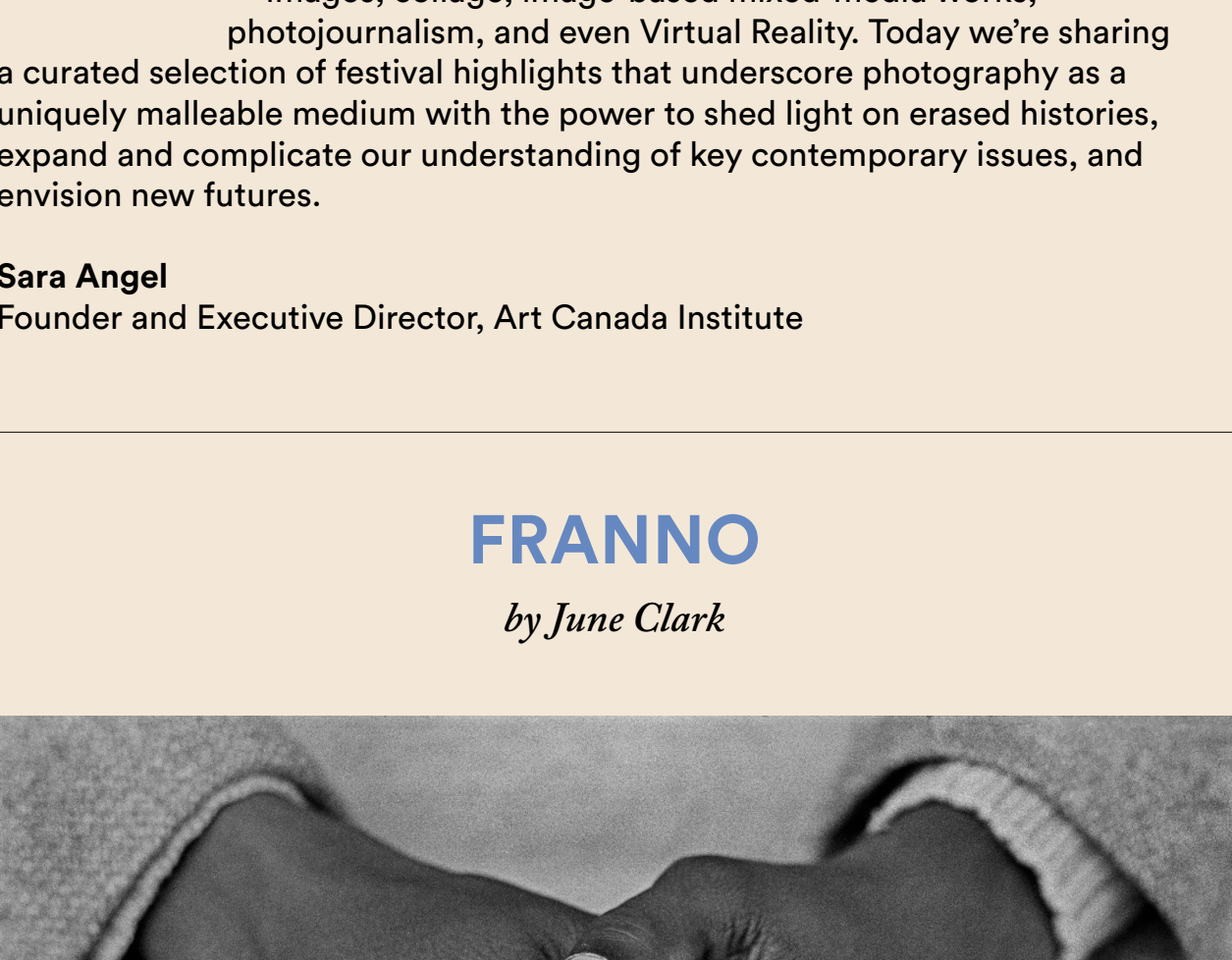


MAY 19, 2023

# CAMERA READY

## CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHY AT CONTACT

*Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival is the world's largest annual celebration of its kind. Here's a look at exhibitions that have caught our eye.*



May marks the beginning of the annual [Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival](#) in Toronto, a collection of more than 180 exhibitions, outdoor installations, and events throughout the city showcasing works by Canadian and international artists. This year's 27th edition has expanded to include a wide range of lens-based arts including digitally altered images, collage, image-based mixed-media works, photojournalism, and even Virtual Reality. Today we're sharing a curated selection of festival highlights that underscore photography as a uniquely malleable medium with the power to shed light on erased histories, expand and complicate our understanding of key contemporary issues, and envision new futures.

