

# Division of Labour

**Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB)**  
January 10—March 29, 2020

# DIVISION OF LABOUR

## Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB)

**January 10—March 29, 2020**

**Opening reception:**

Friday, January 17, 7–10 pm

**Artist Material Fund:**

during gallery hours

ro Barragán (Buenos Aires), Patrick Cruz (Toronto), Atom Cianfarani (Montreal), Nicolas Fleming (Toronto), Marlene Jess (Vancouver), Lisa Meecham (Burlington), Joaquin Wall (Buenos Aires), Allyson Vieira (New York), and Shellie Zhang (Toronto). Curated by Suzanne Carte

**Division of Labour** is an exhibition that brings artists into dialogue on issues of class, race, and labour as they relate to cultural waste. We are living in a time of increasing economic uncertainty, wage gaps, and class divides. Barter economy systems, critical discourse about consumption, and circuits of solidarity exchange are more present than ever in the daily working lives of artists and cultural producers. *Division of Labour* uses this moment to consider the true cost of artists' labour and economic parity through their recovery of and access to excess material. The exhibition is not a simple display of objects constructed from trash, but works to support the building of new

networks, resources, and methods for the sustainability of artists' work. It goes beyond accessing free material and providing artist fees to opening dialogue about the systemic issues inherent in class dynamics, underemployment, and labour exploitation that plague our cultural industry.

The first edition was held at the Worker's Arts & Heritage Centre in Hamilton in January 2019. By continuing the discussion, and extending the platform to Burlington, we intend to learn from the first iteration and build upon it, therefore capitalizing on the labour investment (physical, emotional, and intellectual) of temporary exhibition production.

Through the work of artists who utilize recycled material in their work, *Division of Labour* illustrates the power and potential of reused material for artistic production. The exhibition and ancillary programming are designed to educate about the scarcity of resources, labour rights, and the lack of living wages in the arts.

Image credit: *Division of Labour* wordmark, Tetyana Herych of Furrawn Press

# Artist Material Fund:

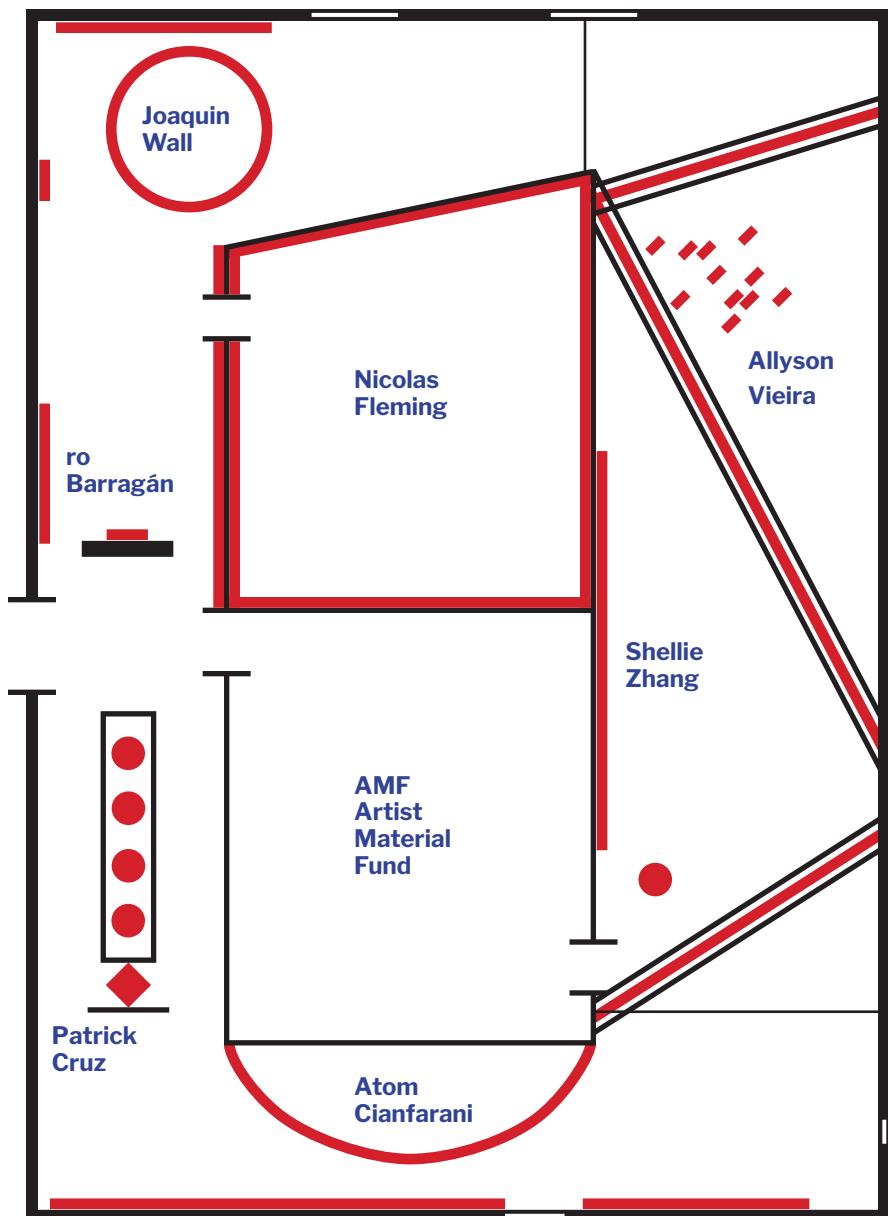
A temporary service for  
a permanent problem

**January 10 - March 29, 2020**  
Lee-Chin Gallery

It is important to put talk into action! **The Artist Material Fund** (AMF) is a service to relocate material and diminish waste produced in the art industry, while providing resources to artists for production. AMF actively cultivates an environment supporting and promoting the sharing of under-used goods to realize their full potential value and the building of more efficient studios. It is a project rooted in cooperation and mutual aid. AMF is a platform operating outside of the capitalist, consumerist

model that strives to create one viable alternative to the common issue of fiscal precarity and ecological irresponsibility.

