

# ACE HOTEL TORONTO

## **Ace Hotel Toronto Art Program**

With each new project, Ace conspires with local artists to create works that celebrate the unmatched DNA of the cities the hotels inhabit – works meant to enrich the spaces and inspire dialogue with the community they serve. At Ace Hotel Toronto, the warmth of the human hand guides the art program throughout. An intimate and grounding force, touch leaves palpable traces of its electricity and inherent curiosity throughout Ace Toronto.

Nearly 40 artists – comprising a rich and diverse group of Canadian creators, from established names to students and up-and-comers, each with a different tie to Toronto – contributed works to the project. Poetry, sculpture, painting, fiber, collage and more make up the intimate galaxy of curated works within, offering space to be lost or get found.

### Public Space Art

Within Ace Hotel Toronto's grand public spaces, the inherent humanity of art offers moments to offset the larger-than-life architecture. In the lobby lounge, two raw canvas pieces from Cairo-born, Toronto-based mixed media artist Nadia Gohar showcase the inherent gradient of paint when applied by brush, and demonstrate the expressiveness of minimalism. Near the DJ booth, which was made in collaboration with Montréal-based studio Concrete Cat, is a circular three-dimensional piece from Toronto-based artist Erin Vincent, who primarily works in found materials. Vincent created furry, spiky tidal movements by embedding thousands of individual nylon brush bristles into the canvas, which in turn form a landscape of unusual texture and light.

Nearby is architect A. Howard Sutcliffe's monumental site-specific work, *Horizon Line*, a puzzle of weathered, stained and untreated plywood pieces which mimics the sparkling waters of Lake Ontario. A staircase descending to Alder, Ace Toronto's wood-fired restaurant helmed by chef Patrick Kriss, allows visitors to be invited into the work, whether they're aware of it or not – creating a synergistic relationship between the two. Inside Alder, hang works by the artists Dahae Song and Ale Groen. In the corridor connecting the restaurant to the elevators is a series of five raw canvas panels from Song, who is from South Korea and based in Toronto. Song's canvas series, which began as a single canvas, deconstructed then reconnected at moments by extracted threads, represents abstract tree-like forms. Song's work is both pacifying and exploratory, capturing a world unseen. A work of considerable width by prolific artist Ale Groen is showcased in the dining room, condensing the atmosphere and experience of a dinner into a single striking object, adding a dramatic moment of color to the restaurant.

Ace Toronto features three private spaces, two of which display original commissioned works. Located on the second floor, Form offers a mural of hand-drawn shapes and studies by multidisciplinary Canadian artist Shelagh Keeley. The intricate moments depicted offer intimacy within the sizable gathering space.

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Ontario-based artist Rod Mireau is known for works that apply materials like wood and metal in unpredictable ways. Within the hotel's cozier meeting room, *Flow*, Mireau created a striking and singular three-dimensional sculptural form out of wood with a black finish. Off of *Flow* stands a small Japanese garden-inspired terrace exhibiting an otherworldly geometric plywood structure by artist Chris Foster. The contrast of the terrace's natural setting and the alien form of the work strikes a dynamic and thought-provoking relationship.

Toronto-based muralist and illustrator Madison van Rijn created a spectacular collaged mural along two walls of the gym. Utilizing expressive color blocks, brushstrokes and the artist's own photographs of Canadian landscapes, the work brings the sensation of nature and a joyous burst of color into the room. Outside the hotel's largest event space, *Interspace*, rests three wall hangings from Toronto fiber artist David Kaye. Repurposing and reinterpreting his 1978 natural linen piece, *Three Part Linen Relief*, Kaye uses textual stitches to manipulate the work while adding relief and creating abstract landscapes.

The hotel's rooftop, which hosts a gallery home for rotating shows, offers permanent installations by Montréal-based artist David Umemoto at the northern and southern ends of the space. Umemoto's work includes sculptural pieces as well as cast concrete murals, which call to mind architectural details — ghostly impressions that seemingly exist in a multitude of times, appearing both familiar and strange.

## Private Space Art

The guest room art at Ace Hotel Toronto is largely composed of works from two programs: *Poems from Home* and *Community Canvas*.

*Poems from Home* was inspired by Toronto's diverse and vibrant population, celebrating the fact that many of the city's inhabitants — and indeed the artists in the program — come from somewhere else. Incorporating pieces from 24 artists, each artwork includes a poem themed around the concept of home as defined by the artist. While threads of similarity and thematic harmony exist throughout all 55 pieces, they are simultaneously singular, featuring different mediums, points of view, impressions and sizes. The result is a gorgeous amalgam of poems from all around the world, brought to life by the artists and people of Toronto, seen in guest rooms that global travelers will wake up to and absorb as they head out to explore the city.

