



Educator Resource

# GT#21

September 29, 2021 — January 30, 2022

Museum  
Of  
**Contemporary  
Art**  
Toronto Canada



## Exhibition Overview

*Greater Toronto Art 2021 (GTA21)* brings together the work of twenty-one artists and art collectives working in relation to Toronto today. The title of the exhibition represents the broad reaches of the city, as well as the ever expanding notion of what Toronto might be, where it extends, and what practices and attitudes exist here.

The group exhibition is made up of almost all new commissions (projects that were made by the artists specifically for this exhibition at MOCA). Throughout their creative processes, each artist was asked to consider the question, “What feels most urgent to you today?” Together, their responses offer different imaginations of the city, society and the world.

This guide will highlight selected works from the exhibition that explore themes of storytelling, personal histories, and cultural heritage.

## Ontario Curriculum Connections

### **VISUAL ART**

#### **Grade 9**

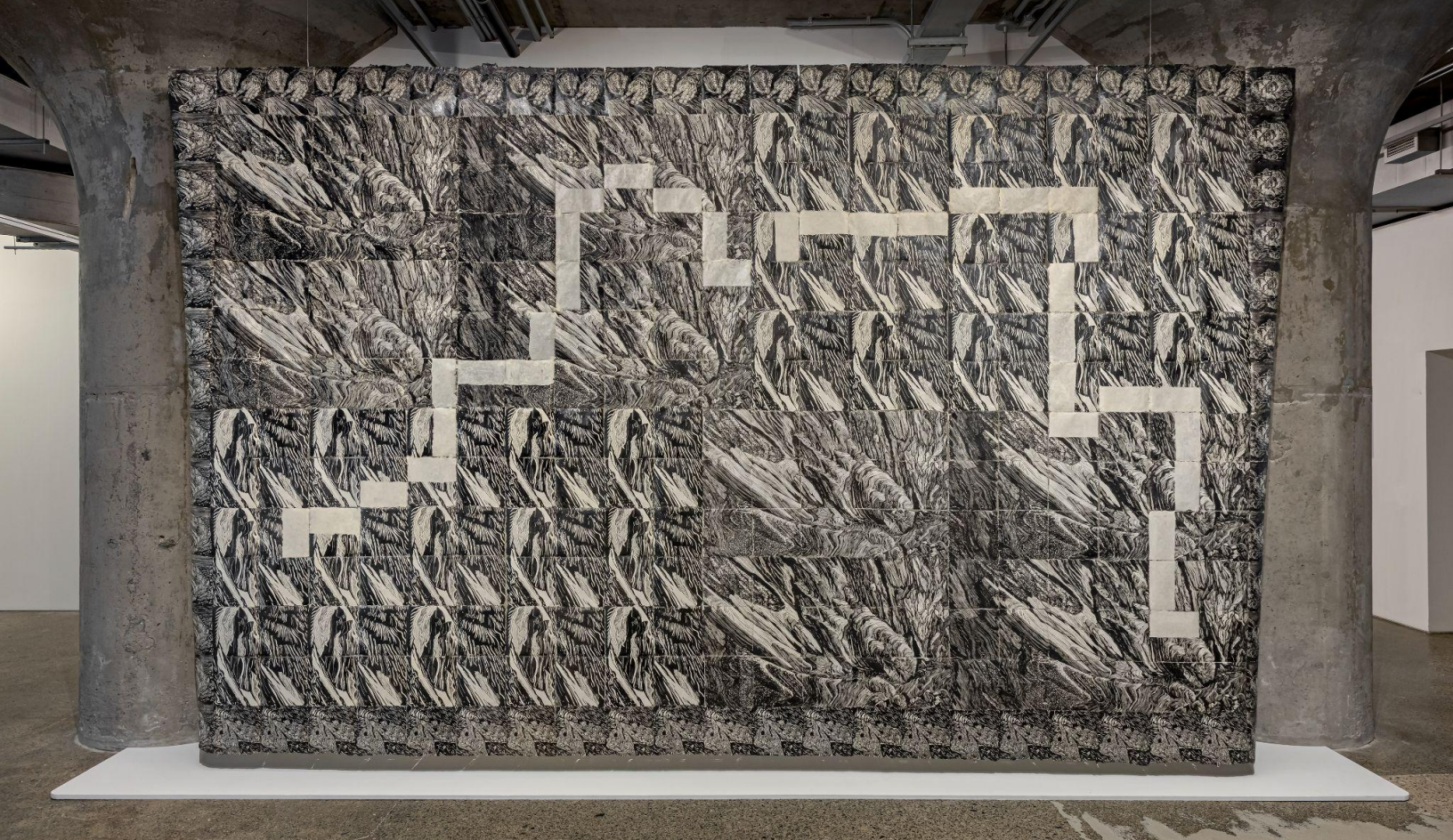
Creating and Presenting A2.1, A2.2, A3.3  
Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing B2.3

