

# Annual Report

2019



Design  
TO Festival

**DesignTO is where  
art and design meet.  
In January 2020, we  
will celebrate our 10th  
anniversary.**

**Over the last 9 years we  
welcomed over 600,000  
visitors, worked with  
3,000 participating  
artists and designers, and  
reached 15 million users  
through print and  
digital media.**

# 10 Years

# At the 2019 DesignTO Festival, we presented 100+ exhibitions, talks, tours, and other events across Toronto.

DesignTO takes art and design out of the studio and into the urban sphere, bringing people together to celebrate, discuss, and be inspired. We engage visitors with exceptional and accessible programming.

DesignTO is multidisciplinary, welcoming the broadest definitions of design. We encourage collaboration, the creation of exceptional work, and the expression of personal values and identities through the creative process. DesignTO's mission is to advance design culture in Canada.

**100+**

free events and exhibitions

**600**

artists and designers

**150K+**

visitors

**23K+**

Facebook followers

**21K+**

Instagram followers

**14K+**

newsletter subscribers

**Diverse**

53% of visitors identify as either a visible minority, person of colour, LGBTX, person with a disability, youth, or indigenous

**Creative**

53% of visitors are from design, arts and culture

**Youthful**

57% of visitors are 34 or under

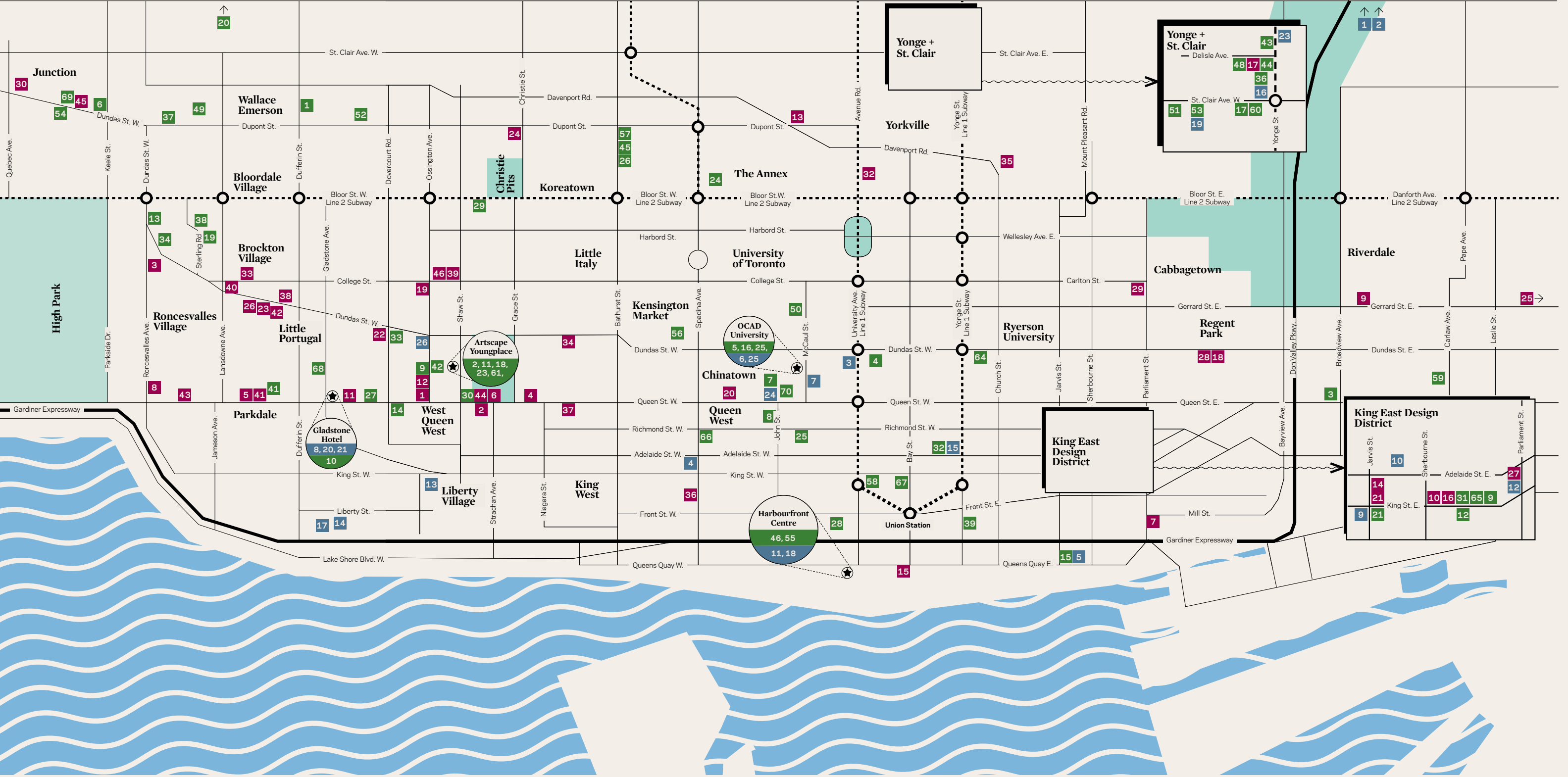
**Educated**

87% of visitors have a college or university degree

*“There is no other festival quite like DesignTO – a showcase for talent of every stripe, including startups and new grads. It’s the ultimate platform to cultivate relationships and to engage with an audience.”*

