

Art Gallery of Mississauga graciously receives the Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant *border crossings: creating parallel histories* Media Launch



Image: Sid Sharp, *The Swimmer*, 2017

Mississauga, Ontario — On Friday April 5th, the Art Gallery of Mississauga welcomes the community alongside members of the press and local politicians to celebrate the AGM's successful securement of the highly competitive Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant. This significant grant supports the delivery of a community engaged project that builds upon the success of the AGM's proven model with a \$434,000 grant over 36 months to assist with staffing and program costs involved, expanding on an empowering community arts initiative.

This project engages with the 'archeology of the present' and activates at the AGM and across and within Mississauga's diverse communities through multidisciplinary workshops centering the idea of borders as a conduit for connectivity through the act of storytelling. Enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative supports individual engagement with community-based arts creation, and will impact on the lives of 10,500 people in the community.

border crossings creator's Sharada Eswar alongside AGM's Director and Curator Mandy Salter, Local MPP Natalia Kusendova, MP Deepak Anand and Mayor Bonnie Crombie will attend to celebrate this accomplishment that has secured \$434,000 over the coming three years.

MPP Kusendova, 'Using art as a form of storytelling and self-expression, *border crossings* will engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. It will encourage the discovery of parallel histories from the past, histories which transcend borders and challenge us to think deeply about whom we are and where we came from. Under the Art Gallery of Mississauga's inspiring roof, this extraordinary vision will bring people together from all walks of life, and create opportunities for them to witness, learn, and to explore colonial narratives in distinctive ways"

MPP Anand, "...That's what Mississauga is. We are a global village where we have languages from every place on this earth. But let's not just keep it as a global village. But let's make it as a place for global peace also. And what's the best way to start, then from the Art Gallery of Mississauga."

Mayor Bonnie Crombie," When we invest in art, we enhance the quality of life of people... The AGM's achievement would not be possible without the community engagement, dedicated volunteers, and the entire team here at the AGM lead by our award winning Director Mandy Salter, who work tirelessly for us to elevate the quality of life in our world-class city by nurturing and showcasing local and international talent for all of our residents to enjoy."

The AGM's *border crossings* project will activate workshops at the gallery and within the community, engaging with multidisciplinary professional artists and emerging mentees alongside diverse community members and groups. *border crossings* celebrates the Art Gallery of Mississauga's commitment to creating connections and providing supports for diverse creatives and communities positioning art as a common denominator. This vital initiative engages with Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and communities to activate ideas through multidisciplinary art forms. The project intends to create platforms for personal and collective reconciliation and questions colonial narratives by presenting parallel histories and stories, while exploring relationships between the spiritual, the uncanny and the every day. For more on this project please visit artgalleryofmississauga.com

"border crossings is an exploration of what it means to reach across borders and make them known, to lean into them and share what lies in between and on either side of these individual and shared experiences," said Sharada Eswar, multi-disciplinary artist and AGM's Community Activator. "border crossings is a timely and sensitive project" said Mandy Salter, AGM Director/Curator " which centers the community in its commitment to building a more relational and accessible institution."

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded more than \$120 million to some 700 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.



Left to right: The Art Gallery of Mississauga's Staff - Vasundra Srinivasan, Jessica Palada, Keisha Erwin, Nisreen, Sharada Eswar, Sonja Hyde's, Sadaf Zuberi, Mandy Salter

Left to right: MPP Natalia Kusendova, AGM Chair Penelope Mathieson, Sharada Eswar, AGM Community Activator and border crossings project lead, Mayor Bonnie Crombie, AGM Director/Curator Mandy Salter, Councillor John Kovac and ExOfficio Member of the AGM's Board of Directors

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