#### **Grade 10**

Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing B2.1, B2.2

#### **Grade 11 & 12**

Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing B1.1, B1.3,  
B2.1, B2.2



Ashoona Ashoona and Alexa  
Hatanaka  
*Ummatima tillirninga, I can feel  
my heart beat, 2021*

- This piece is a collaboration between Ashoona Ashoona and Alexa Hatanaka, and is the largest work each of them has created to date, measuring 11 feet high by 16 feet wide.
- The work is made up of hundreds of smaller block prints that together form a loose map.
- The map traces significant areas in both of the artists' personal lineages, from the Arctic region to the Northwest Passage, to Yokohama, Japan.
- Referencing ancient Japanese maps, which were intended to be read north to south, the composition moves between prints of snow, images of the artists' hands and portraits of their respective grandmothers, an homage to their cultures and personal histories.

**Guiding Questions:**

- In their practices, Ashoona and Hatanaka continually reflect on the environmentally-sustainable ways of making art (for example, they often print on washi, a Japanese paper made with local natural fibres). Can you think of some ways to make art-making in your home or classroom more environmentally friendly?
- If you were to draw a map that traces important places in your life or personal lineage, what would it look like? What are some places or images that you would choose to highlight?

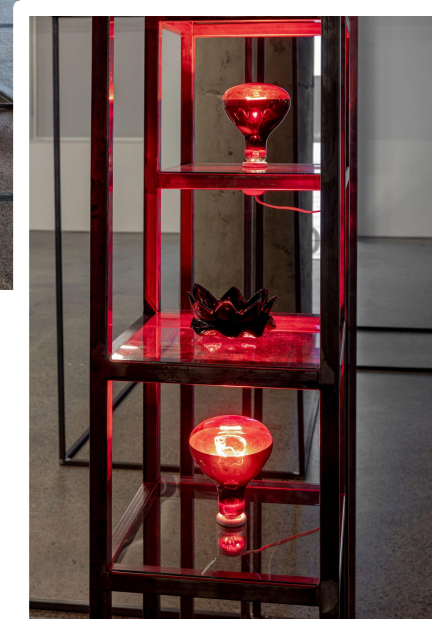
**Hands-On Activity:**

[TD Community Sunday: Relief Printmaking with Alexa Hatanaka](#)



## Azza El Siddique, *Fade into the Sun*, 2021

- This installation is inspired by the artist's research around Ancient Nubian and Egyptian cultures, specifically the architecture of tombs and burial chambers.
- El Siddique used cultural and family heirlooms as models for the ceramic vases and sculptures on display in the centre of the installation.
- Over the course of the exhibition, a slowly dripping irrigation system will start to dissolve the ceramic pieces into new and unpredictable forms, which represents the inevitability of death and decay.
- The red heat lamps activate two scents, bukhoo incense and sandalwood essential oil, which allude to Muslim burial traditions, and remind the artist of the women with whom she grew up.