Catherine Osborne, architecture and design expert, former Editor of Azure Magazine

# Festival Map



# Funders + Partners

## Funders



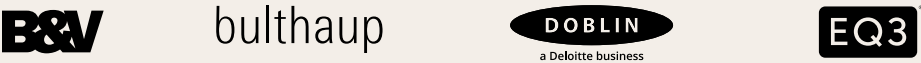
## Gold



## Silver



## Bronze



## Studio



## Media Partners



## Designlines



## Association Partners



## Cultural Partners



## Catering



## Wine



## Beer



A group of people at a social event, with two women in the foreground smiling and holding drinks. The woman on the left is wearing a black top and a grey beanie, and the woman on the right is wearing a black top. They are both holding glasses of wine. In the background, there are other people, some of whom are also smiling. The overall atmosphere is warm and social.

*“DesignTO is the platform where we get to tell the story of what design in Canada was, is, and can be. It opens up what has historically been a space/discipline for some, and has made it a discipline for all.”*

Zahra Ebrahim, human-centred designer and urbanist,  
community leader and advisor

# Launch Party

This must-attend bash kicked off the new 10-day Festival, hosting 1,700+ artists, designers, architects, and design-lovers in the historic St. Lawrence Hall in Old Town Toronto.

The party featured an inflatable installation by studio rat.



DesignTO Launch Party. Photo by N. Hermann

# Surface Tension

Surface Tension showcased the work of a dozen local and international artists and designers. Exploring the theme of water from material, aesthetic, cultural, political, poetic, and ecological perspectives, the exhibition engaged a range of topics integral to thinking about water in its broadest senses.

Surface Tension featured the work of Karen Miranda Abel, Atelier Mey, Douglas Coupland, Julie Gladstone, Robert Hengeveld, Colin Hill, Lisa Hirmer, Eva Kolcze, Lisa Myers, Polymetis, Eli Schwanz, and Unit Lab. The exhibition was curated by DesignTO.



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Surface Tension. Photo by C. Shang

# Design Unseen

Design Unseen showcased the work of six creatives working in the field of graphic design, exposing the often unseen creative process. The exhibition was an opportunity to go behind the curtain and explore the journey that precedes the end result. Is process as critical—if not more so—than a design in its final form?

Design Unseen featured the work of local and international designers Estefani Campana, Department of Unusual Certainties, Chris Lange, Christopher Lee, Gilbert Li, and Jay Wilson. The exhibition was curated by DesignTO in collaboration with Lauren Wickware.



Design Unseen. Photo by C. Lim

# 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 from nine Canadian designers

Work/Life featured the work of Allstudio, Andrew Ferrier, Rachelle Bugeaud, Dear Human, Claire Hamilton Studio, Half-day, mpgmb, Sisley Leung, and Studio Knowhow. The exhibition was organized by DesignTO in partnership with Umbra.



Work/Life. Photo by M. Madjus

# DesignTO Guided Bus Tours

On Saturday and Sunday afternoons of Festival Week local experts led four Guided Bus Tours: arts entertainer Kaleb Robertson , OCAD U's Dean of Design Dori Tunstall, journalist Alex Bozikovic, and innovation designer Heather Daam-Rossi. Each guide brought their unique insight and expertise to their tour, with special stops selected by them.



DesignTO Bus Tour. Photo by H. Nguyen

# Exploring Art at Yonge + St. Clair

The neighbourhood of Yonge + St. Clair in midtown Toronto was activated by 11 projects, including several lobby installations. This tour organized by DesignTO featured an intimate talk with installation creators: Stein Wang and Topher Kong of the cheeky design studio Hi Thanks Bye, public installation artists Mitchell Chan and Brad Hindson of Studio F Minus, and Steven Paynter and Gillian Walczaka from the global architecture firm Gensler.

**YONGE +  
ST. CLAIR**



Installation by Hi Thanks Bye.

# DesignTO Tours: Campari Office

Attendees received an exclusive peek into Campari Canada's unique Palm Springs-meets-Italian Futurist office space in Liberty Village, designed by Toronto firm I-V, on a tour led by DesignTO with Campari Canada's Managing Director Massimo Mottura and Azure Magazine's Executive Editor Elizabeth Pagliacolo.