**Sara Angel**

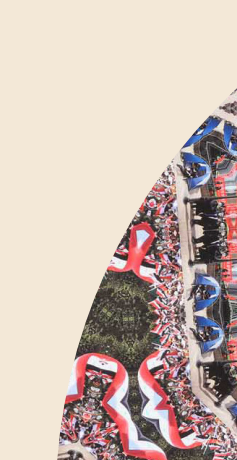
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

## FRANNO

by June Clark



June Clark, *Franno*, 1982, courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto.



After emigrating to Toronto in 1968, Harlem-born artist June Clark (b.1941) began photographing the people and streets of her chosen city. Two loosely clasped hands are the focal point of this black and white image, which is featured alongside others taken by Clark during the 1970s, '80s and '90s that document communal, everyday life in Toronto. "I walked around looking for imagery that brought me home or had me feel as if I was home," [the artist explains](#). "I didn't know what I was looking for. I would just see people on Bathurst Street sitting on their stoops or their verandas and this, to me, is community, so I would photograph them and they seemed to love it, so I kept it up."

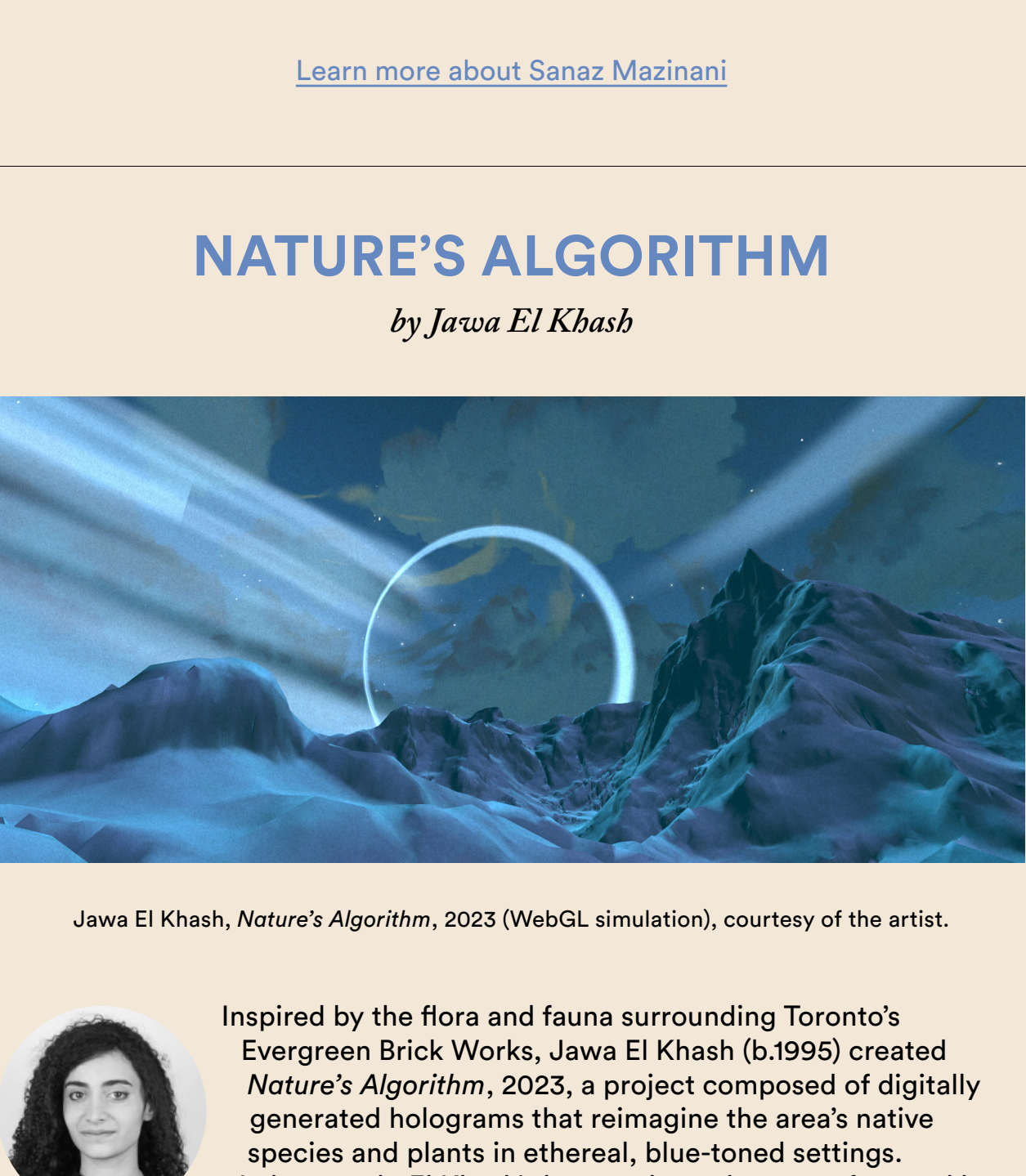
**Where:** Daniel Faria Gallery

**When:** April 29 to July 3

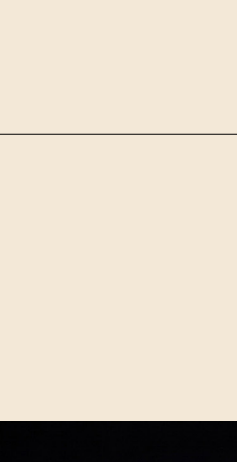
[Learn more about June Clark](#)

## TREE OF LIFE #1

by Jean-François Bouchard



Jean-François Bouchard, *Tree of Life #1*, 2022, from the series *Exile from Babylon*, courtesy of the artist and Arsenal Contemporary Art Toronto.



Slab City, an off-the-grid anarchist community in California's Colorado Desert, is the backdrop for this shot of a barren tree draped with garbage taken by Jean-François Bouchard (b.1968). The work is part of Bouchard's *Exile from Babylon* series, in which the Montreal-born, New York City-based artist took haunting still life photographs of trees to represent the inhospitable setting where those who reject, or have been rejected by, mainstream society have formed their own community. Bouchard's interest in marginalized communities and unorthodox lifestyles has taken him around the world since 2003.

