

Design
TO Festival

2022 Festival

where art and
design meet
across the city

distanced
& digital

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Directors' Message

Dear Reader,

We write this note to you at a time where there is a war in Ukraine, we have endured two years of a global pandemic, there is an urgent climate crisis, and the fight for social justice continues.

It's a time where there are so many things beyond our control. So we focus on the things we can do, the things we can change. Our purpose to bring people together to design a better world is realized through our mission to curate public programming that increases our knowledge and appreciation of design and its role in creating a viable, just and joyful world. In big and small ways, with and for each other, designers imagine and build new futures.


We can only do this together. Thank you to our amazing team, Board of Directors, funders, sponsors, partners, artists, designers and audience. We are excited to get back to seeing you in-person to reconnect, collaborate, inspire each other, celebrate and experience art and design.

See you soon,
Jeremy & Deborah

'A Dream of Home', by Mahogany Culture. Photo by Mac Vogt.



DesignTO is a non-profit arts organization that curates exhibitions, presentations and educational programming to increase the public's knowledge and appreciation of design and its role in creating a viable, just and joyful world.



DesignTO is known for creating a platform for independent artists and designers, through editorial features such as the 'Designer Spotlights' and 'Insider' series, programs such as DesignTO Youth and a design residency, 'In Conversation' talk series, and most notably the DesignTO Festival, Canada's leading and largest annual design festival celebrating design as a multidisciplinary form of thinking and making.

Since 2011, the DesignTO Festival has welcomed over 800K visitors, showcased the work of 5,500 artists and designers, and reached 460M+ users through print and digital media.

DesignTO Identity

Purpose

We bring people together to design a better future.

Mission

We curate exhibitions, presentations and educational programming to increase the public's knowledge and appreciation of design and its role in creating a viable, just and joyful world.

Vision

Through our public programming, embolden all Canadians to participate in designing a future where people and the planet are thriving again.

'Daniels Mural Project', by Que Rock. Photo by Yianni Tong.

About Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

DesignTO was founded by a group of creatives from equity-seeking groups (including women, youth, LGBTX and people of colour), and continues to be led by people with diverse and intersectional identities, from many places and age groups spanning five decades.

We strive to be as diverse as the City of Toronto. This starts with our team and extends to the people that make up our community of artists, designers, curators, partners and attendees. In our most recent year, we had equity-seeking representation as follows: 100% of our 18 person team, 72% of our board, 45% of our exhibitors, and 85% of our audience.*

This representation at the heart of the organization has helped us to achieve our goal of reflecting the beautiful diversity of Toronto. But we also recognize that we still have a lot of work to do. We recognize and are working on our blind spots, working to increase representation and access to the festival for these groups.

*Equity-seeking groups are communities that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation. (Source: University of British Columbia, Equity & Inclusion Office.)

'Protester Poster', by The Visual Department (Michelle Smith). Photo by Yianni Tong.

“2022 was truly a special year to participate in the DesignTO Festival. Despite all the obstacles, such as extreme cold and severely reduced capacity, people still chose to trek out in the snow to visit the exhibition, which is inspiring.”

Leon Lai, Exhibitor and Architect, Svima

2021–2022 Reach

**3 New
Design Residents**

**167 DesignTO
Members**

(457 since 2016)

6 Youth Served

(31 since 2019)

**6 ‘In Conversation’
Talks**

(March–October 2021)

**7 Artist & Designer
Editorial Features**

(50+ since 2011)



‘Bic Series’ by Micah Adams at ‘Libations for Liberated Living’, organized by Laura Carusi, Emma Green, Alison Postma, Callum Schuster, and Emma Welch. Photo by Christine Lim.