DesignTO Tours: Campari Office. Photo by M. Neale

# DesignTO Tours: Deloitte Office

This tour explored Deloitte's reimagined national headquarters, where they are redefining how employees and clients work by using design and technology to enhance engagement, productivity, and inclusion.

**Deloitte.**



# DesignTO Talks: Tiffany Pratt

Stylist, designer, and HGTV host Tiffany Pratt hosted a full-house at this talk, speaking about her vibrant design philosophy, experience making a lasting creative business, personal brand, and media presence. Tiffany's past projects include interior design for Café CanCan and Piano Piano, a collaboration with CXBO Chocolates, and many more.

*Tiffany Pratt*



DesignTO Talks: Tiffany Pratt. Photo by C. Shang

# DesignTO Talks: Uncovering Canadian Design

This talk revealed the process involved in designing and making modern furniture and home décor. Moderated by EQ3 Creative Director Thom Fougere, he and panelists Christian Lo of ANONY, Simon Johns, Jamie Wolfond of Good Thing, and Alisa Wronski shared their personal design pedagogies, examined successes and failures, and provided insight into their methods as contemporary Canadian designers.

**EQ3**



DesignTO Talks: Uncovering Canadian Design. Photo by M. Madjus

# Ideas Forum: Watershed to Waterfront

This event featured fast-paced and lively presentations by artists, designers, and architects exploring the theme of water from material, aesthetic, cultural, political, poetic, and ecological perspectives.

Speakers included Great Lakes photographer Victoria Piersig, surfer and designer Antonio Lennert, architecture and public art duo Polymetis, architect Aziza Chaouni, DTAH's Yvonne Battista and James Roche, artist Lisa Hirmer, architecture firm IBI Group, and The Bentway's Director of Programming, Ilana Altman.



# DesignTO Talks: Studio Swine

In connection with the exhibition Surface Tension, this feature presentation explored the work of DesignTO international guests of honour Alexander Groves and Azusa Murakami of the internationally acclaimed Studio Swine.

Following the talk, leading architecture and design writer Catherine Osborne (former Editor of Azure Magazine) hosted a Q&A.



**AZURE**



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DesignTO Talks: Studio Swine. Photo by S. Ding

# DesignTO Symposium: Unlocking the Future of Work

The symposium brought 10 multi-disciplinary experts and 250 guests into one room for a diverse and engaging discussion on humans and the future of work.

Speakers included Yoel Berznoger, D.A.R. Projects (Mauricio Navarro, Jenny Boucher), Department of Unusual Certainties (Christopher Pandolfi, Sam McGarva), Wendy W Fok, Tom Morin, Radical Norms (Angelika Seeschaaf Veres, Daniel Daam-Rossi, Koby Barhad), Juan Saavedra, Chloe Waretini, Mason White, and Shihan Zhang.



**AZURE**

HAWORTH®

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DesignTO Symposium: Unlocking the Future of Work. Photo by K. Dudzinski

# DesignTO Awards

The 7th annual DesignTO Awards sponsored by Herman Miller recognized contemporary design excellence seen across the Festival. 17 awards were selected by a jury, with 4 People's Choice Awards selected by popular vote.

Jurors included Jane Juranek (interior designer, IBI Group), Renée Mathews (multidisciplinary artist and 2018 Award winner), Tak Pham (media art curator, art critic, and architectural historian), Chris Rowe (Collection Sales Lead, Herman Miller Canada), and Jillian Warren (Director, Workplace, figure3).



HermanMiller



Aletheia, Philip Beesley. Photo by K. Zhu

# Festival Features

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

This year's jurors were Pooya Baktash (PARTISANS), Catherine Osborne (architecture and design writer, and former Editor of Azure Magazine), and Kathryn Walter (FELT Studio).



Photo by K. Zhu

Aletheia



Photo by E. Ilina

Come Up To My Room



Photo by C. Shang

DIYing Free



Photo courtesy of Batay Csorba

Misfit



Photo by M. Neale

Pro Tem

*“It was exhilarating to openly share our work with so many people, and be able to connect with such a diverse group of people over the course of the DesignTO Festival. Not only did we feel part of a greater design community, but we were able to share something so close to our heart with people of all ages and backgrounds, who also felt like they could relate to what we created.”*

Humble Raja (Reena Mistry + Bhavesh Mistry), 2019  
DesignTO Award winners for Forbidden Forest



The Team

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Jeremy Vandermeij, Executive Director  
Deborah Wang, Artistic Director  
Michael R. Madjus, Marketing Director

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Anna Vander Meij  
Marilyn Maxim  
Olga Klosowski Schellenberg

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Carmen Douville  
Amanda Low  
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Robyn Wilcox  
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