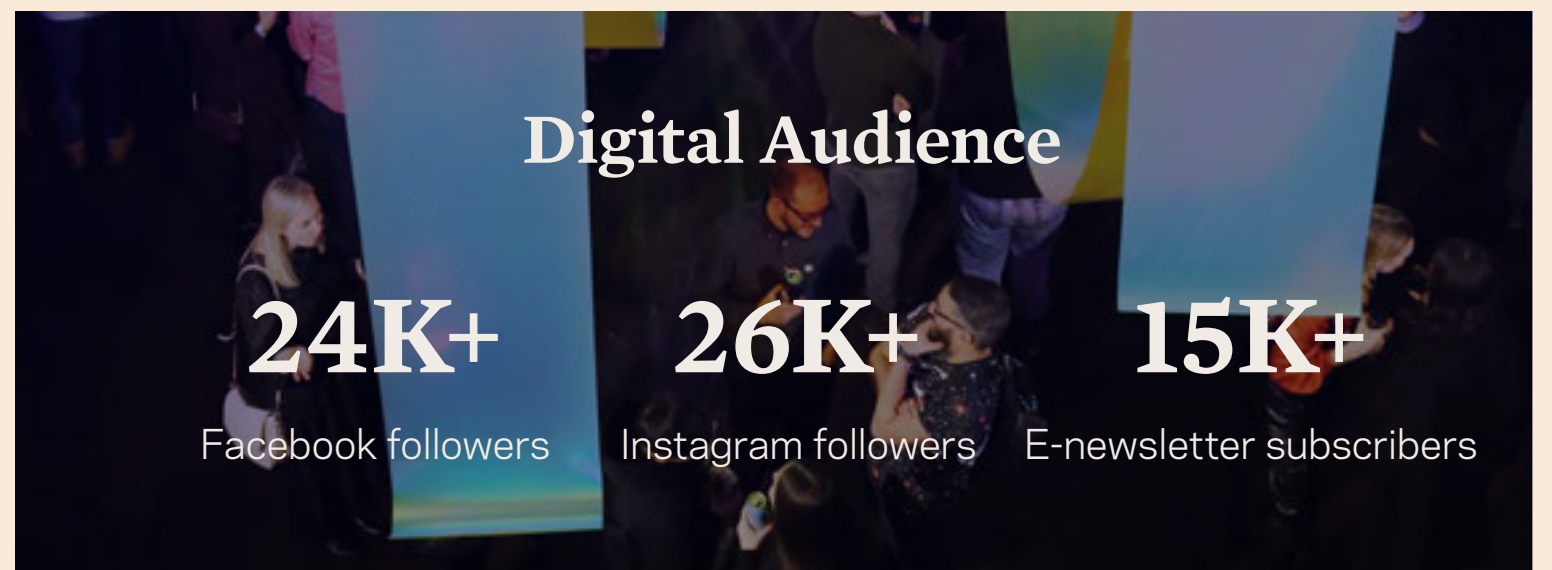
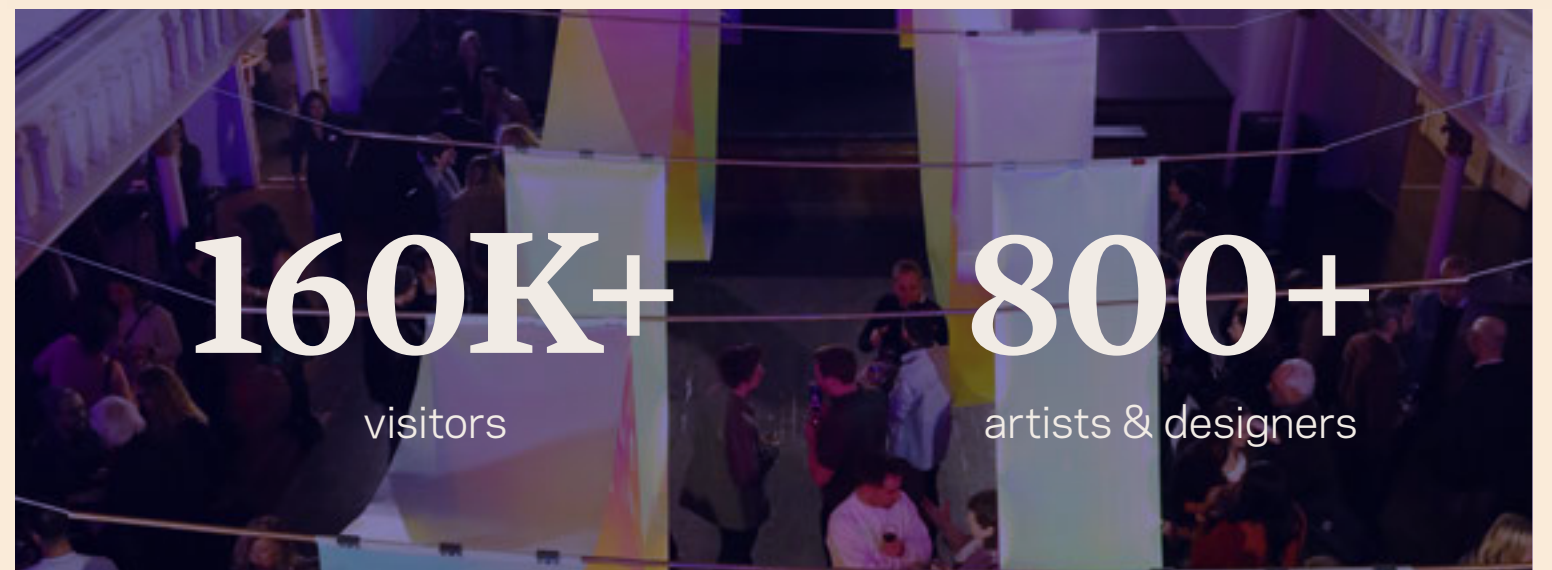
10  
Years