Materials collected from cultural institutions in the GTHA (Greater Toronto Hamilton Area) are available in the gallery for FREE to artists and individuals in the community throughout the course of the exhibition. Help yourself. It is on a first-come-first-serve basis. There is no limit to what you can take. Take only what you need.



**ro Barragán**

Artist Material Fund & WORK poster  
2017  
Typographic print on recycled  
poster  
Courtesy of the artist

**ro Barragán**

*into words series*  
2019  
Typographic print on recycled  
poster  
Courtesy of the artist

**Patrick Cruz**

*Cultural traffic*  
2019  
Painting and mixed media  
Courtesy of the artist

**Atom Cianfarani**

*Survival Quilting: OPERATE WITH  
LESS*  
2020  
Performance, posters, tetra paks  
and packing styrofoam  
Courtesy of the artist

**Nicolas Fleming**

*A House for Suzanne*  
2020  
Construction materials  
Courtesy of the artist

**Lisa Meecham**

CANVAS  
2020  
Rug hooking  
Courtesy of the artist

**Joaquin Wall**

*Global Steps / Surfaces of  
Revolution*  
2020  
Performance, clay, video, and  
photographs  
Courtesy of the artist

**Allyson Vieira**

*Worker 1*  
2015  
Concrete and steel  
Courtesy of the artist and Daniel  
Faria Gallery, Toronto

**Allyson Vieira**

*Block 1 - 14 & 16*  
2015  
Concrete, scraps from Worker (1 - 5),  
concrete blocks, epoxy  
Courtesy of the artist and Daniel  
Faria Gallery, Toronto

**Shellie Zhang**

*Means of Exchange*  
2020  
Inkjet print and paint  
Courtesy of the artist



These entries briefly introduce the work of each artist in Division of Labour to place them in relation to one another and uncover their common concerns surrounding recycling efforts, consumption, value, precarity, and art production. The texts are drawn from conversations with the artists and their own words regarding the process and conceptualization of work, labour, consumerism, and environmental impact. It serves as the exhibition's expanded wall labels - a guide to walk through and learn.

# ro Barragán

Artists and activists in Buenos Aires are at the forefront of communal models of solidarity exchange to build sustainable economies. The city's cultural centres have established a strong voice in reinventing economics outside of the neoliberal capitalist archetype. Many associations (grassroots organizations that became regional self-sufficiency programs, which provide resources to help people maintain an income that is enough to meet their needs) moved away from capitalist structures to embrace healthy, balanced economies based on barter, trade, and solidarity markets. Artist and printmaker ro Barragán's studio is at the heart of this practice. Her print shop and gallery window is a space where artists can collaborate and circulate ideas and new works.

In Argentina, there is a deep history of poster production as a medium for public political engagement that continues to this day. It has become the preferred tool to convey messages cheaply, effectively, and widely.

Operating alongside master printmaker Juan Carlos Romero, Barragán honed her letterpress skills to produce the popular typographic poster used by activists, political parties, and workers' unions as a means of public communication.

In keeping with the recognizable style of Romero's poster production, Barragán adds her own means of creation by printing on studio refuse and castoffs. When learning to typeset, she grabbed misprints left on the studio floor by other printmakers and then overlaid patterns of numbers and letters, makes the original texts indecipherable. The posters become new works of abstracted blocks of colour and imprints.

The Artist Material Fund wordmark was a collaborative project with Suzanne Carte and Barragán using discarded sets of industrial woodcuts and used printed matter. The print encompass all that the AMF hopes to foster: inexpensive image-making and conscious recycling efforts.

**ro Barragán** earned a Master's degree in Aesthetics and Art Theory from the National University of La Plata, Argentina. She has been actively making work since 1994. Her work—using a variety of media including, painting, engraving, engraving, digital art, installations, and interactive art—has been featured in collective and individual exhibitions in Buenos Aires and other Argentinian cities, as well as Bogotá, Rome, and Miami. Between 2010 and 2013, Barragán worked with the Galería Carla Rey Arte Contemporáneo. She also develops art activities in the context of the street, through stickers and posters. She teaches Engraving and Complementary Printed Art at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the National University of La Plata and typography at the Museo de Calcos y Escultura Comparada Ernesto de la Cárcova in Buenos Aires.

# Patrick Cruz

*“Cultural traffic* is a collection of sculptures composed of scavenged, fabricated, and purchased materials from discount retailers. The amalgamation of these materials considers the excess of our contemporary material culture while considering the paradoxical effects of rapid modernization on marginalized and developing cultures. The series proposes a meditation on the abstracted movement of objects, identities and bodies through time and space and their respective cultural, political and historical belonging.”

Cultural consumerism and consumption forces artists to consistently produce. This requires time, money, and space.

Canadian urban centers are increasingly hostile to artists, the underemployed, individuals in poverty, on the poverty line, and the working poor. Space is at a premium and the demanding cycle of artistic productivity makes it difficult for artists to live and work in the city. This compelled Cruz to work smarter, not harder.

When works return back to the studio from exhibitions, Cruz revises them for future exhibitions. Scavenging from his own production, he paints over existing paintings, paints on the back of paintings, builds upon the armature of existing sculptures, re-arranges installations, subtracts, adds, changes, and re-imagines. Whereas many artists have to rent additional storage units to house bulky sculpture or large canvases between exhibitions, these pieces grow and expand in Cruz's home studio. This working process not only diminishes waste produced by the art industry but allows Cruz to produce financially-viable work. As the works morph, they are invested with new meaning and purpose. The additive process allows for the creative productivity to be unfettered despite spacial constraints. By elongating the lifespan of material, Cruz allows it to reach its full economic efficacy.