2021–2022 Reach

54.2M Media Impressions

(533.5M+ since 2011)
323% ↑ from previous year

22K+

Facebook followers
50% ↑ in reach from previous year

12.3K+

Newsletter subscribers
69% ↑ in open rate from previous year

3.9K+

Twitter followers
3% ↑ in followers from previous year

27.7K+

Instagram followers
180% ↑ in post likes from previous year

2K+

LinkedIn followers
36% ↑ in followers from previous year



2021–2022 Festival

24
Digital Projects
(71 since 2021)

500+
Artists & Designers
(5.5K since 2011)

**100+ Free Events
& Exhibitions**
(900+ since 2011)

20K+ Visitors
(800K+ since 2011)

**1.3K+ DesignTO
Talks Digital Views**
(5K since 2020)



'2020 DesignTO Launch Party'. Photos by Joseph Stewart

We are Toronto.

18 DesignTO Team members

Diverse

76% of the DesignTO Team and 59% of visitors identify as either a visible minority, person of colour, LGBTX, person with a disability, youth, or indigenous.

Creative

61% of the DesignTO Team and 62% of visitors are from design, arts and culture.

Youthful

46% of the DesignTO Team and 29% of visitors are 34 and under.

Educated

92% of the DesignTO Team and 94% of visitors have a college or university degree.



“I’ve been involved with DesignTO since 2014. I think DesignTO does an exceptional job at bringing together so many diverse perspectives and experiences, and making connections people might not otherwise have the opportunity to make.”

Eman El Fayomi, 2022 DesignTO Symposium Speaker and Head of Learning Resources at the Canadian Digital Service

Festival Map

The 2022 DesignTO Festival presented 114 projects, of which 90+ were in-person happening across the city of Toronto, reaching as far as Eglinton Avenue to the north, Queens Quay to the south, Don Mills Road to the east, and Pacific Avenue to the west.



2021–2022 Partners + Sponsors

DesignTO would like to thank the Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, and our corporate sponsors and partners for helping to bring DesignTO closer to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

Major Funders



Media Partners



Program Partners



Association Partners



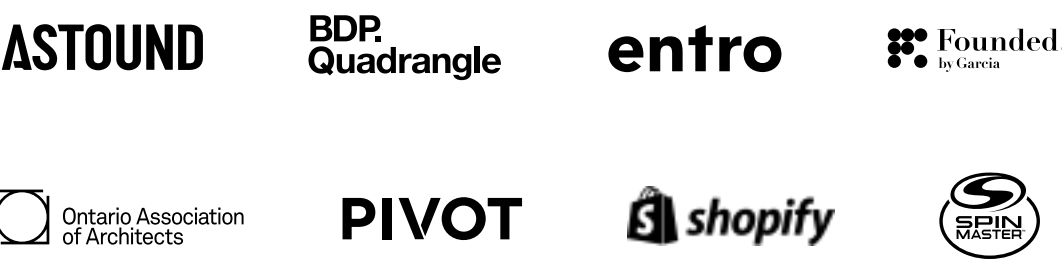
Partners



Cultural Partners



Supporters





“As a proud member of the Toronto design community, it’s important for ASTOUND Group and our employees to align with organizations that share our same values and support of the arts. When partnering with DesignTO for the 2022 Festival, we immediately felt that shared sensibility and the opportunity to help support the voices in our collective community.”

Miles Diggins, VP, Brand Strategy, Creative & Marketing, ASTOUND Group

‘HOME Beautification signed by Yaw Tony’. Photo courtesy of the designer.



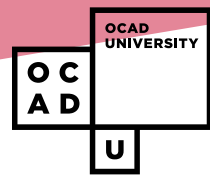
ongoing projects

'Shared Terrain' special viewing.

In Conversation Series

Spotlighting designers from Canada and the UK, DesignTO in partnership with University of the Arts London (UAL) and OCAD University presented a new six-part online talk series in 2021 called 'In Conversation'. As the title suggests, faculty, students and alumni from UAL and OCAD were in conversation with each other and industry experts to discuss contemporary issues, research and creation in design.

2021 speakers included Aberrant Architecture, Dr. Danah Abdulla, Dr. Nabil El-Nayal, Dr. Nehal El-Hadi, Bridget Harvey, Victoria Kamila, Michael Lee Poy, Maya Mahgoub-Desai, Will Selviz, Philip Sparks, Monica Virtue, and Georgina Voss.