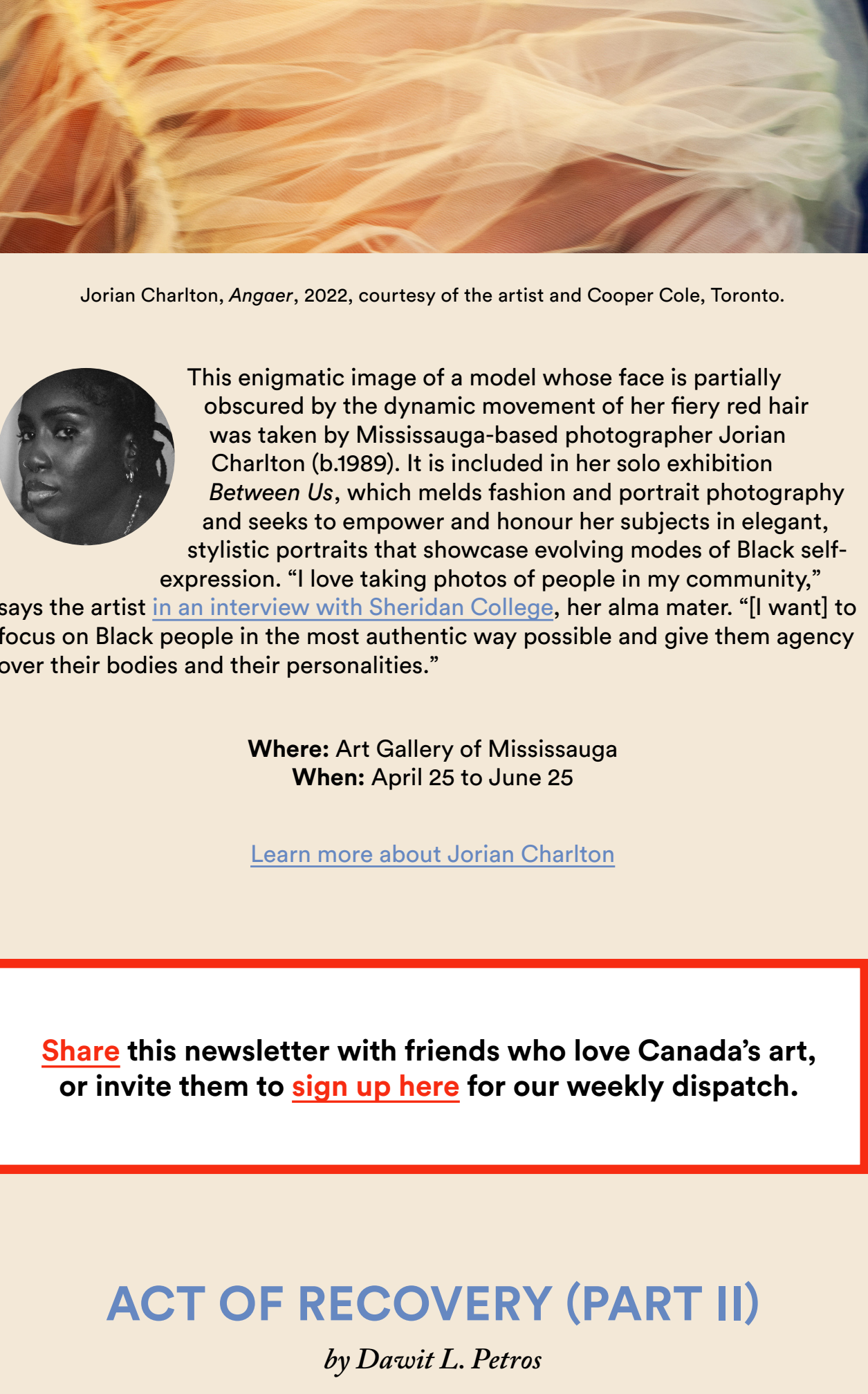
**Where:** Arsenal Contemporary Art Toronto

**When:** April 27 to July 15

[Learn more about Jean-François Bouchard](#)

## TOKYO/DAMASCUS

by Sanaz Mazinani



Sanaz Mazinani, *Tokyo/Damascus*, 2012, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, courtesy of the artist and Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto.



In *Tokyo/Damascus*, 2012, Iranian Canadian artist Sanaz Mazinani (b.1978) uses images from the Arab Spring protests in Syria and the Occupy movement in Japan to create a kaleidoscope of colours and patterns reminiscent of Islamic tiles and mosaics. Part of the group exhibition *We Are Story: The Canada Now Photography Acquisition*, this large-scale work invites viewers to take a closer look at the details that make up our interconnected world. It serves as a prime example of Mazinani's practice, in which she often manipulates found imagery drawn from social media, news sites, blogs, and government databases.

**Where:** Art Gallery of Ontario

**When:** January 28 to July 23

[Learn more about Sanaz Mazinani](#)

## NATURE'S ALGORITHM

by Jawa El Khashb



Jawa El Khashb, *Nature's Algorithm*, 2023 (WebGL simulation), courtesy of the artist.