**Patrick Cruz** is an artist living between Quezon City, Philippines and Vancouver, Canada. He was recently long-listed at the 2019 Sobey Arts Award and won the national prize for the 17th annual RBC painting competition in 2015. Cruz is the founder of Kamias Special Projects, an artist-run space in Quezon City, Philippines, which hosts the Kamias Triennial, a cross-cultural art festival in Quezon City, Philippines. Most recently, the Kamias Triennial formed a curatorial collective along with curators Allison Collins and Su-Ying Lee to forge more meaningful connections and relationships among disparate art ecologies. The third Kamias Triennial titled *Sawsawan: Conversations in the Dirty Kitchen* launches on February 7, 2020.

# Atom Cianfarani

Atom Cianfarani is a queer artist and designer whose practice is founded in the re-purposing of refuse. Working from an ecological ideology, their cross-disciplinary practice promotes renewal. As a self-described Discarded Commodity Artist, their work is founded in rescuing cast-off materials from our ever-increasingly disposable society. Cianfarani focuses on the urban ecological struggle, highlighting how detouring raw materials from our waste stream can illuminate the intrinsic value of the object, while showcasing our implicit participation in the cycle of creation and discard. The materials they use are therefore imbued with a sense of history and ideological weight and become the lead characters in their work.

*Survival Quilting: OPERATE WITH LESS* addresses our current environmental reality and the challenge of imagining a future in an unsustainable society. While the transformation of discarded single-use materials redirects a minute percentage of waste destined for

landfill, the project's real aim is to represent the monumental issue at hand: Survival.

This project revolves around used Tetra Paks (packaging fabricated out of paper, plastic and aluminum that is often used for plant-based milks, boxed wine, juice, etc.) and packing Styrofoam. These landfilled materials have a serious impact on our environment. For example, Tetra Paks are marketed as an environmentally-favorable alternative to glass and metal, yet they are made from a non-recyclable material.

Cianfarani deconstructed over 600 of these discarded single-use packaging items to create a “new fabric” and weave 10-foot square quilts.

The Styrofoam is shredded with a handmade machine and mixed with cement to make forms.

On the night of the opening, Cianfarani operates the hand-made shredding machine for the audience. As it chugs through the mass amount of collected Styrofoam, the machine creates an overwhelming terrain,

or maze, of wasted material and highlights the enormous impact of our human footprint. Unprocessed Styrofoam and Tetra Paks litter the floor, awaiting destruction and reformation. It is a never-ending cycle of processing and receiving. As much as they rip through the trash to transform it anew, more used packaging enters the gallery space via drop-offs and donations.

Even though Cianfarani's projects point to the devastation of toxic production and consumerism, they ask us to consume something else: LOVE. This anti-consumerist/anti-normative mantra is repeated, like a quilt patchwork, on the walls of the space. Printed on old newspapers, the slogan demands that we divest in forced consumption by operating with less and refusing the norms of the waste economy.

**Atom Cianfarani** is an artist and designer whose practice is founded in the repurposing of refuse. Working from an ecological preservationist ideology, their design and art practice examines bioremediation to promote renewal in the urban waste-scape. In the 20 years they lived and worked in New York City and Brooklyn, their design practice, first in fashion and later in architectural infrastructure, reflected their political and environmental concerns. Their fashion company, Gaelyn and Cianfarani, pioneered the melding repurposed rubber, latex with sustainable fabrics into haute couture, showing twice at New York Fashion Week's Bryant Park tents and gracing the pages of countless fashion magazines including Italian Vogue, Details, i-D and Elle. For 10 years, Cianfarani was Vice Chair of the board of directors of the Lower East Side Ecology Center. They were the Sustainability Director at Build It Green in Brooklyn. As founder of the sustainability design firm Atomseco they have directed and consulted on green roof and sustainability projects, public art, and guerrilla art projects in Toronto and New York City. Cianfarani lives and works in Montreal where they are partner in the art collective Et tu, Machine and was recently a Futurist-In-Residence at Concordia University.

# Nicolas Fleming

Transforming a gallery space for each temporary exhibition is the most wasteful practice in exhibition design and making. At the AGB, we work to create elaborate and clear, clean spaces for artists to show their work, but remain cognizant of the labour and materials that go into erecting walls and creating new structures. Built into the design of the space is the mobility of the structures, which creates flexibility for more configurations two or three exhibitions in the future.

Building from a pre-existing cinema space in the gallery, Nicolas Fleming and the installation crew construct a rough structure reminiscent of a house. Drawing upon his expertise as a preparator, drywall, mud, wood, and metal studs have become his medium. Fleming has been able to successfully translate his paid work as a gallery technician into his studio time. This amalgamation of contract working hours and studio hours into one has allowed him to formulate a different relationship to work, one which is not alienating

but generative. It is a purposeful mind shift from working for people to earning a wage to hone a skill.

Working from materials salvaged from his previous installation art projects and galleries he works in, Fleming offers this two-story, domestic space to the curator for her to explore and invest as she sees fit, as an alternative to the common white cube exhibition space.

In this new construction, Suzanne Carte places the work of the permanent collection - giving them life outside of the vaults. Over the last thirty years, the AGB has amassed the largest comprehensive collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics in the world, totalling over 3000 works. The collection of objects ranges from highly functional ware to sculptural installations. The works brought into the house are functional pieces which have been stripped of their initial function – bowls that will never be filled with fruit, mugs that will never hold

liquid, vases that will never display flowers, and plates that will never present food again. Fleming's "house" places them in a setting that "makes sense", yet troubles the dual purpose of these objects to be both art and instrument. Putting the muted objects back into a domestic environment gives them the potential to function again.

