

[frieze.com](https://www.frieze.com)

5 Shows to See During Art Toronto

BY Rory O'Connor AND Chloe Stead | 14 Feb 25

7–8 minutes

[Tishan Hsu](#) | Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto | *8 September – 26 January 2025*



Tishan Hsu, 'Interface Remix', 2024, exhibition view, Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto. Courtesy: Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto and © 2024 Tishan Hsu Artists Rights Society/New York; photograph: LF Documentation

Since 2022, the Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto's now-outgoing curator Kate Wong has brought much-needed relevance and life to the museum. Her generous and ambitious final contribution is the first Canadian showcase of the work of Tishan Hsu, whose practice explores the relationship between technology and the human body. Hsu first conceived of the machine as an extension of the human brain while working as a data entry clerk in the 1980s. His work draws on his early experiences with

emerging software and examines the impact of virtual realities on society while lingering in the forms and materiality of the human body.

The exhibition, 'Interface Remix', spans five decades of Hsu's career. In addition to paintings, sculptures and installations, the show features a new site-specific piece created in response to MOCA's architecture. *Ear-skin-screen with casts: Toronto* (2024) is custom wallpaper that twists into an unsettling architectural form, with acrylic elements extending from its surface like grotesque tumours or appendages in a David Cronenberg movie, an apt metaphor for the superficial smarm of the art world.

[Winsom Winsom](#) | Clint Roensch Gallery | 12 September – 26 October



Winsom Winsom, 'Bridging Time', 2024, exhibition view, Clint Roensch Gallery. Courtesy: the artist and Clint Roensch Gallery

At the centre of Winsom Winsom's exhibition 'Bridging Time' at Clint Roensch Gallery stands a striking new installation titled *Travelling Time* (2024). Variations of this complex work are on display elsewhere, including at the [Toronto Biennial of Art](#). A ceremonial installation anchors the space with a serpentine design surrounded by upright tree branches, each playing a distinct role. Encircling the scene are Winsom's 'Ancestors 1–7' (1999), a series of photo transfer portraits on silk, with *Ancestors 5* serving as a legend. The work engages with themes of transformation, renewal and self-inquiry, evoking political, artistic and spiritual ancestors by creating a self-selected family tree of influential Black women

– a deeply resonant concept for Winsom, a pivotal Canadian artist and educator whose legacy of activism continues to inform Toronto communities.

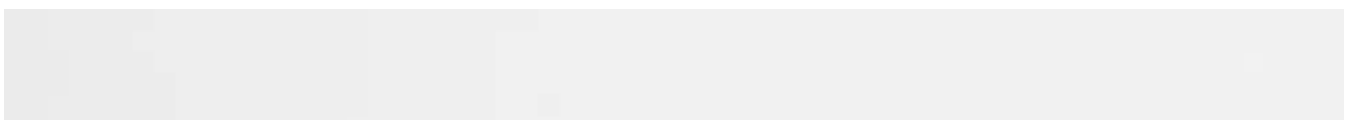
[Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill](#) | COOPER COLE | 21 September – 9 November



Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, *Language Shoes*, 2024, running shoes, silk thread, blackberry ink, grass ink, oregon grape ink, wildflower ink, aluminum, 12 x 11 x 27 cm (L), 11 x 11 x 25 cm (R). Courtesy: the artist and Cooper Cole, Toronto; photograph: Jessann Reece

Eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep, eight legs? Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill, an artist and writer from Comox, British Columbia, often works with found materials to address themes of private property, capitalism and alternative economies. 'The Spider Plays', which arrives on the heels of her first Toronto institutional exhibition at Mercer Union, is an unconventional and very funny show that explores themes of fear, labour and anxiety through the imagined lives of spiders. Several sculptural elements bring the spiders' world to life at a human scale. Silk pyjamas with four arms and fuzzy sneakers covered in fine, hair-like threads anticipate an audience. Text, structured as concrete poetry, takes the form of stage directions and dialogue arranged into spider-like shapes, which are framed and hung above a walk-on platform. Looking at the compositions one finds sensitive works on paper layered with ink, text and collage.

[Sam Lipp](#) | Bonny Poon/Conditions | 26 September – 16 November





Sam Lipp, *29 years. Day laborer. Anarchist. Vagabond.*, 2024, oil on steel, spray paint, screws, 74 x 58 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Bonny Poon / Conditions, Toronto; photograph: Laura Findlay

Operating from a ground-floor condo-turned-art space in Chinatown, Bonny Poon/Conditions brings a fresh perspective. Currently on view is Sam Lipp's solo exhibition 'Camp as Paradigm', which includes four oil paintings on primed steel that depict mugshots of seductive Parisian miscreants, artists and vagabonds from the 1890s, which were sourced from stock photos available on Getty Images. In a

darkened room, a video (*Copyrights of Man*, 2024) features a remix of *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) set to Lady Gaga's 'Do What U Want' (2013). The exhibition might evoke the endless doom scroll of dating apps, where one pretty face blends into another, but it also playfully echoes the critical camp paradigms that have shaped Toronto's art scene, building on the legacies of artists like Will Munro, Kris Knight and Bruce LaBruce, the latter of whom is also represented by the gallery.

[Pacita Abad](#) | Art Gallery of Ontario | 9 October – 19 January 2025



Pacita Abad, *Anilao at its Best*, 1986, oil, acrylic, mirrors, plastic buttons, rhinestones on stitched and padded canvas. Courtesy: Pacita Abad Art Estate and MCAD Manila; photograph: At Maculangan/ Pioneer Studios

The Art Gallery of Ontario has been the target of a year-long boycott since the departure of its Indigenous Art curator Wanda Nanibush, but Pacita Abad's eponymous show simply cannot be missed. It contains over 100 dazzling and expansive works by the Philippine-born artist, showcasing

her spectacular experiments in textiles, works on paper, paintings, prints and archival material.

Abad moved to the United States from the Philippines as a young woman in the 1970s, and her work grapples with the profound impact of the Marcos regime and the alienation experienced by immigrants in search of a new life. The sprawling, expertly curated exhibition reflects her deep engagement with social justice through material exploration. In its centre, Abad's famous, expressive masks – large-scale trapuntos, a kind of quilted image-making – illustrate a complex relationship with American notions of 'freedom' and 'truth'. A large collection of ephemeral objects, sketchbooks and photographs serves to unravel the story and connect the personal to the political. Some of the works depict oppressed people and political refugees, lovingly immortalized and enveloped in brilliant kaleidoscopic patterns.

Main image: Pacita Abad, Hundred Islands (detail), 1989, oil, acrylic, glitter, gold thread, buttons, lace, sequins on stitched and patterned canvas. Courtesy: Pacita Abad Art Estate; photograph: At Maculangan/Pioneer Studios