# At the 2020 Festival, we presented 100+ exhibitions, talks, tours, and installations across Toronto.

DesignTO is about creativity, community, and experimentation. Since 2011, DesignTO has been bringing communities together to celebrate design, by taking art and design out of the studio and into the urban realm.

Featuring the work of hundreds of designers each year, the Festival showcases locally made furniture, lighting, products, graphic and experiential design, interiors and architecture, art installations, and more. As a non-profit arts organization, the festival emphasizes collaboration and the expression of personal values and identities through the creative process.







# We are Toronto.

160K visitors annually  
17 DesignTO Team members

## Creative

88% of the DesignTO Team and 43% of visitors work in the design industry

## Diverse

71% of the DesignTO Team and 53% of visitors identify as either a visible minority, person of colour, LGBTX, person with a disability, youth, or indigenous

## Youthful

59% of the DesignTO Team and 56% of visitors are 34 or under

## Educated

94% of the DesignTO Team and 82% of visitors have a college or university degree







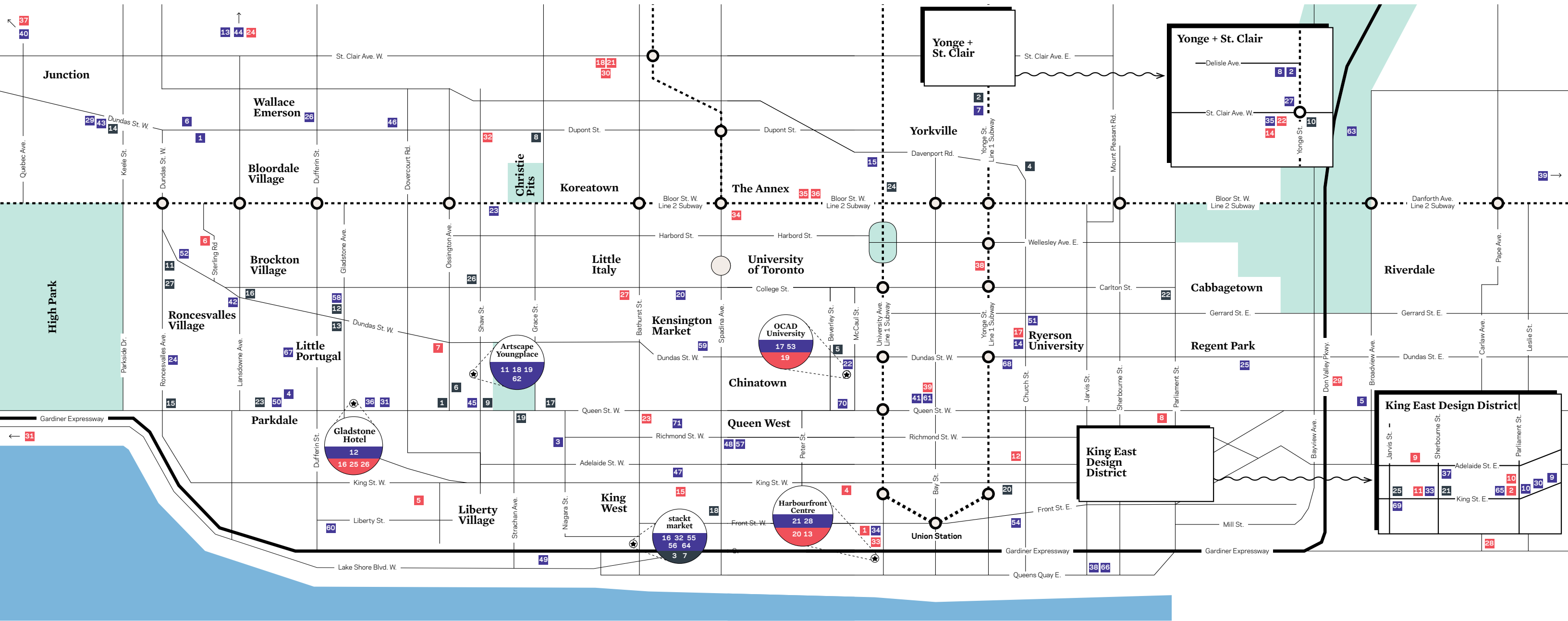
*“DesignTO does so much for designers; they have been able to bring a lot of different people in the creative industries together. They’ve also made design in Toronto more accessible, not just for people in design but for people who want to discover design.”*

Christian Lo, Co-founder, Anony



# Festival Map

The 2020 DesignTO Festival presented 100+ events across the city of Toronto, reaching as far as Eglinton Avenue to the north, Queens Quay to the south, Main Street to the east, and Weston Road to the west. Venues included galleries, building lobbies, storefront windows, and showrooms.



# Festival Hot Spots



Come Up To My Room. Photo by Simon Liao

## Gladstone Hotel

3 events and exhibitions, including ‘Come Up To My Room’, a founding exhibition



Mjolk 10yr Anniversary in the Junction.  
Photo by Breanne Jeethan

## Junction & Junction Triangle

5 events and exhibitions



Themselves Exhibition at stackt market.  
Photo by Hannah Nguyen

## stackt market

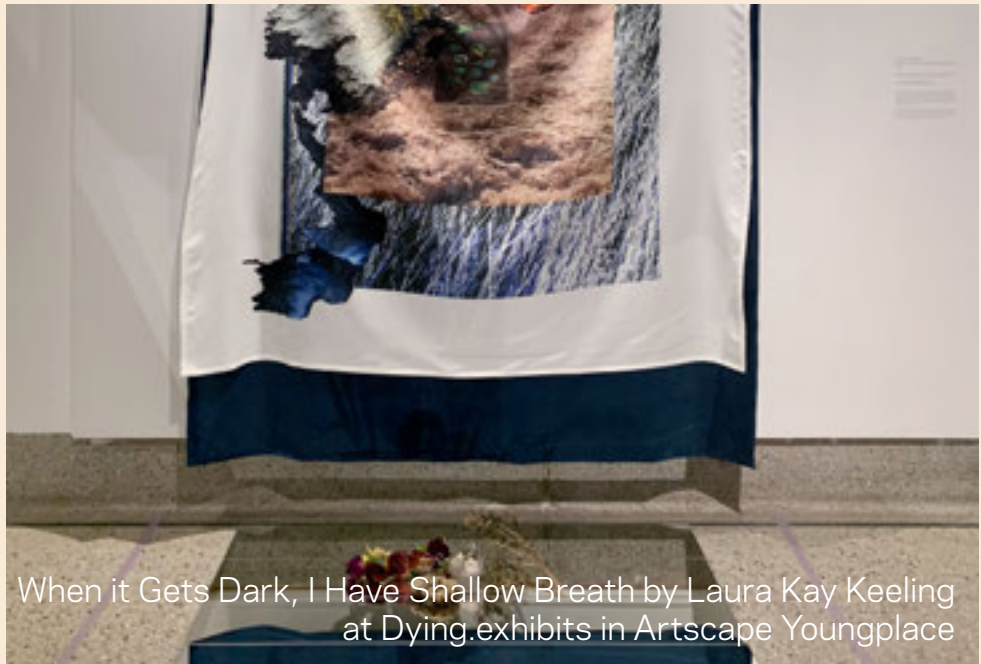
7 events and exhibitions, including the group exhibition ‘Themselves’