**Nicolas Fleming** holds a Bachelor's degree in Studio Arts from Concordia University (Montreal, 2001) and a Master's Degree from Université du Québec à Montréal (Montreal, 2007). Since 2006, he has presented numerous solo exhibitions in Quebec, namely at Galerie de l'UQAM, McClure Gallery, AXENÉO7, Galerie Trois Points, Maison des Arts de Laval, and Centre CLARK. He has also had the opportunity to show solo projects in Ontario at TYPOLOGY Projects, Bunker 2, and Evans Contemporary. Other solo exhibitions of note were presented at ISE Cultural Foundation (New York, NY) and at Harcourt House (Edmonton, Alberta). Recently, the artist attended Rupert Residency (Vilnius, Lithuania) as well as Sculpture Space Residency (Utica, New York). Other productions by the artist include installation works for Truck Stop (Montreal – Quebec, 2017), Papier Art Fair (Montreal, 2015), and Aires Libres Festival (Montreal, 2014).

# Marlene Jess

## **Moving Slush, Hamilton/Burlington**

Saturday January 11, 2020

### **Leaving Centre[3]**

173 James Street North, Hamilton  
@ 9:00 am

### **Arriving at AGB**

1333 Lakeshore Road, Burlington  
@ 1:00 pm

Vancouver-based artist Marlene Jess asks participants to join her in a silent walk from Hamilton to Burlington as she transports remnants and debris from a performance work at the Centre[3] to the AGB. While moving material from one place to the next, Jess asks us to meditate on trade and transportation routes in the GTHA as they pertain to the shifting economic tides of industrial and cultural production.

*Moving Slush, Hamilton/Burlington* is part of her *Shoveling Piles* series where she performs an unnecessary physical task of moving a pile of material from one place to another. Through the completion of self-initiated physical labour, Marlene Jess seeks to explore something other than a traditional notion of productivity. Movement, physicality and bodily presence are human qualities the artist regards as sites of agency and momentary emancipation. Jess states, “I labour under a simple equation: show up, work hard for a set duration, and be conscious with my body.”

**Marlene Jess** is a 5th generation French-Canadian settler currently situated on unceded First Nations Territory of the Lekwungen, Coast Salish and WSÁNEĆ peoples called Saanich. It is located on what is called southern Vancouver Island in the Pacific Northwest.

Jess considers her working-class upbringing critical to her artistic inquiry. She recently completed a Master of Fine Arts degree at Emily Carr University in Vancouver, BC and has completed projects and presented work in Canada at venues such as Media Net, Victoria, BC, The Ministry of Casual Living, Victoria, BC, Harcourt House, Edmonton, AB, Open Space, Victoria, BC, The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, BC, The Khyber, Halifax, NS, and in the United States at Sea Change Gallery, Portland, OR, and Launchpad Gallery, Portland, OR.

# Lisa Meecham

Rug hooking by design is a recycling effort. The craftsman takes used fabric and rips it down into strands of material to be looped through a sheet of burlap in a continuous pattern.

In CANVAS, Meecham uses strips of material culled from previous projects. She grabs old drop cloths covered in paint from the studio floor and other materials readily available to create new projects. Like the creation process for many artists, CANVAS is the manifestation of many stops and starts. The final product is the result of taking the work apart and putting it back together many times in order to construct and perfect a work with the same material. The many iterations of CANVAS are part of the generative, experimental process that gives Meecham time to reflect on the value of artistic production. Rug hooking is a labour-intensive and repetitive exercise allowing the mind to contemplate and question the production, as the hands remain busy making the product.

Traditional Rug Hooking is as diverse an art form as those who practice it. Artist, **Lisa Meecham**, often draws from the Canadian cultural narrative to connect those new and seasoned to the craft in dialogue with challenging themes. Meecham is an accomplished artist in many mediums, furniture and fibre being favourites. An award-winning Traditional Rug Hooker, Meecham's mats have been displayed in local MP and MPP's offices, Ontario galleries, Nova Scotia guilds, and have toured the province of Newfoundland as part of a Canada 150 travelling exhibition in 2017.

# Allyson Vieira

Allyson Vieira lives and works in New York, one of the most expensive cities in North America. Gentrification is painfully acute in the five boroughs, yet sadly, it has become the norm for many urban centres. Look up! The sky is full of cranes (yes, in Burlington too). Ongoing construction becomes the sign of a growing city, but also of a city becoming less habitable. As the population density tightens and housing prices escalate, social, financial, and physical mobility becomes increasingly difficult. Artists are disproportionately affected by this due to their job precarity and low-income levels. They also become the scapegoats of gentrification. Artists raise the social capital of impoverished areas, which lures upper and middle-class settlers, and sets off a chain reaction of power, control, and ownership. Artists are priced out of their neighbourhoods, re-locate to the margins, and the vicious cycle repeats.

Vieira looks up at the new verticality of her city. The ongoing construction sites inform her perspective lines and material choices. She uses construction-grade material such as metal studs, concrete, scaffolding, netting, and fencing to build architectural forms in the gallery.

At the AGB, the netting frames the work and forces the audience to perform. It cuts off the space and compels the viewer to move around and under the structure, allowing one to confront the work closely and slow down the normal pathing. Between the diagonal cuts of the netting is the solitary *Worker*. Constructed from cast concrete and steel bars, the *Worker* takes shape from cylindrical tubes. This column-like sculptural form appears deflated. Barely standing, the figure is caught either in a moment of being built or breaking down. The *Blocks* sit nearby, as the perfect building material to prop up the *Worker*.

Vieira draws economic value out of each scrap of material that enters the studio space. Packaging, remaining concrete, and gloves from the construction of the *Worker* series went into the production of the *Block* works. Railing against a throwaway age of disposable

products and single-use packaging, all of her refuse material and studio detritus goes back into circulation. Nothing is wasted. Everything is useable matter. It leaves the studio as product to hold space in galleries instead of filling a dumpsite.

