



# *From Toronto, with Love*

A Nuit Blanche 2018 Independent Project

September 29, 2018

presented by Not Just Tourists, Toronto  
hosted at Laurier, 130 King Street West, Toronto

## Participating artists

C. Elizabeth Best  
Ashley Bowes  
Peymaneh Brayley  
Michael Chomyn  
Chelsea Coelho  
Drew Cumpson  
Catherine Gutsche  
Dougal M.Haggart  
Barbara Kowalski  
Jacqueline Marcelo  
Dana Marlatt

Angela Qin  
Alex Richter  
Amina Samac  
Schairelle  
Tom Schloessin  
Julia Selinger  
Nektarios Solakofski  
JoAnne Tatone  
Samantha Wehbi  
Monica Wickeler  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
Recruitment & Admissions

# Welcome

*From Toronto, with Love* presents 24 vintage suitcases, each unique and transformed by individual artists working in diverse mediums.

Originally destined to carry medical supplies from Toronto to remote clinics, these suitcases were found unsuitable for this and repurposed for art by individual volunteer artists reflecting on the idea of journeys, destinations, and the privileges and limitations of health care at home and abroad.

Viewers are invited to draw upon and sign the “guest book” suitcases, which will be used by *Not Just Tourists Toronto* (NJT) to continue forging connections through travel.

*Not Just Tourists Toronto* is a non-political, non-religious organization, which prevents the waste of usable medical supplies, collecting donations from Toronto’s hospitals and medical suppliers. Participating travellers are given suitcases filled with hospital-grade supplies to deliver to places in need.

Julia Selinger, curator

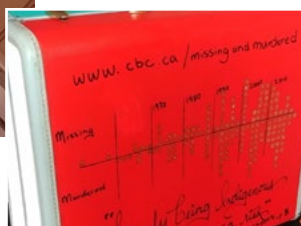
Angela Qin, project director

Ashley Bowes, media director

Dougal Haggart, artistic advisor



**Not Just Tourists  
Toronto**



### **C. Elizabeth Best**

*My Fear of Going Missing*

21" w x 18" h x 9" d

Acrylic paint on rigid shell, instant photos, ribbon skirt

"This suitcase is my expression of what it means to be an Indigenous woman living in a world where 'simply being Indigenous and a female is a risk' for being murdered or going missing. I want to highlight this topic because I hope my day to day experience will encourage the audience to do their own research."  
cbest123@yorku.ca

Elizabeth Best is a first year PhD student studying Indigenous history at York University. She completed her Masters thesis at Laurier in 2018. In her free time Elizabeth's painting, beading and sewing is related to her personal reclamation of culture which was taken away by the Canadian child welfare system. Elizabeth uses art to express the activism she studies in her academic work.



**Ashley Bowes**

*Solo Connections*

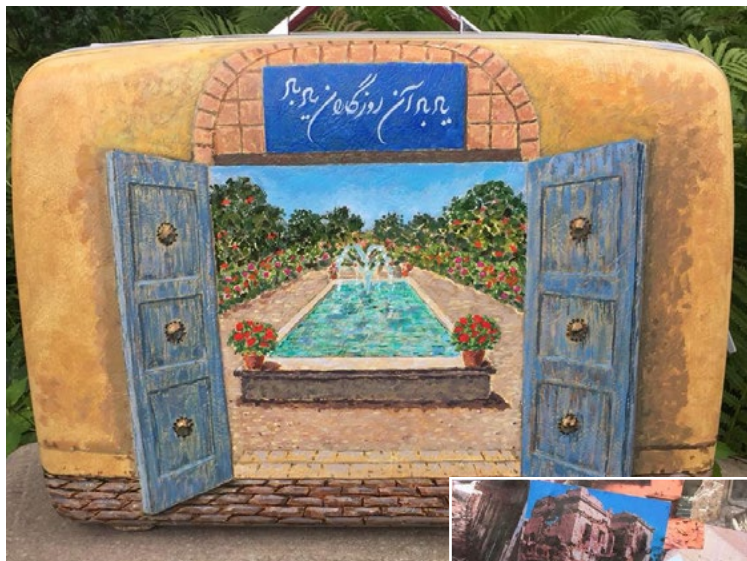
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Digital video

“The journey of a solo female traveller who forms meaningful connections with locals in one of the world’s most pulsating and vibrant cities on a mission to deliver a life-changing suitcase and experience adventure.”