Inspired by the flora and fauna surrounding Toronto's Evergreen Brick Works, Jawa El Khashb (b.1995) created *Nature's Algorithm*, 2023, a project composed of digitally generated holograms that reimagine the area's native species and plants in ethereal, blue-toned settings. In her youth, El Khashb's interest in ecology was fostered by her grandfather, a plant pathologist and agriculturalist who passed down scientific knowledge that she employs in her work. As [she explains in it's Nice That](#), the Damascus-born, Toronto-based artist prefers the medium of Virtual Reality for its unique ability to "digitally archive the present and re-imagine the future."

**Where:** Evergreen Brick Works and through

a 3D desktop simulation [available online](#).

**When:** May 4 to December 31

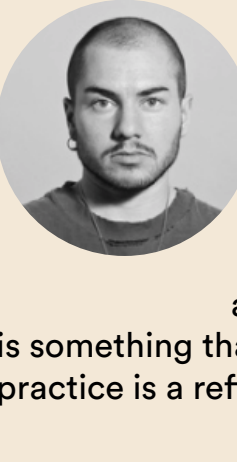
[Learn more about Jawa El Khashb](#)

## ANGAER

by Jorian Charlton



Jorian Charlton, *Angaer*, 2022, courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto.



This enigmatic image of a model whose face is partially obscured by the dynamic movement of her fiery red hair was taken by Mississauga-based photographer Jorian Charlton (b.1989). It is included in her solo exhibition *Between Us*, which melds fashion and portrait photography and seeks to empower and honour her subjects in elegant, stylistic portraits that showcase evolving modes of Black self-expression. "I love taking photos of people in my community," says the artist [in an interview with Sharif C. Jones](#), her all-time fave. "I want to focus on Black people in the most authentic way possible and give them agency over their bodies and their personalities."