Artist **Allyson Vieira** has exhibited extensively both internationally and in the United States, including major solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel, CH, and the Swiss Institute, NY. Her catalog, *Allyson Vieira: The Plural Present*, was published by Karma Books in 2016, and her recent book of interviews with Greek master marble carvers, *On the Rock: The Acropolis Interviews*, was published by Soberstone Press in 2019. She is currently Assistant Professor of Foundations at the Corcoran School of Art at the George Washington University in Washington, DC.

# Joaquin Wall

*Global Steps / Surfaces of Revolution* is a geo-specific video-sculptural project by Argentine media artist Joaquin Wall. The piece hosts a series of collective actions and performances to research possible ways to curve and fold our conception of time-space and territory.

As a performative essay; ideas, productive potential and collaborative strategies are collected and put into practice in two opposite locations of the planet: Argentina and Canada. By exploring climatic contrasts, different and shared motivations and perspectives from each location and its inhabitants, the work reflects on how natural, political, social and economic circumstances can be reframed by the integration of its complementary opposite.

*“In which other ways can we imagine a body travelling from one pole to another?”*

Drawing on the figure of the toroid (a circular shape with a hole in the middle) as a new global manifest, Wall aims to intuitively introduce new political and social practices inspired by the *surfaces of revolution*, the state of constant mutation and the awareness of parallel opposites, in perspective toward our contemporary global challenges and conflicts.

In his works, performative and collaborative processes take place in sets, galleries, theaters and public spaces, questioning the border between art and life, property and co-creation, bringing notions of empathy, color, spontaneity, resistance, and adaptation. Combining physical actions, materials, unpredicted opportunities and generally what is at hand, Wall constructs environments and situations to function as spaces of assembly for both collaborators and public. With this practice, he researches on experimental ways to create a sense of community, togetherness, and

revolt that can transcend or defeat cultural differences, languages and established social constructions.

The first stage, produced in Argentina Wall collaborated with Patagonian artists Julia Sbriller and Roco Corbould and a group of local cultural agents around the cities of La Plata and Bariloche, Argentina.

The second and final installation in *Division of Labour* is the full manifestation of this thinking and working. It presents a significant ideological shift in programming at the AGB, as it exists within the newly amalgamated programming ethos of tethering the exhibition and education streams. Studio technicians, Heather Kuzyk and Michelle Lynn, held two workshops, working alongside local potters, who offered their expertise and labour in the construction of the bowls, balls, and donut-like formation. The clay forms rest on shelves in the gallery built from a collection of waste material discarded by the gallery, its patrons, and other cultural institutions. Wall also worked directly with participants attending the Sunday Family Open Studio in a clay performance where children created mini toroids behind a screen of white fabric. Using discarded materials to rehearse and compositionally construct, the participants were given space for play and to intuitively work alongside the artist. A video installation of the local workshops

and actions, captured by filmmaker Alyssa Bistonath is centered in the hole of the toroid. The footage of the experimentation and the footage of the experimental exercise in Argentina is hidden behind the curtain.

The night of the opening Wall performs a spinning movement choreographed by Toronto-based choreographer, educator, and researcher Jonathan Osborn, on waste collected from the streets of La Plata. Throughout the course of the exhibition the broken, white clay forms will be reconstituted and rearticulated in the ceramic and pottery studio. In keeping with the low or no-waste principles of the exhibition design, the clay will be reused in future educational programming after the show closes.

Built for a multilateral discursive exchange, this unified exhibition/education framework allows for greater engagement of all arms of the AGB. Supporting fluid (and abstract) productions like the *Global Steps / Surfaces of Revolution*, is part of the how the AGB grows as an institution. In turn, we look to collaborative, commission-based models of resource and skill sharing as an act of economic solidarity. Taking cue from Wall's working methodologies, we learn more about what it means to build an ecology for artistic sustainability.

**Joaquin Wall**, (b. 1986, La Plata, Argentina) studied Sculpture and Experimental Arts at the Fine Art Highschool of La Plata and completed his education in Media Arts and Cinematography at the National University for Arts and the Film Industry School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His work, essentially hybrid and experimental, draws on a variety of mediums, including performance, sculpture, choreography, video and installation.

In 2009 he participated in The Ever Mass Land residency program with Lucie Kolb, curated by BolWerk at Nadine Laboratory for Contemporary Arts, Brussels. During 2012 he travelled the South American continent, exchanging and collaborating with local and migrant communities and participating in the Residency Program of No Lugar Arte Contemporáneo, Quito, Ecuador.

From 2013 to 2015 he joined a group of international film-makers based in Amsterdam around the Master Program of the Nederlandse Filmacademie, working in different projects both as author, actor or cinematographer, shooting both in Europe and Southeast Asia. In 2016 he was part of Shifting Spaces, a 44-day collective occupancy of W139 Space for Contemporary Art, Amsterdam. In 2017 he was Artist-In-Residency at FLAM Forum for Live Arts, Amsterdam, where he delivered a series of public interventions, including a collective dance therapy and experimental canal tours.

In 2017 his project REVOLVE, co-created with Bram Loogman was produced by The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and Arte FRANCE and premiered at the 30th International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam (I.D.F.A. DocLab, 2017).

In 2018 the Fine Art Museum of Buenos Aires Province commissioned TRANS-MISION, a video sculpture with works from 2012 to 2018. As part of this exhibition, and together with Ahmed El Gendy, he performed U NO a UNO, a piece where both artists were tied to each other closely with a belt for a duration of 7 days. JU NTOS , a video documentary about this performance was produced by El Gendy as his graduation piece for S.N.D.O. School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam, and premiered at the 15th International Independent Film Festival of La Plata, in September 2019.