[a.bowes@njttoronto.com](mailto:a.bowes@njttoronto.com)

Ashley Bowes is a filmmaker & media artist,  
and Media Director for *From Toronto, with Love*



**Peymaneh Brayley**

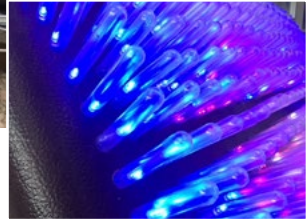
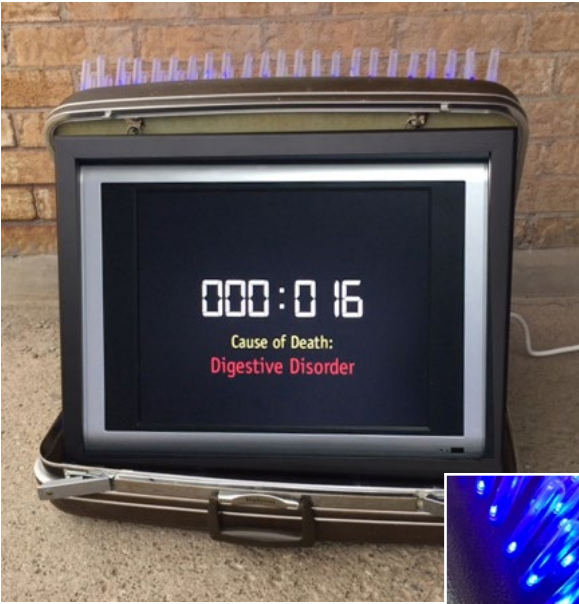
*Suitcase of Memories*

27.5" w x 20" h x 9" d

Acrylic paint, calligraphy, collage

"I want to show how I remember my life before I came to Canada. My memories are like a coin with two sides. One side is a peaceful and joyous childhood and the other side is the experience of the horrors of war and life in Iran after the revolution."  
[pbrayley@ca.inter.net](mailto:pbrayley@ca.inter.net)

I'm a child of children of exile. My art is a reflection of longing for a lost world and relief mixed with the guilt of knowing that horrors of the past are long gone for me, but are still a daily experience for many. Though I have been living in Canada for many years, what I experienced in Iran as a child and a young adult still has a great influence in all aspects of my art and life. My goal is for people who look at my work to see the world through my eyes.



### **Michael Chomyn**

*Counting Every Second*

24" w x 20" h x 8" d

Computer generated media, test tubes,  
LEDs, assorted scavenged materials

"Every 2.5 seconds a preventable death occurs.

Most Canadians take health care for granted. Meanwhile, 13 million people globally die every year of easily treatable conditions such as diarrhea, pneumonia, and malaria. The majority are children aged 5 or younger, who die needlessly due to lack of basic health care.

Something as simple as a clean bandage can save a life. We need to change this statistic. Take a suitcase, save a life."

[m.chomyn@njttoronto.com](mailto:m.chomyn@njttoronto.com)

Michael Chomyn is the *Not Just Tourists Toronto* Operations Director.



**Chelsea Coelho**

*Coral Reef*

24" w x 17" h x 7" d

Acrylic paint

"I was really inspired by the places around the world that *Not Just Tourists Toronto* delivers medical supplies to. NJT encourages their volunteers to forge a deeper connection with the spots they're visiting by doing something good for the local community. Coral reefs are a concentration of biodiversity, colour, and life. In my piece, they reflect a place that is able to flourish and thrive with the help of something as simple but essential as medical supplies."  
chelseacoel@hotmail.com

My name is Chelsea Coelho, and I'm 17 years old. I may not have a lot of the art experience that comes with age, but I make up for it with talent and determination. Media I work with include acrylic paint, watercolour, ink, wire, and graphite, but I often experiment with other materials. A lot of my work is inspired by the outdoors. The patterns and textures found in plants, animals, water, and the sky always make me want to create something.