Inverted Valleys by Interspatial Art & Design Collective.  
Photo by Jiin Park

## Yonge + St. Clair

7 events and exhibitions



When it Gets Dark, I Have Shallow Breath by Laura Kay Keeling  
at Dying.exhibits in Artscape Youngplace

## Artscape Youngplace

4 exhibitions



They Feed Off Buildings at Bulthaup Toronto.  
Photo by Harry Choi

## King East Design District

13 events and exhibitions



# Funders + Partners

## Major Funders



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YONGE +  
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*“Toronto is an extraordinarily diverse city, our Indigenous communities, our black communities, our POC communities, our queer communities ... there are so many communities that are able to use the festival as a platform to have their perspectives embraced. That’s very unique.”*

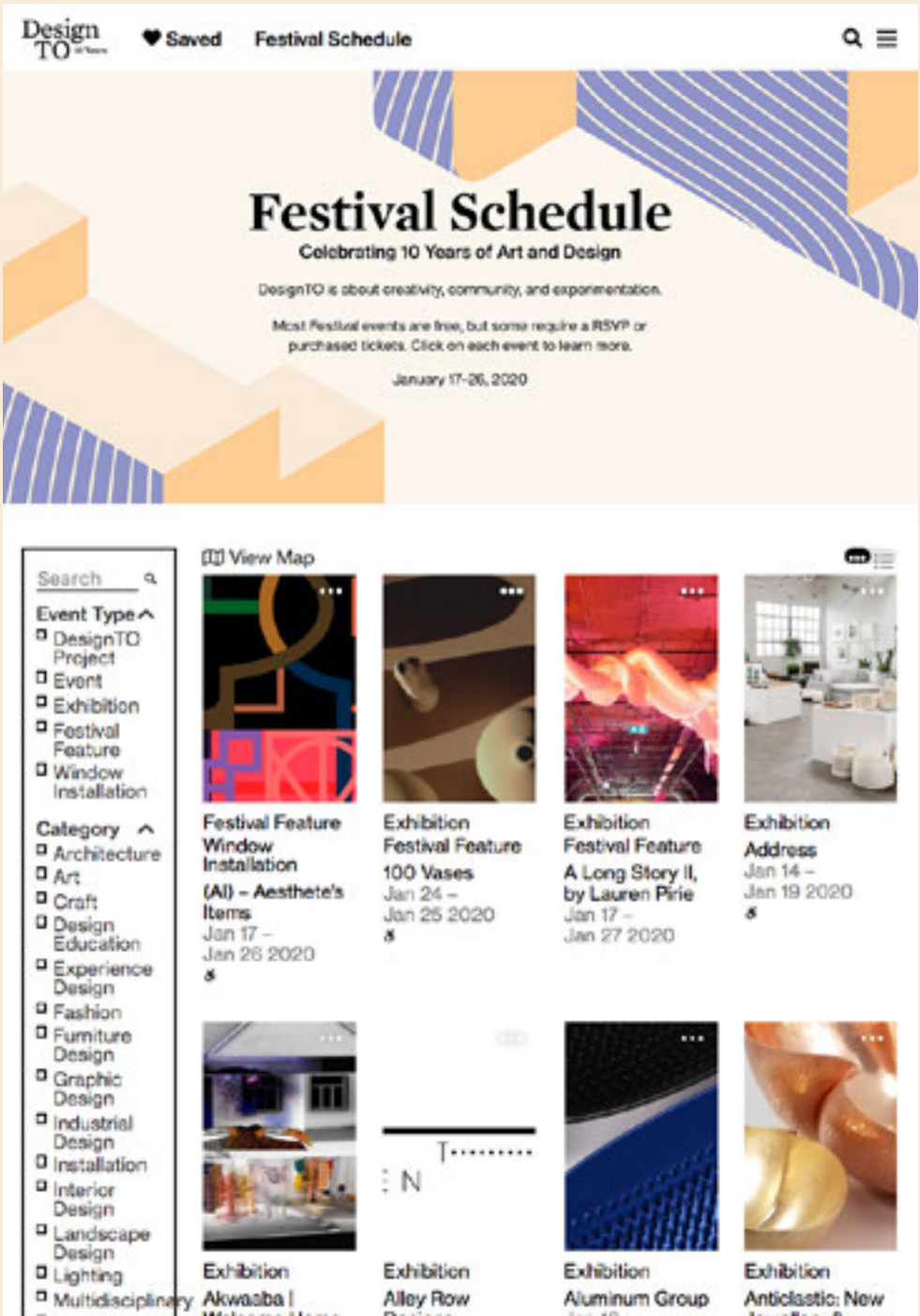
Dori Tunstall, Dean of Design, OCAD U



# 10th Anniversary Projects



DesignTO Youth



New DesignTO Website



New DesignTO iOS Mobile App



# Launch Party

The must-attend bash kicked off the 10-day Festival, hosting 1,000 VIPs, designers, architects, artists, and design-lovers in the historic Berkeley Church in Old Town Toronto.

The party featured a site-specific installation conceptualized by Mexico-based multidisciplinary design studio Anagrama and lighting installation by Salex.

**3M**

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DesignTO Launch Party. Photo by Huy Tran



# Future Retrospectives

'Future Retrospectives' featured the work of eleven local and international artists and designers, unified by a shared methodology: using the past as a lens through which we imagine the future. The exhibition asked, "what will the future look like, and how did we get there?"