**Alyssa Bistonath** is a lens-based practitioner whose work focuses on themes of memory and belonging. The daughter of Guyanese immigrants Bistonath endeavours to look at modes of representation by investigating nostalgia, exploring evidence, and interrupting the archive. Her most recent work, includes “Portals” (2019) a four channel video installation commissioned by the City of Toronto for Nuit Blanche and an experimental documentary titled “Why We Fight” (2016) where she invited the Guyanese diaspora to write letters to a personified Guyana. The film won Best Canadian Short at the Regent Park Film Festival. Alyssa has been the director of photography for Michéle Pearson Clarke, Meera Margaret Singh, Public Studio, and Cauleen Smith. She is on the board of directors at Gallery TPW and is adjunct faculty at Ryerson University.

# Shellie Zhang

Positioned on a brightly-coloured wall of refuse paint, Shellie Zhang's photographic series *Means of Exchange* feels like walking down the isles at an outlet mall.

Discount objects populate artists' studios and homes. Due to financial constraints, artists source inexpensive material to transform studios and make new work. Zhang makes the sourcing of her material explicit in the making and meaning making of her work.

These "cheap" items have a limited lifespan. In Zhang's work they are valorized despite their disposable nature. They become a portrait of class. Who shops at Dollarama vs The Bay for household needs and décor? Who gets their groceries at No Frills vs Pusateri's Fine Foods? Who can afford to purchase "green" and organic products? Who is afforded frivolity? Zhang's images speak to us about the class wars inherent in the consumption of goods. As much as they are stand-ins for social and financial power

and mobility, they also expand to unpack the value of the workforce producing these goods, because sometimes discussions on class are really about race.

As Zhang explains, "*Means of Exchange* is a series of photographs featuring still life displays of products manufactured from Yiwu and imported into Canada. The photographs depict collections of fake flowers, streamers, holiday décor and other small commodities to question the reciprocity within an exchange built on the demands of the free market. In North America, the phrase "Made in China" is often used synonymously with "poorly-made" and "mass-produced", though ironically, the importation of these goods also speaks to the demand for them and their regulation overseas. How are acts of labour devalued when regulated to other countries and made invisible? How does the worldwide circulation of commodities compare as people suffer increasingly restrictive migration policies? The series is a

reflection on consumption while examining how objects translate culture, and the limitations of understanding through commerce, trade and mass-produced goods.”

By uniting both past and present iconography with the techniques of mass communication, language and sign, Zhang’s work deconstructs notions of tradition, gender,

identity, the diaspora, and popular culture, while calling attention to these subjects in the context and construction of a multicultural society. She is interested in exploring how integration, diversity and assimilation is implemented and negotiated, how this relates to lived experiences, and how culture is learned, relearned and sustained.

**Shellie Zhang** (b. 1991, Beijing, China) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada. She has exhibited at venues including WORKJAM (Beijing), Asian Art Initiative (Philadelphia) and Gallery 44 (Toronto). She is a recipient of grants such as the Toronto Arts Council's Visual Projects grant, the Ontario Arts Council's Visual Artists Creation Grant and the Canada Council's Project Grant to Visual Artists. In 2017, she was an Artist-in-Residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario. She is a member of EMILIA-AMALIA, a feminist research and writing group. Her work is in the TD Bank Corporate Art Collection, the Drake Hotel Permanent Art Collection, and numerous private collections. Recent projects include a publication with the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) and a solo exhibition at the New Gallery (Calgary).

# Programming

The exhibition includes a series of public events to create critical discussions about economics, art production, and a living wage for artists. From panel discussions to artists' walks, the programs are built to enhance dialogue around issues of class while building audience awareness of the precarious, self-organized labour that is integral to cultural production.

# Global Steps

The AGB is looking for participants to build, sculpt, and move with Argentinian artist Joaquin Wall during his production residency. Help construct a series of clay bowls, balls, and structures for a major installation in the gallery space.

**Maker workshop:**

**Thursday January 9**

**6:00—9:00pm**

**Family Studio Open**

**Sunday Workshop:**

**Sunday January 12**

**12:00—4:00pm**

**Final performance:**

**Friday January 17**

**7:00—9:00pm**

All activities are free, accessible, and open.

All abilities and skill levels welcome.

# FREE FARE FAIR

**Friday January 17**  
**7:00—10:00 pm**

Join us for the opening night of the winter exhibitions with activities, food, and music! This is a full fair of free offerings including a performance by Atom Cianfarani featuring their *Operate With Less* (OWL) handmade styrofoam shredding machine, a newly commissioned dance/aerobic work by Joaquin Wall, zine-making with Tara Bursey, hands-on learning and building with BurlingtonGreen, upcycling plastic toys with Tiny Toy Company, and bumping beats of DJ Smooth Transitions and DJ Donna Lovejoy.

**Chantelle Misheal** was a BurlingtonGreen volunteer for a number of years and currently serves as the Community Program Coordinator where she links residents, business employees and group members to rewarding eco-action initiatives in Burlington. Chantelle is passionate about waste reduction & diversion, with a focus on food waste reduction and zero-waste alternatives. She is enthusiastic about Ontario's Waste-Free Strategy, as it will encourage a shift towards a circular economy. After years of creating her own personal care products, including everything from toothpaste to deodorant, Chantelle advocates for everyone to be mindful of the products that are put on our bodies, and eventually back into the environment. Don't be afraid to ask about her favourite edible scrub!

Chantelle completed the Environmental Studies Certificate Program from the University of Guelph. She has experience as a program coordinator for various environmental programs throughout Halton, and she has also spent time working in sustainable communities in Costa Rica & Hawaii focusing on permaculture and waste diversion. She has a keen interest in learning more about cooperative business models, foraging in Southern Ontario & green roof technology.