DesignTO Youth

Started in the fall of 2019, DesignTO Youth is a community engagement program which offers youth access to creative disciplines and professionals, concluding in a public exhibition of their work at the DesignTO Festival. Working in partnership with SKETCH Working Arts, the 2021-2022 DesignTO Youth program focused on place making, involving critical reflections on our individual and collective relationships to space, culminating with the public exhibition 'Place Making'.

2021-2022 youth artists include dairysam, Yasmine Hassen, Brian Jiang, Enna Kim, Winston LeYonnick, and Ashley Meza-Wong working across different artistic and design disciplines.

Organized by DesignTO in partnership with SKETCH Arts. Supported by the City of Toronto (Economic Development & Culture), Pivot Design Group, Spin Master and Shopify.



'Place Making' exhibition by DesignTO Youth residents.



FLDWRK x DesignTO Residency: 6ft (a)part

2021-2022 saw the inaugural launch of the FLDWRK x DesignTO Residency. The residency invited designers to propose ideas that could meaningfully impact their communities, culminating in a public presentation of their work during the DesignTO Festival.

Running from October 2021 to January 2022, residents came together online, meeting bi-weekly with their cohort, and FLDWRK and DesignTO curators, designers and architects. In between meetings, residents worked independently on their projects, which furthered ongoing research or a new line of inquiry.

FLDWRK

'The Grief Gallery', by Charlene Lam. Photo by Christine Lim.



FLDWRK x DesignTO Residency: 6ft (a)part



Charlene Lam – Grief curator
(Lisbon, Portugal)

‘The Grief Gallery’ explored the bridging of distance between personal and collective grief, between loss and recovery, between physical locations and disparate cultures, between then and now, and between the dead and the living.

‘The Grief Gallery’. Photo by Christine Lim.



Jennifer Chan – Designer,
researcher and facilitator
(Toronto)

‘Artifacts of Grief’ was an invitation to explore and express individual and collective grief and grieving, to spark more conversation and storytelling around this ever-present experience.

‘Artifacts of Grief’. Photo by Christine Lim.



Isabel Okoro – Artist (Toronto)

‘magic dreams’ explores dreams and “Normtopia,” a term the artist coined through her photo-based artwork. The exhibition invites guests to join the artist in thinking about what is normal, and then dreaming within and beyond that normalness.

‘magic dreams’.

DesignTO Membership Program

The DesignTO Membership features unique opportunities to experience Canadian and international design through our annual 10-day Festival, new year-round programs, and new Members-only video library of recorded talks, panels and symposia.

Currently there are 150+ DesignTO Members.

2018 DesignTO Premium Members Event, Philip Beesley Architect Inc.



DesignTO Blog Editorial

Through editorial features, DesignTO has created a digital platform that has promoted over 50 artists and designers this year on the DesignTO blog and social media.



Designer Spotlights

Through the ‘Designer Spotlight’ series, readers have the chance to learn more about the artists and designers that make up Toronto’s vibrant creative community.

Insider Series

DesignTO’s ‘Insider Series’ takes our readers into the spaces and places often hidden from public view. We explore the homes and studios of artists and designers in Toronto and abroad.

Expert Series

The ‘Expert Series’ invites experts from various disciplines to share unique knowledge and information.

Photo courtesy of Vicky To.

Photo courtesy of Michelle Organ

Natasha Lebel. Photo by Arash Moallemi



Placemaking Series

DesignTO partnered with branding and experiential design firm Entro to create a 3-part series exploring placemaking in art and design. Writers Kerala Woods and Amanda Low interviewed architect Farida Abu-Bakare, curator Ryan Rice, and architect and cultural planner Sabrina Richard, whose work is influenced by the concept of placemaking.

Photo courtesy of Farida Abu-Bakare



Meet Series

With a diverse range of community members, 'Meet' series introduces members of the DesignTO Team, Festival Week volunteers, DesignTO Members and more.

