

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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Museum  
Of  
Contemporary  
Art  
Toronto Canada

GTA  
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**NFB and MOCA Toronto partner on digital artwork *Charity* by Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour and Ryan Ferko**  
*Exploration of an unlikely public art controversy in a Toronto suburb launches online September 29*



(Image provided by the NFB)

September 23, 2021 – Montreal – National Film Board of Canada (NFB)

The [National Film Board of Canada](#) has partnered with the [Museum of Contemporary Art \(MOCA\) Toronto](#) on the new digital artwork [Charity](#), created by the Toronto-based collective of [Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour and Ryan Ferko](#). Available free online globally on [NFB.ca](#) in English and French starting September 29, **Charity** is an interactive documentary that explores the controversy and bureaucracy around an oversized chrome cow placed in a suburban Ontario neighbourhood as public art, raising questions about the identity of a place and who determines it.

In July 2017, residents of the Cathedraltown suburban development in Markham, northeast of Toronto, awoke to find Charity, a giant chrome replica of a prize-winning Holstein cow commissioned by Cathedraltown's developer, facing their homes. The residents, however, had never been consulted about the installation of their new eight-metre high bovine neighbour meant to pay tribute to the history of the site, and quickly rose in opposition to the sculpture. After mockery in the media, a barrage of complaints and numerous municipal-level discussions, the city council agreed to remove the contentious cow.

**Charity** looks at this unlikely controversy surrounding suburban public art, focusing on the bureaucratic processes that unfolded over several years in the Markham City Council as a way to consider the broader forces at play in our municipal democracies. Produced by the NFB in partnership with MOCA Toronto, **Charity** is an immersive and innovative case study on the challenges of representing multiple subjective experiences and histories simultaneously.

With a running time of approximately 36 minutes, **Charity** employs 360° video and photogrammetry to present a variation on the familiar interactive real-estate tour—where a house in Cathedraltown becomes a site to collect and re-narrate a community’s confrontation with a piece of public art, in turn offering a portrait of private property. The audio draws the audience into the quasi-absurdist hole that is the Council meetings in which the merits of the sculpture, and its ultimate removal, are discussed.

**Charity** is produced by Jeremy Mendes and executive produced by Rob McLaughlin for the NFB’s English Program Digital Studio.

### **About the artists**

[Parastoo Anoushahpour](#) (b. 1986, Tehran, Iran), [Faraz Anoushahpour](#) (b. 1987, Tehran, Iran) and [Ryan Ferko](#) (b. 1987, Mississauga, Canada) all live in Toronto and have worked in collaboration since 2013. Their shared practice explores the interplay of multiple subjectivities as a strategy to address the power inherent in narrative structures. Foregrounding the idea of place as a central focus, their work seeks to both decode their surroundings and trouble the production of images through speculative narration and dialectical imagery. Shifting between both gallery and cinema contexts, their recent film and installation work has been shown at [Viennale](#), Vienna, Austria; the [New York Film Festival](#), NY, USA; [Taipei Artist Village](#), China; [Trinity Square Video](#) and [Toronto International Film Festival](#), Toronto, Canada; SPACES, Cleveland, OH, USA; and the [International Film Festival Rotterdam](#), Netherlands.

**Charity** is presented online in parallel with their new film *Surface Rites*, featured on-site at the [Greater Toronto Art 2021](#) (GTA21) exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Toronto from September 29, 2021, to January 9, 2022.

### **About the partnership**

The NFB/MOCA partnership offered an individual artist or collective the opportunity to develop an accessible, free public artwork in the form of a digital media experience. The partnership was designed to explore how our cities and social reality have changed, and will continue to adapt, in the midst of social transformation and re-opening.

### **About the NFB**

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is one of the world’s leading digital content hubs, creating groundbreaking [interactive](#) documentaries and animation, mobile content, installations and participatory experiences. NFB interactive productions and digital platforms have won over 100 awards, including 21 Webbys. To access this unique content, visit [NFB.ca](#).

### **About MOCA Toronto**

MOCA Toronto is motivated by the principle that museums and their programmes are culturally and socially beneficial to the diversity of the communities they serve. MOCA supports and promotes forward-thinking artistic experimentation and provides a community space for enrichment, discourse, collaboration, and creativity. Working across all contemporary art forms, MOCA’s programmes empower local artists and engage the Toronto art scene while contributing to the international art community and scholarship. MOCA is a not-for-profit charitable organization. The evolution of the Museum is made possible through a unique alliance with Castlepoint Numa, public sector funders, private donors, members, sponsors, and a network of cross-sectoral partners.

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### **Related Products**

Electronic Press Kit | Images, trailer, synopses: [Charity](#)

### **Associated Links**

[Museum of Contemporary Art \(MOCA\) Toronto](#)

[Charity](#)

[Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour and Ryan Ferko](#)

[Parastoo Anoushahpour](#)

[Faraz Anoushahpour](#)

[Ryan Ferko](#)

[Viennale](#)

[New York Film Festival](#)

[Taipei Artist Village](#)

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## **About the NFB**