Chantelle believes we all have a responsibility to be accountable for our impact, and hopes to reconnect the community with a genuine appreciation for the environment that surrounds us.

**Tara Bursey** is an interdisciplinary artist, self publisher and arts worker. She has worked as Curatorial Assistant at the Textile Museum of Canada and Artscape Youngplace, and in a curatorial capacity for the City of Hamilton Tourism and Culture Division, Hamilton Supercrawl, Craft Ontario and the Wychwood Barns Community Association. Her artwork has been exhibited across Canada as well as in Copenhagen, Berlin and Eye, Suffolk, UK, and she has presented her artistic research in the areas of textiles and contemporary art at Symposia in Los Angeles and Savannah. Most recently, she has worked rigorously in the areas of programming and education, bringing arts education to first and second graders at her neighbourhood school, and curating an exhibition about professional wrestling.

Born in Scarborough, Ontario, she lives and works in Hamilton where she coordinates exhibitions and programs at the Workers Arts & Heritage Centre. She also sings in a punk band called Gilded Age.

**Tiny Toy Co.** is the brainchild of teacher-librarian and emergent literacy expert Rebecca Saha. We collect, corral, and curate tiny toy “debris” from families across Toronto, and beyond, to give it a second life as part of upcycled early learning activities. We design and create literacy lessons, and educational games for young children using upcycled loose parts for learning. Our original educational activities all come with lesson plans, including adaptations to make them less or more challenging for primary school learners.

We refurbish and extend the life of high-quality, educational games and play sets through parts replacement. Our “reverse bulk store” approach also allows us to combine individual pieces of great toys like Lego, Duplo, K’Nex, Jenga, Thomas the Train / Brio, Snap Circuits, and more, until new sets are created. Together, we can tackle toy waste and create literacy, instead of litter.

**Sahra Soudi (AKA DJ Smooth Transitions)** is a multimedia artist, curator, DJ, and community organizer based in Hamilton whose art practice is rooted in social justice activism. Inspired by collectivity and community, their efforts are reflected in two artist collectives, HAVN (Hamilton Audio Visual Node) and COBRA (Coalition of Black and Racialized Artists).

**DJ Donna Lovejoy** knows music. With over 15 years of experience on the wheels of steel, she has built a rock-solid reputation, along with a very diverse vinyl and digital music collection. First inspired by the DJs at the underground raves of her youth, Lovejoy learned the art of mixing and blending records to create soundscapes to suit just about any type of event. Her success lies in her thoughtful approach to each event and her ability to weave several genres together in a single evening.

## Artists Talk & Tour

**Saturday, January 18**

**1:00—2:30pm**

Led by Senior Curator, Suzanne Carte

Artists from *Division of Labour* Joaquin Wall, Shellie Zhang, Lisa Meecham, Nicolas Fleming, and Atom Cianfarani walk through the exhibition and discuss their work.

## Repair Café

**Saturday, January 18,**

**February 15, and March 21,**

**12:00—3:00 pm**

Bring your broken electronics, holey sweaters, and wobbly chairs to the Repair Café. Not only do you get to have an appliance fixed, a wearable item patched, or a vintage item restored, but you also get to learn how to do it yourself as you work side by side with the repair volunteer to complete the task. Repair Café is a grassroot, volunteer-run organization that holds monthly gatherings in the GTHA where “fixers” help visitors learn how to repair items for free. It aims to build a more sustainable society, counter the “throw-away” mindset, and to place value on people who have repair skills and organizations that collaborate and innovate for the common good.

# Family Sunday Open Studios

**January—March, Sundays**

**1:00—4:00 pm**

Upcycling is a great way to turn something destined for landfill to something beautiful and useful. Create collage, sculpture, and more out of found and discarded items found in the *Artist Material Fund*. Feel free to bring in your own underused goods and products to add to the mix and create art you can gift, keep, or exchange with others.

**Sunday January 26 & February 9:** Collage

Explore the *Division of Labour* exhibition to find inspiration to create two your own collage out of old, discarded gallery materials and excess art supplies.

**Sunday February 2 & February 16:** Assemblage

Take a closer look at the work of *Division of Labour* artist Patrick Cruz and create your own assemblage structures out of found and repurposed objects.

**Sunday February 24:** Bring used picture frames to create a variety of items, including earring holders, serving trays and more. Hosted by BurlingtonGreen.

**Sunday March 15:** Transform your unused teacup sets (cups and plates) into trendy bird feeders. Hosted by BurlingtonGreen.

**Sunday March 29:** Use glass mason jars for this session to create everything from candle holders, desk organizers or sewing kits. Hosted by BurlingtonGreen.

## Lunch & Learn

**Friday January 31 & February 28  
12:15 – 1:00 pm**

Join Chantelle Misheal of BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association for a quick Lunch & Learn session on cost-effective and simple ways to reduce your impact on the environment - at home and at work. Come prepared to discuss where you find obstacles going eco-friendly in your everyday life - we'll explore what it means to be a "Mindful Consumer" as well as get you updated with all the hands-on opportunities to get involved with BurlingtonGreen. BYOL (bring your own lunch).

Established in 2007, **BurlingtonGreen** is a citizen-led, non-partisan, registered charity. Through awareness, advocacy and action initiatives, they work with the community to protect the environment, mitigate climate change and to create a healthier, more environmentally responsible Burlington.

Learn more about the organization's initiatives and how you can participate in supporting local advocacy. <https://www.burlingtongreen.org/>

## **Code of Conduct Implementation**

Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) insists that everyone who uses the services remains mindful of, and takes responsibility for, their speech and behavior. AGB will not tolerate words or actions that are racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, classist, transphobic, cissexist, or ableist. AGB does not accept oppressive behavior, harassment, destructive conduct, or exclusionary actions and asks all be respectful of physical and emotional boundaries.