Photo courtesy of DK Studio



Getting Through This

During the pandemic, DesignTO created the 'Getting Through This' series, exploring the different ways in which the DesignTO community were coping with uncertainty and hardships including mental health, working from home, productivity and more.

Mia Cinelli, 'The Weight', at Dying.exhibits for DesignTO 2020.

A wooden lounge chair with a colorful geometric patterned cushion, surrounded by potted plants. The chair is made of light-colored wood and has a cushion with a pattern of squares and stripes in shades of white, brown, and tan. The chair is positioned in a room with a wooden floor and several potted plants, including a large green plant in the background and a smaller one in the foreground. The lighting is warm and natural.

*“It was a pleasure to partner
with local designers by providing
a fitting space to display
such fantastic craftsmanship.”*

Anita Cane, Owner, Sienna Flora

‘Sling’, by Isabella V. Bontorin and Eric McBain at Sienna Flora.



festival week projects

'(murmur)' by FRMLab at Clay Space. Photo courtesy of the designer.

Shared Terrain

‘Shared Terrain’ is a group exhibition that fosters cultural exchange between the Nordic Region and Canada. This exhibition is structured around exchange and conversation between 10 creatives from distant locations who are collaborating with each other for the first time.

Participating artists and designers included Carissa Baktay (Canada and Iceland), Laura Millard (Canada), Teemu Salonen (Finland), Randi Samsonsen (Faroe Islands), Katarina Spik Skum (Sápmi, Sweden), Anie Toole (Canada), Lillian Tørlen (Norway), Wednesday Architecture (Denmark), Justine Woods (Aabitaawiziniwag, Canada), and Boris Yu (Canada).

‘Shared Terrain’ is curated by DesignTO, co-presented with Harbourfront Centre, and supported by Lemay, the Embassy of Norway, and Icelandair, the official transportation partner of Nordic Bridges. ‘Shared Terrain’ was made possible as part of Nordic Bridges 2022 in collaboration with Harbourfront Centre, Toronto. Thank you to our external jurors Akash Inbakumar and Melanie Egan.

© Harbourfront centre

lemay



Norwegian Embassy

NORDIC
BRIDGES

ICELANDAIR

‘Shared Terrain’ group exhibition. Photo by Christine Lim



Purpose & Play

'Purpose & Play' is an exhibition that explores new prototypes for contemporary life, showcasing the work of eight Canadian designers and studios including Nikki Alagha, Maha Alavi, Melinda Hart, Hi Thanks Bye, Christopher Li Sheung Ying, Dominic Montante, Alison Postma, and Leisa Rich.

'Purpose & Play Live' was an online event featuring all 8 designers talking about their prototypes, working from home, and new opportunities in a post-COVID world.

Organized by DesignTO in partnership with Umbra.



'Purpose & Play' prototype exhibition. Courtesy of Umbra.



DesignTO Symposium: No Such Thing as Normal

DesignTO’s seventh annual symposium brings 11 multidisciplinary experts together to discuss how we can dismantle the long-accepted idea of “normal,” in order to design for diversity, specifically in the context of a global pandemic.

Speakers included Zahra Ebrahim, EDIT Collective, Eman El-Fayomi, Tiyyondah Fante-Coleman, Laura Forlano, Esmond Lee, Andrea Ngan, Simone Shahid, Jay Shaw, Mona Sloane, and Jutta Treviranus.

Organized by DesignTO. Supported by BDP Quadrangle and ASTOUND, with media partner AZURE Magazine.

BDP.
Quadrangle **ASTOUND** **AZURE**

‘DesignTO Symposium: No Such Thing as Normal’ Speakers.



Holding Up History: Panel Talk

Four experts from architecture, heritage conservation, design education and film engaged in a multifaceted conversation exploring how heritage is currently defined and designated in the city. Moderated by DesignTO Programs Assistant adé abegunde, the discussion also delved into ways in which heritage preservation strategies can be used to remember the past without hindering future development.