### **Drew Cumpson**

*Interrupted – From Kingston with Love*

25" w x 19" h x 7.5" d

Mouth painting with acrylics

*This work was interrupted by the artist's intense health challenges and shows us just a glimpse of his original vision still in progress. It is a testament to his strength and courage.*

"My design tells the story of the birth of NJT Kingston on one side, and my story of creating a documentary about wheelchair accessible travel on the other."

[www.drewcumpson.com](http://www.drewcumpson.com)

Drew Cumpson suffered a spinal cord injury in 2011 that left him C4 ventilator dependent and quadriplegic with no movement below the shoulders. He started the Kingston chapter of NJT in 2017. Drew enjoyed painting prior to his accident, and a year after his accident he began to teach himself mouthpainting. "It is not easy to do, and it takes a lot of patience through learning and doing to be able to create artistic pieces."





## Catherine Gutsche

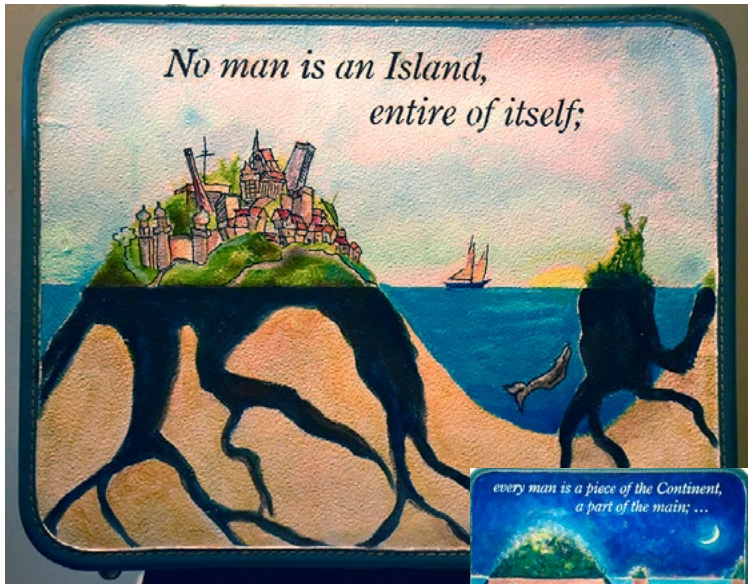
### *Flourish*

13" w x 21" h x 9" d (9" + 3" projection)

Acrylic paint, Luggage labels, 3D Globe, Medical mask

"Transporting surplus medical supplies around the world fosters healthy growth. It is called 'Flourish'. Word Origin & History c.1300, 'to blossom, grow,' from Old French floriss-, stem of florir 'blossom, flower, bloom, flourish,' from Latin florere 'to bloom, blossom, flower,' figuratively 'to flourish, be prosperous,' from flos 'a flower'" [www.CatherineGutsche.com](http://www.CatherineGutsche.com)

I love to experiment with mixed media and imagery, mostly in an abstract fashion with bold forms and colour. Painting whatever inspires me at the moment. I incorporate fabric, beads, buttons, found objects, wire, and objects from nature into mostly acrylic paintings. I paint until I believe I am finished, then I step back, return to the canvas and paint some more. ... After a few days I make up my mind if the work should be signed or turned to the left and worked some more. When enough is enough, I sign it and hang it.



**Dougal M.Haggart**

*Donne*

21" w x 16.5" h x 7.5" d

Acrylic paint, wax

"Travellers on surface (islands, seas) connected by common roots below and within. Inspired by John Donne 'No man is an island...'. To a very privileged WASP who has known no hunger or war or serious injury, the people who suffer these may seem far distant and somewhat alien."

[www.dmhaggart.ca](http://www.dmhaggart.ca)

Born in New Brunswick, raised in Montréal, I studied in the US, worked and travelled in BC and Europe, then settled in Toronto in the 1970s, working as a graphic and web designer and developer. Since retiring in 2009, I completed the Visual Arts Certificate at The Art Centre and classes at Toronto School of Art. I paint to celebrate moments or places and the meanings that they have for me. I may begin painting 'en plein air,' often I just sketch, and then paint from that experience later, if the subject niggles at me to "Go on, there's a story."