### Guiding Questions:

- This work is site-specific, meaning that it was designed with MOCA's building and architectural features in mind. How do you think the integration of MOCA's columns adds to the work?
- What are some ways that this work engages with our different senses? How do you think El Siddique's use of multisensory elements adds to the viewer's experience of the work?



## Oluseye, *Ploughing Liberty*, 2021

- In his work, Oluseye sculpturally express the challenges Black communities have overcome to earn freedom, protect their dignity, and be considered Canadian.
- This series reflects Oluseye's research of the Loyalists who arrived in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution and were resettled on rocky, infertile land.
- The work addresses the tensions between two versions of patriotism and Canadian national identity—the struggle and labour of Black farmers working the land, versus the leisure and celebration of ice hockey.
- We see this tension reflected in the sculptures themselves, which were created by fusing farming tools and hockey sticks together.
- While hockey sticks are a nod to Canadian identity, they're typically associated with white communities—an assumption that erases Black fans and Black players alike.

### Guiding Questions:

- When you think about what it means to be Canadian, what are the symbols or images that come to mind?
- Think of a few other countries, and the symbols that have come to represent them. Do you think they are fair or accurate representations of these countries?
- What is your first impression of this artwork? Does the way in which the sculptures have been arranged and installed on the wall affect the way you perceive the work?



## Nour Bishouty, *Permanent Collection*, 2021

- Nour Bishouty has two works in the *GTA21* exhibition, a film called *Aḡrā` Samar*, and the installation shown above.
- The whole body of work is based on her father's practice of making objects for a souvenir shop in Amman, Jordan, during the 1990s.
- In the blue drawer, Bishouty has displayed a collection of sculptures and artifacts (some are originals and some are replicas), offering a reflection on the institutional authority of museums.
- The tiny sculpture of the two-headed beast, part lion and part bull, is a bronze replica, through which she explores themes of miniaturization, repetition, authenticity, and value.

### Guiding Questions:

- Think about some of your favourite or most important objects. Why are they important or valuable to you? How do you think you assign value to an object?
- Bishouty asks us to consider the question, "Do we accept what is being told to us at face value?" As you visit the rest of the *GTA21* exhibition, think about how you interact with the different artworks. Are you reading the didactics (text panels on the walls) and then looking at the work? What are some other ways that you can interact with or consider the artworks?



## Online Resources

### EXPLORE

Check out [GTA360](#), an interactive digital extension of the *GTA21* exhibition

[GTA21 Publication](#) (available for purchase online and at MOCA)

### READ

Read more about each *GTA21* artist on the [exhibition website](#)

### WATCH

[GTA21 Artist Spotlights](#)

[Creative Conversations: Azza El Siddique, Nour Bishouty & Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum](#)

### Image Credits:

Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, *Dynasty*, 2021. Installation, MOCA Toronto. Photo Toni Hafkenscheid.

Foreground: Walter Scott, *Read the Room*, 2021. Background: Julia Dault, *Final Call*, 2021. Installation, MOCA Toronto. Photo Toni Hafkenscheid.

Ashoona Ashoona and Alexa Hatanaka, *Ummatima tillirninga, I can feel my heart beat*, 2021. Installation, MOCA Toronto. Photo Toni Hafkenscheid.

Azza El Siddique, *Fade into the Sun*, 2021 (installation and detail view, MOCA Toronto). Photos Toni Hafkenscheid.

Oluseye, *Ploughing Liberty*, 2021. Installation at MOCA Toronto. Photos Toni Hafkenscheid.

Nour Bishouty, *Permanent Collection*, 2021. Installation, MOCA Toronto. Photos Toni Hafkenscheid.

*Creative Conversations: Azza El Siddique, Nour Bishouty & Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum*. Moderated by Rui Mateus Amaral and Daisy Desrosier. Screen capture.