**Where:** Art Gallery of Mississauga

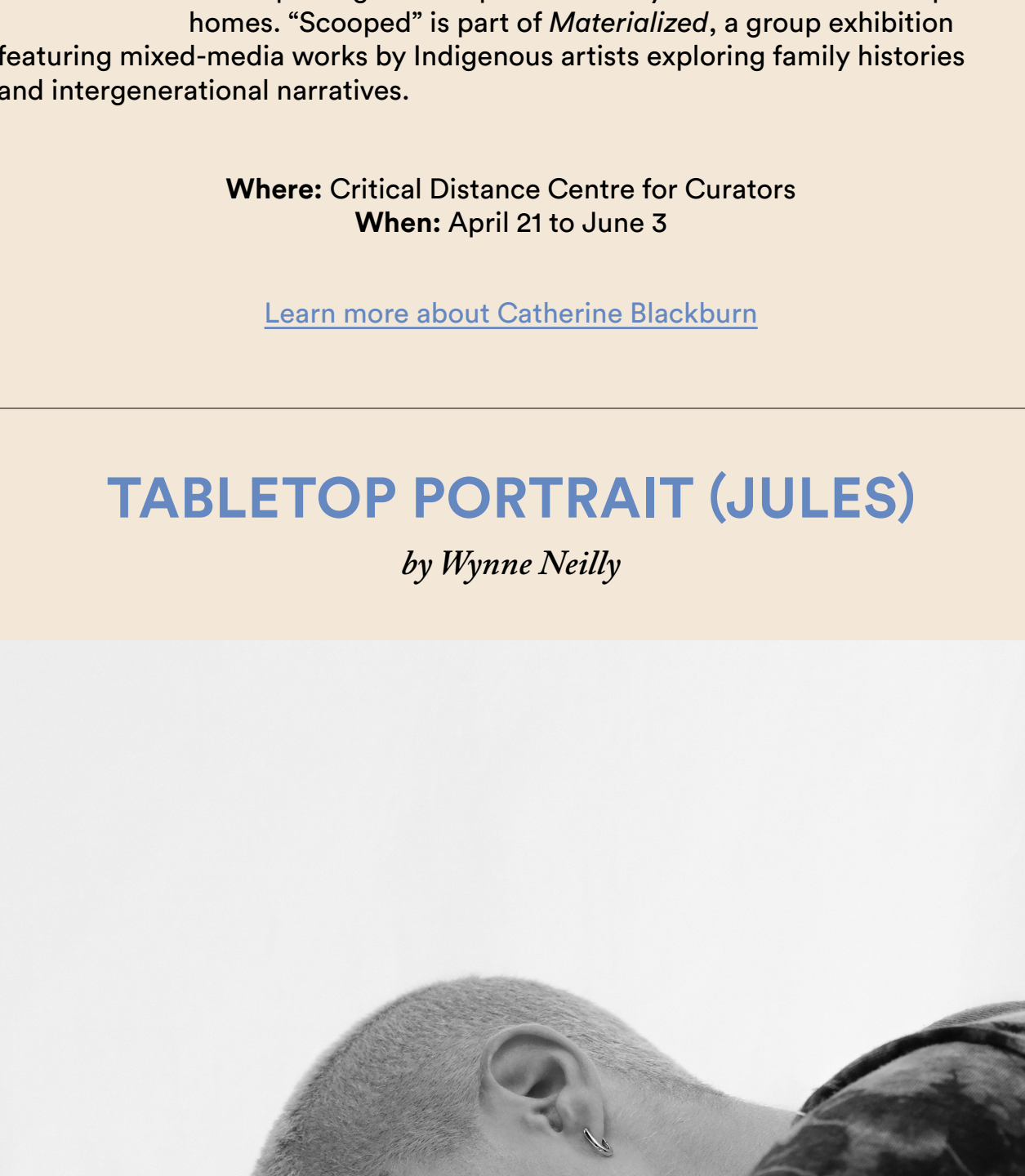
**When:** April 25 to June 25

[Learn more about Jorian Charlton](#)

**Share** this newsletter with friends who love Canada's art, or **invite them to sign up here** for our weekly dispatch.

## ACT OF RECOVERY (PART II)

by Dawit L. Petros



Dawit L. Petros, *Act of Recovery (Part II)*, 2014, printed 2016, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, courtesy of Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal.



At the Art Gallery of Ontario's exhibition *We Are Story: The Canada Now Photography Acquisition*, viewers can see works that include this arresting image of a tilting shipwreck off the coast of Nouakchott, Mauritania. Eritrean Canadian artist Dawit L. Petros (b.1972), who is based in Montreal and Chicago, captured the image during a year-long international voyage on which he explored displacement, colonialism, and "the complex narrative of migration across Africa and Europe," as he [explains in an interview with The Guardian](#).

**Where:** Art Gallery of Ontario

**When:** January 28 to July 23

[Learn more about Dawit L. Petros](#)

## THE PROFESSOR'S DESK

by Zinnia Naqvi



Zinnia Naqvi, *The Professor's Desk*, 2023, courtesy of the artist.



Toronto-based artist Zinnia Naqvi examines the history of anti-Asian racism at Canadian universities with this multi-layered image that brings together materials from four publicized incidents of discrimination. Created with archival documents from the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, the work honours the struggles of Black, Indigenous, and racialized individuals at Canadian academic institutions. By surrounding the archival finds with personal effects and family photos, the work fosters an empathetic, human-centred understanding and appreciation for those who paved the way for future generations in their fight for equality.

**Where:** Whippersnapper Gallery

**When:** May 4 to 31

[Learn more about Zinnia Naqvi](#)

## SCOOPED

by Catherine Blackburn



Catherine Blackburn, *Scooped* (detail), 2017, courtesy of the artist.



In this work by Catherine Blackburn (b.1984), a child sits on a stoop and is flanked by two human-shaped cut-outs bordered with gold beads. A member of Saskatchewan's Eritrean River First Nation, the artist and jewelry-maker is referencing the Sixties Scoop, Canada's long-time practice of taking Indigenous children from their families without consent and placing them in predominantly white foster and adoptive homes. "Scooped" is part of *Materialized*, a group exhibition featuring mixed-media works by Indigenous artists exploring family histories and intergenerational narratives.