*Poems from Home* includes Victoria Sequeira, a self-taught Portuguese artist, illustrator and painter based in Toronto, who completed six works for the series — capturing personal poems as well as poems authored by her cousin, Celina Sequeira, and the French novelist Gustave Flaubert. Using figurative body movements abstracted on the canvas, Sequeira's work offers softness and instills a sense of peacefulness. Designer Kelly Ann Nguyen created two works for *Poems from Home*, using hand motifs and gestures of welcoming, intermingled with details evoking nature and rivers. Nguyen is a Vietnamese Canadian artist currently residing in Tokyo, and used small Japanese phrases within her pieces that speak to going and the comfort of return.

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Five black-and-white works in the series come from Canadian contemporary artist Meera Sethi, who was born in India. Translating the word “home” into five South Asian languages and scripts – Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Tamil and Bengali – Sethi creates intricate geometric designs around each word, reminiscent of the ubiquitous wrought-iron grills commonly seen adorning urban dwellings in Indian cities, which evoke notions of beauty and protection. First-generation Canadian multidisciplinary artist tahsine al hassane completed two works in acrylic and paper on wood, capturing poems written by hassane herself, exploring migration and hope. Three paintings by Toronto artist Jarrod Wilson use lines of abstracted text from a single poem to create cognitive dissonance, suspending layers of language into a cerebral work that aims to slow the viewer’s perception and challenges the perception of legibility.

Lili Lee is a South Korean artist, who has recently resided in both Toronto and South Korea. Lee's work is inspired by mobiles and the shapes and colors of Bauhaus furniture. Creating two paintings for the series that are largely composed of optical points, lines and planes, Lee incorporates three Korean words that define Toronto as a home in the artist’s mind. Indigenous artist Jennifer Alicia conceived a work that nods to the city’s original name, Tkaronto, which translates to “where the trees are standing in the water.” Alicia’s work serves as a map of sorts, tracing Toronto’s three major waterways and the text flows similarly. Cairo-born, Toronto-based artist Dalia Hassan contributed three works to the series, which incorporate and capture the duality and unity held within two lines written by early Persian philosopher, mystic and poet Al-Ḥallāj.

*Poems from Home* also includes works by the artists M.I.Blue, Sigma Foxx, Ian Keteku, Guillermo Trejo, Dalia Elcharbini, Carmen Jane Lew, Christine Duff, Anto Chan, Furqan Mohamed, Ale Groen, Jason Logan, Simon Bertrand, Christina Ott, Yuriko Kubota, Mariel Gonzalez and Nelson Cheng.

For *Community Canvas*, the artists Claudia Gutierrez and Guillermo Trejo have created a collaborative work on 70 pieces of pre-cut canvas shared between the two artists in a sort of call-and-response activation. Trejo began by printing on the canvas, using his bold, graphic aesthetic; Gutierrez then used a dip dye technique she studied at her residency in Oaxaca, Mexico to add an element of softness and fluidity to the prints. Gutierrez also sewed the edges of each piece, creating a final product of lines, fabric and texture that brings depth to guest rooms and encourages the eye to travel throughout the piece repeatedly.

Born in Canada to Mexican and Uruguayan parents, Gutierrez has been based in Ottawa since 2008. Her practice stretches from painting and printmaking to textile production, and her work is inspired by the patterns found in written language. Gutierrez often exploits severe formal contrasts – light and dark, softness and hardness, weightiness and buoyancy – to evoke contraction and contradiction in her work. Guillermo Trejo is a Mexican Canadian artist based in Ottawa. Specializing in printmaking, Trejo moved to Canada in 2007, and his experience of immigration and distance have shaped his work. The two artists have been collaborators for over a decade, having shown their work together, worked together in art spaces and sat on boards together. This is the first time the two have collaborated on an art piece, developing a visual language that is simultaneously together and apart.

Three Ace Toronto rooms contain mobiles by Taiwanese Canadian artist Dennis Lin, who commonly works in industrial and found materials such as wood, metal and rock, reflecting an interest in exploring

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patterns of consumption and their impact on humanity and the Earth. Lin's dazzling mobiles exude a cosmic energy and delicacy, disguising the strength of the materials used and achieving a beautiful, suspended balance.