Artists and designers were Graysha Audren, Mia Cinelli, Hannah Claus, Cassandra Ferguson, Tsēmā Igharas, Andreas Krätschmer, SHATTERED MOON ALLIANCE, Studio Björn Steinar, Adhavan Sundaramurthy, Sage Szkabarnicki-Stuart, and Jessica Thalmann.

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lemay



Future Retrospectives



# Work/Life

Responding a significant issue of contemporary urban life: “Spaces are getting smaller, but what we need them to do for us is only growing larger,” ‘Work/Life’ showcased new prototypes.

The fifth year of the exhibition showcased the work of ten Canadian designers and studios including Annie Tung Creative, Castor Design, Department of Unusual Certainties, Joseph Zhuang, Keillor MacLeod, Mezzaluna Studio, Mickey LaForge, Plural, Radical Norms, and Studio Node.



Loop Light by Plural, Work/Life winning design. Photo by Huy Tran



# PLATED

Guest curated by Catherine Osborne for DesignTO, 'PLATED' was a celebratory feast of local design. Hosted at the home of DesignTO co-founder Shaun Moore, guests enjoyed cocktails, wine pairings by Trail Estate Winery, and a multiple-course dinner by The Tempered Room, where every dish, bowl, and drinking vessel was crafted by Canadian artists and designers.

Participating designers included Castor Design, Dear Human, FELT Studio (Kathryn Walter), Vanessa Lee Jackson, April Martin, meilen, Talia Silva, Kristian Spreen, Jamie Wolfond, and Patrick Yeung, with flowers by Emblem Flower Studio (Todd Caldwell).



TRAIL ESTATE  
WINERY



PLATED. Photo by Christine Lim



# Design to Play

DesignTO held its first-ever event focused on puzzles and play at the global headquarters of Spin Master, where in-house game designers oversaw gaming stations, guided play and provided insight on their design process. Guests – including children of all ages – tried a range of games from drawing and word play with a group, to maze and building games on their own.