**Where:** Critical Distance Centre for Curators

**When:** April 21 to June 3

[Learn more about Catherine Blackburn](#)

## TABLETOP PORTRAIT (JULES)

by Wynne Neilly



Wynne Neilly, *Tabletop Portrait (Jules)*, 2021, courtesy of the artist.



A queer and trans artist himself, photographer Wynne Neilly (b.1990) often features people from the 2SLGBTQ+ community—as he does here, in *Tabletop Portrait (Jules)*, 2021. The Toronto-based artist, who shot actor Elliot Page for a powerful 2021 cover of *Time* magazine, is a recipient of the 2023 Scotiabank New Generation Photography Award (NGPA) and is currently featured in a group exhibition alongside fellow NGPA winners. "The queer and trans community is something that is ever evolving and shifting," he tells [CBC](#). "My photographic practice is a reflection of that."

**Where:** Arsenal Contemporary

**When:** April 28 to June 17

[Learn more about Wynne Neilly](#)

## SHIBAASHKA'IGAN: HONOURING THE SACRED JINGLE DRESS

by Nadya Kwandibens



Nadya Kwandibens, *Shibaashka'igan: Honouring the Sacred Jingle Dress*, 2019, courtesy of the Billboard at Artscape Youngplace.



Three women wearing the jingle dress—traditional Ojibwe regalia—share a casual moment of joy in this work by Nadya Kwandibens, Toronto's newest Photo Laureate. By documenting elders and knowledge keepers in candid states of laughter and intimacy, the artist, who is of Anishinaabe descent, is honouring the power of the jingle dress and dance while also countering the stereotype of the "stoic Indian." Kwandibens often uses her background in comedic improv to put her subjects at ease, explaining [in an interview with The Globe and Mail](#) that "being able to draw out stories and make people comfortable is something I've done for a long time."

**Where:** Critical Distance Centre for Curators

and the Artscape Youngplace billboard

**When:** April 21 to June 3

[Learn more about Nadya Kwandibens](#)

## THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS

The ACI is a not-for-profit educational charity that receives no government financing or public support. Our work is made possible by an important circle of [friends, patrons, and benefactors](#).

If you would like to support our important work, please see [this page](#).

Follow us on social media



Facebook  
artcaninstitute/



Instagram  
@artcaninstitute



Twitter  
@artcaninstitute

Image Credits: [1] June Clark, *Franno*, 1982, Courtesy of the artist and Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto.

[2] Jean-François Bouchard, *Tree of Life #1*, 2022, From the series *Exile from Babylon*, Courtesy of the artist and Arsenal Contemporary Art Toronto. [3] Sanaz Mazinani, *Tokyo/Damascus*, 2012, pigment print, mounted and laminated to Dibond, 149.9 cm (diameter), Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchase, with funds from the Canada Now Photography Acquisition Initiative, Edward Burtnysky and Nicholas Melivier, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Bulger Gallery, Toronto (2021/10). © Sanaz Mazinani. [4] Jawa El Khashb, *Nature's Algorithm*, 2023, WebGL simulation, Courtesy of the artist. [5] Jorian Charlton, *Angaer*, 2022, Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto. [6] Dawit L. Petros, *Act of Recovery (Part II)*, 2014, printed 2016, archival pigment print, overall: 50.8 x 66 cm, Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Purchase, with funds from the Canada Now Photography Acquisition Initiative, Edward Burtnysky and Nicholas Melivier, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto. [7] Zinnia Naqvi, *The Professor's Desk*, 2023, Courtesy of the artist. [8] Catherine Blackburn, *Scooped* (detail), 2017, photos, 24kt-gold-plated beads, seed beads, thread, 12 x 9 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [9] Wynne Neilly, *Tabletop Portrait (Jules)*, 2021, Courtesy of the artist. [10] Nadya Kwandibens, *Shibaashka'igan: Honouring the Sacred Jingle Dress*, 2019, Courtesy of the Billboard at Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw Street, April 21–June 3, 2023.