AGB enforces a Code of Conduct for all participants as we continue to grow and understand what it means to be a safer and braver space for both artists and the audiences. This agreement is built to ensure that all involved in programming hold inclusivity and respect as a high priority. AGB commits to working with community partners whose values and core concerns compliment those of the organization to help and further serve the many communities in which we are engaged in. All community participants, including members and guests of members, event hosts, sponsors, presenters, exhibitors, and attendees, are expected to abide by the AGB's Code of Conduct and cooperate with organizers who enforce it. Anyone who engages in unacceptable behaviour will be expelled from the participating in programs or attending events.

## **About the publication**

Publications are useful resources and tools for artists and institutions. They extend the life of an exhibition, promote artists, engage in a national and international discourse, record knowledge production, build history, archive ephemeral practices, and provide space for critical dialogue and responses. Rarely, however, do they provide an additional revenue supply for either artists or institutions. Many end up in boxes rather than in people's hands and clog up artists' studios and gallery storage spaces.

In keeping with the minimal waste ethos of the exhibition, the catalogue for *Division of Labour*, designed by Tetyana Herych of Furrawn Press, is a print-at-home or read-online exhibition resource.

Family Guides - packed with activities and information - are available for the *Division of Labour*. The guides focus on the key themes in the exhibition, Labour, written by Tara Bursey and Environmental Impacts, written by Farrukh Rafiq.

# Acknowledgements

The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) is a public art gallery devoted to supporting contemporary art, craft, and related thought. We are a gathering place for experiences, ideas, and critical conversations. We create programming initiatives that push the boundaries of traditional arts education by supporting artists, youth, and the wider community in their personal, professional, and artistic development, and by leading in the study and preservation of contemporary Canadian ceramics. We reflect upon, and reaffirm, our core values through all our programming which include; Inclusion. Inspiration. Encouragement. Collaboration. Respect. Accessibility. Sustainability. Integrity.

We respectfully acknowledge that the land where we are located is part of the ancient Dish With One Spoon Treaty and the Brant Tract Purchase, Treaty No. 3 ¾. We are grateful to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River for sharing this territory with us.

Suzanne Carte would like to thank all the contributors and artists for their time and energy. A special recognition to the ongoing support

of Joan Carte, Wayne Carte, Michèle Pearson Clarke, and Su-Ying Lee. I appreciate all who have made this project possible including; Chantelle Misheal, Lawson Hunter, Mike Rooks, Gary Kirkwood, and the volunteer fixers, Tara Bursey, Rebecca Saha, Farrukh Rafiq, the docents, guilds, Residencia Corazón, Hazel Ottley, Anthony Gebrehiwot, Evelyn Kelch, Jonathan Osborn, Alexis O'Hara, Joesph Tassoni, Yuula Benivolski, Konstantin Kilibarda, and Peter Fleming.

I acknowledge all the invisible labour that goes into the production of exhibitions and public programs. Thank you to the arts administrators, cultural producers, event managers, outreach programmers, education assistants, curatorial teams, marketing and communication departments, development officers, studio technicians, volunteer coordinators, shop managers, maintenance operators, custodians, visitor services, and executive directors of galleries across the GTHA who are grossly underpaid for their significant contribution to the Canadian cultural landscape and local economies.

A big shout-out goes to the staff at The Workers Arts and Heritage (WAHC) —Hitoko Okada, Florencia Berinstein, Daniel Hill, and Tara Bursey—who went above and beyond to make the first edition a success. It is a very time-consuming endeavour and I am forever grateful that they believed in it and put in the labour.

Thank you to all of the contributing cultural institutions and community members who believed in the project and want to create more spaces that minimize waste, including the City of Burlington, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Art Gallery of York University, Blackwood Gallery, Idea Exchange, Oakville Galleries, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, The Lettering Shop, McMaster Museum of Art, Ryerson Image Centre, Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Museum at University of Toronto Art Centre, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Sheridan College-Theatre Department, Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Onsite Gallery at OCAD University, Visual Arts Mississauga, and WA&HC.

The AGB would like to acknowledge the preparators for their dedicated skills and efforts in installing the *Division of Labour* exhibition Nick Breton, Daniel Joyce, Rollin King, Lexie Nelson, Marc Nerbonne, Grayson Richards, and Carmen Schroeder.

The AGB gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of its staff, members, volunteers, donors and sponsors, and the Ontario Arts Council. Nicolas Fleming would like to thank the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

An art trash collection and recycling program has been extremely hard to fund. We are grateful that the Ontario Trillium Foundation stepped up and saw the raw potential in a service which re-purposes material waste from cultural institutions. It would not have been possible without the Seed Fund support.

*Division of Labour* is generously supported by our Title Sponsor, RBC Wealth Management, Dominion Securities (Group of 10) Burlington, and our Activation Sponsor, Durward Jones Barkwell & Company LLP. We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the Ontario Arts Council. The Artist Material Fund is graciously supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Community partners include BurlingtonGreen, Centre[3], Workers Arts & Heritage Centre, Fondo Nacional de las Artes, and the Consulate General of Argentina in Toronto.

## Contact Information

1333 Lakeshore Road  
Burlington, ON L7S 1A9  
(905) 632-7796  
agb.life  
@artgallburl

## Hours of Service

At the AGB, we believe that art experiences should be accessible to everyone, so we are open 74 hours per week, 362 days per year, and admission is always free.

## AGB Hours

Weekdays: 9am—9pm  
Weekends: 10am—5pm



ART GALLERY of BURLINGTON



Workers Arts and Heritage Centre



for artistic + social practice



Together we make a difference



Wealth Management  
Dominion Securities

Burlington



CHARTERED  
PROFESSIONAL  
ACCOUNTANTS

Big enough to know. SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE.



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario



Fondo Nacional de las Artes



Consulate General of the  
**Argentine Republic**  
Toronto - Canada