Design to Play. Photo by Simon Liao



# DesignTO Youth: The Skatrix

Collaborating with students from Oasis Skateboard Factory (OSF), 'The Skatrix' was a public screening of animated shorts from the first edition of DesignTO Youth, a new program that provides youth with access to creative disciplines and professionals. Working together, DesignTO and OSF crafted a program that taught art and design skills through hands-on workshops, talks, studio tours, and mentorship.



Oasis Skateboard Factory students and instructors



# DesignTO Tours: Giannone Petricone Associates, Ideas for the Intensification of the Suburban Mall

This talk and tour, led by GPA partners Ralph Giannone and Pina Petricone, began at the Don Mills Centre, and was followed by a panel discussion with Leo deSorcy, Michael Piper, and Leslie Woo, on questions of ex-urban models, opportunities, and the shifting parameters for retail-driven, mixed-use development.

giannone  
petricone  
associates



DesignTO Tours: GPA, Ideas for the Intensification of the Suburban Mall. Photo by Simon Liao



# DesignTO Tours: Connection Points

Attendees on this walking tour discovered four exciting installations in the Yonge + St. Clair neighbourhood that explore ideas of connectedness, and heard from the installation creators: artist Lauren Pirie, art and design collective Interspatial, artists and designers Chris Foster and Layne Hinton, and global architecture firm Gensler.

**YONGE +  
ST. CLAIR**



Arborescent by Gensler at DesignTO Tours: Connection Points. Photo by Jiin Park



# DesignTO Tours: MCM Fabrication Workshop

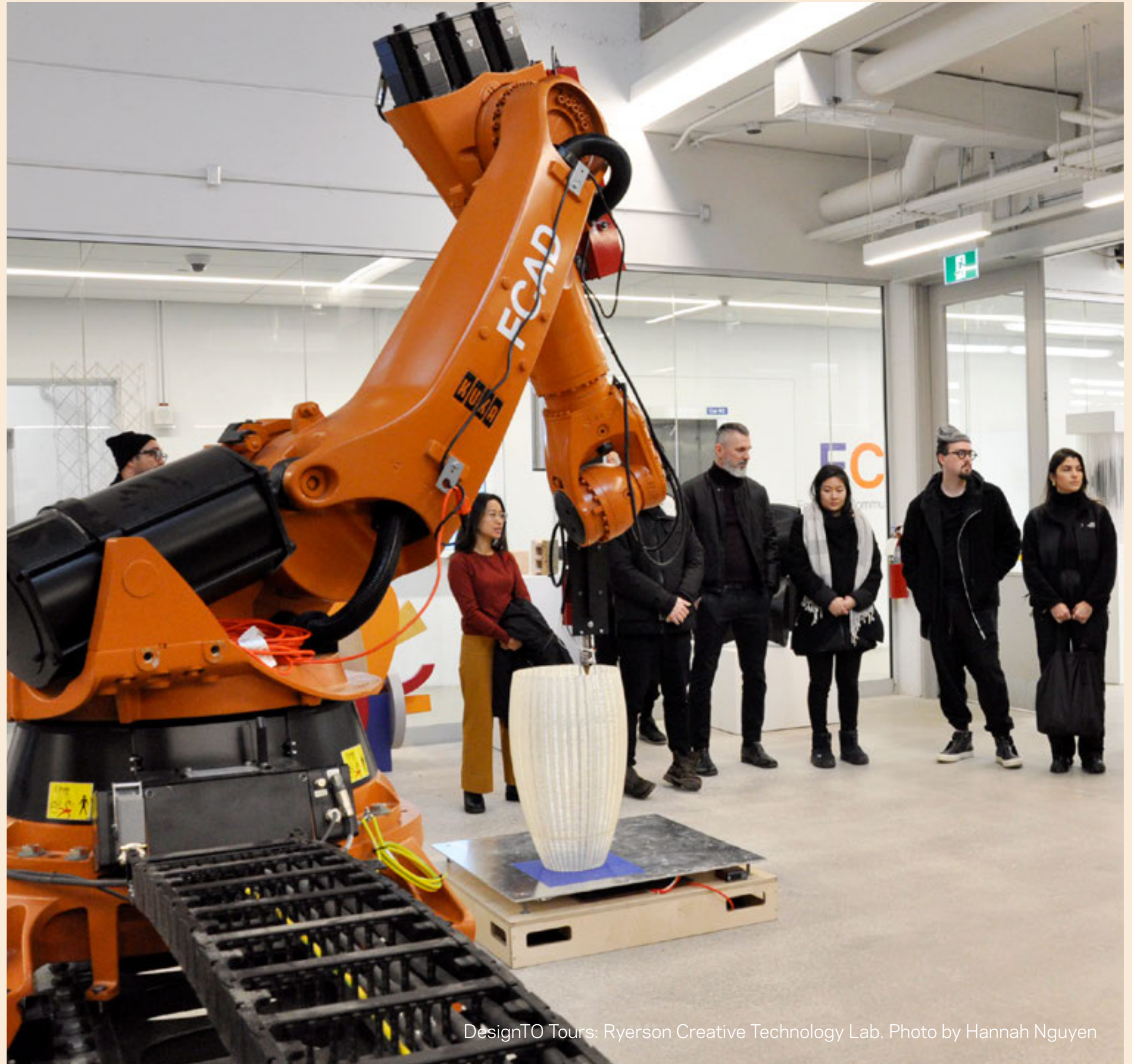
This exclusive tour of MCM's workshop, where they integrate state-of-the-art equipment with skilled craftsmanship to fabricate environments such as Bar Raval in Toronto and the Senate of Canada Building in Ottawa. Architects from five leading firms – Diamond Schmitt, KPMB, iN STUDIO, Partisans, and Bartlett & Associates – also spoke about the process and collaboration between designer and fabricator.