Speakers included Ria Al-Ameen, Suzanne Kavanagh, Wei-Han Vivian Lee, and Lulu Wei.

Organized by DesignTO. Supported by the Ontario Association of Architects.



'Holding Up History: Panel Talk' Speakers.



Holding Up History: Self-Guided Tour

This self-guided tour highlighted 10 different sites across the city featuring diverse applications of façadism in Toronto and heritage conservation alternatives. Participants will be encouraged to explore and critique structures such as Honest Ed's, The Drake Hotel, Massey Hall, and Hermant Building.

Contributors included Ria Al-Ameen, Christopher Borgal, Norman Clarke, Stephanie Mah, Lia Maston, Marianne McKenna, Donald Schmitt, and Lulu Wei.

Organized by DesignTO. Supported by the Ontario Association of Architects.



Diamond Schmitt, The Drake Hotel Modern Wing.
Courtesy of Diamond Schmitt



Ideas Forum: Confronting the Housing Crisis

This event featured five fast-paced and fun presentations exploring housing equity, modular housing initiatives, rent-then-own models, and community support and consultation.

Speakers included Diana Chan McNally, Kellie Chin, Reverend Faith Fowler, Daniel Ling, and Eric Philip.

Organized by DesignTO in partnership with the Toronto Society of Architects.



'Ideas Forum: Confronting the Housing Crisis' speakers.

DesignTO Awards

The 10th annual DesignTO Awards, presented by Yabu Pushelberg, recognized design excellence within the Festival with 24 awards.

In 2022, there were three new awards: the 'Founders' Award' which recognizes the project that best aligns with DesignTO's purpose to bring people together to design a better future, the 'Emerging Artist/Designer Award' which recognizes the jury's selection for the best work by an emerging artist/designer across the Festival, and the 'Best Product/Object Design Award' which recognizes the best in custom work and limited-edition collections including furniture, lighting, glass, ceramics, textiles and surface design.

The 2022 jurors were Anya Georgijevic, Bahar Ghaemi, Sylvia Lee, Marcia MacDonald, and Samira Matan.

yabu
pushelberg

'Old World Shoes: A Celebration of Independent Shoe and Shoe Repair Stores of Toronto', by Henry Vanderspek. Courtesy of the designer.





“Seeing people in the design community come together for the first time in two years. We didn’t even gather in person to a significant degree, due to Covid restrictions, but DesignTO’s coverage of the festival online and in social media made it feel like an event to celebrate. I felt like I was reconnecting with old friends. That feeling was the highlight for me. You folks received a lemon, and you made a sweet sweet glass of lemonade. Thank you.”

Stephen Dalrymple, 2022 DesignTO Festival Attendee

‘Crisis of Convenience [w.a.s.t.e.]’ by Norwin Anne at l’Atelier. Courtesy of the designer.

The Team

Executive

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

Brand + Design

aftermodern.lab, Graphic Design
Kenson Chan, Web Design
Mike Spears, Mobile App Design
Vicky To, 2022 Look & Feel

Board of Directors

Ilan Ishai
Leslie Jen
Jessica Kamphorst
Zviko Mhakayakora
Julian Mills
Shaun Moore, Chair
Catherine Osborne

As of February 1, 2022

Festival Week photographers

Theresa Adusei
Christine Lim
Yianni Tong
Mac Vogt

Operations + Development

Emily Christie
Anna Kao
Simon Mhanna
Anna Vander Meij

Programming

adé abegunde
Amanda Low
Kelsey Miner
Olga Klosowski Schellenberg
Safoura Zahedi
Victoria Chin

Marketing

Carmel Garvez
Wing Lam Leung
Kerala Woods

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Data Sources

DesignTO Festival Survey, DesignTO
Attendance Records, MRP Report, City
of Toronto Signalized Intersection Traffic
Data, Brand Mentions , Google Analytics,
Hootsuite Analytics.