# DesignTO Tours: Ryerson Creative Technology Lab

This tour of Ryerson University's new Creative Technology Lab (CTL), was led by CTL Director and Associate Professor of Interior Design, Jonathon Anderson. Attendees explored the advanced technology-based workshop, which supports creative research, specialized curriculum, and entrepreneurship activities across all nine Faculty of Communication & Design (FCAD) schools and Ryerson zones.





# DesignTO Talks: Anagrama

In their talk 'Strategy, Beauty and Deadlines', Creative Partner Daniela Garza and BU Director Karla Leon of Anagrama, a Mexico-based branding, architecture, and interactive design studio, spoke about teamwork and collaboration in a multidisciplinary practice. Following the talk, Anagrama was interviewed by Monocle's Toronto Bureau Chief Tomos Lewis and writer Will Kitchens.

relativespace



DesignTO Talks: Anagrama. Photo by Daniel Barbosa



# DesignTO Talks: Anony & Castor

Attendees joined design editor Catherine Osborne for a conversation with Christian Lo of lighting studio Anony, and Brian Richer of multidisciplinary studio Castor, on the occasion of their installations and new product lines launching at EQ3's King East showroom.

**EQ3**



DesignTO Talks: Anony & Castor. Photo by Joseph Stewart



# DesignTO Talks: Place des Montréalaises

Andrew King, Lemay's Chief Design Officer and leader of LemayLab, and conceptual artist Angela Silver, presented Place des Montréalaises, the winning concept for an international urban design competition to be built in 2022. The talk explored the place architecture, art, and design have in reframing and redefining history.

**lemay**



DesignTO Talks: Place des Montréalaises



# Ideas Forum: Materializing the Future

Working in partnership with the Toronto Society of Architects, this event featured six fast-paced and fun presentations exploring the themes and questions from DesignTO's exhibition 'Future Retrospectives', with a focus on materiality.

Speakers included Lauren Abrahams (Public Work), Kazmy Chi (Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico), Pat Hanson (gh3\*), Chris Pommer (PLANT), artist Jessica Thalmann, and Richard Witt (Quadrangle).



Ideas Forum: Materializing the Future



# The Future of Work(ers) in Brave Organizations

Attendees joined DesignTO and The Moment to explore the next generation of Organization Design, and what that means for workers within the Future of Work.

The event featured a panel of speakers from CounterTax Lawyers, ET Group, Mantle314, and The Moment, followed by smaller facilitated discussions.

**The Moment**    teknon



The Future of Work(ers) in Brave Organizations. Photo by Breanne Jeethan



# DesignTO Talks: They Feed Off Buildings

Founders Luisa Rubisch and Rasa Weber of the Berlin-based design and architecture collective They Feed Off Buildings spoke about the process of creating 'Urban Terrazzo', a composite material that uses architectural debris to pay homage to demolished buildings and their histories. Following the talk, Rubisch and Weber were interviewed by Maryam Siddiqi, Lifestyle Editor of The Globe and Mail.

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of the Federal Republic of Germany  
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bulthaup



DesignTO Talks: They Feed Off Buildings. Photo by Simon Liao



# DesignTO Symposium: A Future without Work

DesignTO's fifth annual symposium brought nine multidisciplinary experts together into one room for an inspiring discussion on a Future without Work.

Speakers included Jonas Altman, Antonio Cesare Iadarola, Komal Faiz, Keith Jones, Symon Oliver, Heather Russek and Jessica Thornton, and Lexi Tsien, with a keynote talk by Carol Anne Hilton, CEO and Founder of The Indigenomics Institute.



**AZURE**

**Gensler**



DesignTO Symposium: A Future without Work. Photo by Jiin Park



# DesignTO Awards

The 8th annual DesignTO Awards presented by Herman Miller and DIALOG recognized design excellence within the Festival with 24 awards.

This year's jurors were anahita azraimi, artist and Executive & Creative Director at Toronto Outdoor Art Fair; Heather Dubbeldam, Principal of Dubbeldam Architecture + Design; Jaime Muszynski, Senior Interior Designer at Arney Fender Katsalidis; Chris Rowe, Collection Sales Lead, Herman Miller Canada; and Yaw Tony, artist and designer.

The DIALOG jurors for the Best of Community Wellbeing award were Chen Cohen, Principal; Simone Ferkul, Interior Designer; Mark Gorman, Mechanical Engineer, Associate; Ramsey Leung, Intern Architect; and Gail Shillingford, Associate.



HermanMiller

**DIALOG**



Speculative Characters for Visual Inflection by Mia Cinelli, at 'Future Retrospectives'



# Festival Features

Festival Features is a shortlist of 24 events, exhibitions, and/or window installations selected by a jury.

This year's jurors are Joel Karamath (Course Leader, Interaction Design Arts, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London), Camille Mitchell (Community Leader and Architect, Gensler), and Philip Ocampo (Artist, Arts Facilitator and Programming Coordinator, Xpace Cultural Centre).



## Off Course

Graphic Design as Despectacularization  
by Eric Francisco



## Still Life, Life Still

Simone Ferkul and Welsey Chau





*“This year we’re really lucky to be the first crew of the DesignTO Youth Project, where we’re working with designers to do animation. It’s great for the students to see their work in a gallery and see themselves as equals, but it’s also great for designers to see how skateboarders see the city and that different perspective. We feel really lucky to have an opportunity to have that dialogue.”*

Lauren Hortie, Teacher, Oasis Skateboard Factory (OSF)



The Team

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Deborah Wang, Artistic Director  
Michael R. Madjus, Head of Marketing  
Robyn Wilcox, Head of Programming

Operations + Development

Emily Christie  
Anna Vander Meij

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Victoria Chin  
Carmen Douville  
Amanda Low  
Simon Mhanna  
Kelsey Miner  
Olga Klosowski Schellenberg  
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Marketing

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Michelle Zeppieri

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aftermodern.lab inc., Visual  
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Festival Week photographers

Daniel Barbosa, Stephen Chu, Breanne  
Jeethan, Simon Liao, Christine Lim, Hannah  
Nguyen, Jii Park, Joseph Stewart, Huy Tran

Data Sources

DesignTO Festival Survey, DesignTO  
Attendance Records, MRP Report, City  
of Toronto Signalized Intersection Traffic  
Data, Google Analytics, Facebook,  
Twitter, and Instagram