## **Barbara Kowalski**

*Colectivo*

16.5" w x 17" h x 12.5" d

Wood, fair trade wool sourced from Peruvian artisans through Threads of Peru

*"Colectivo is an ode to local collective buses and to the folk art of weaving. The suitcase is a representation of a bus, with the seat built as a replica of a backstrap loom, a typical loom used by weavers in various Latin American countries. Colectivos are the ultimate window into local culture: a universal way to get around [and so] essential for healthcare treatment."*

[www.barbarakowalski.ca](http://www.barbarakowalski.ca)

Barbara Kowalski is a graphic designer from Toronto who recently gave up a permanent address in favour of traveling the world. From visiting weavers in small Bolivian villages to taking classes with local artists in Chile, Cuba and Mexico, art has provided some of the strongest insights into local cultures and history and most meaningful connections on past travels. Barbara came into design by way of history, journalism, human rights and photography.



**Jacqueline Marcelo**

*The Portraits of South East Asia*

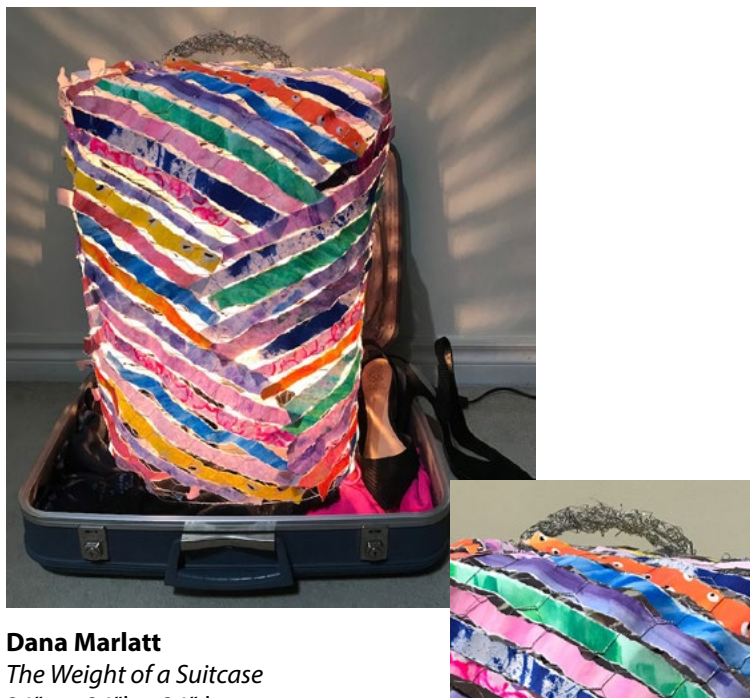
21" w x 38" h x 7.5" d

Collage of portraits, pictures, memos, and journal notes from travelling south east Asia. More than 100 artificial traditional flowers (The Bali Plumeria Flower)

*"The Portraits of South East Asia* are a collection of drawings from backpacking Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines from 2016-2018. This piece pays homage to my grandmother with dementia in the Philippines."

[jackiexmarcelo@gmail.com](mailto:jackiexmarcelo@gmail.com)

Born in the city of Toronto, I learned quickly to appreciate the diversity that exists within the city. My art pays homage to the people and cultures from around the world, and in turn has inspired me to embrace my own ethnicity. In the mountains of the Philippines, my grandmother weaves baskets and colourful tapestry.... I strive to find a career that will take me to places filled with art, culture, and most importantly, the people who make them.



**Dana Marlatt**

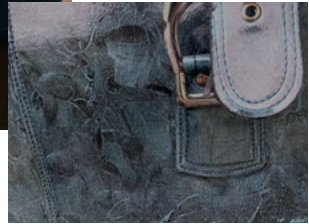
*The Weight of a Suitcase*

24" w x 24" h x 24" d

Chicken wire, painting and magazine shreds, beads, lights

"Before creating this piece I went on a vacation. While packing for it, I reflected on the hundreds of suitcases packed previously and the emotions they evoked in the process. It became apparent how different packing my suitcase for this vacation felt rather than the suitcases I had packed for medical relief. It felt like everything that went in the suitcase was due to my mass consumption and personal use, rather than helping another. The art piece was made to portray the emptiness of a suitcase packed for a vacation."  
[dana.marlatt@ryerson.ca](mailto:dana.marlatt@ryerson.ca)

Dana works at a startup by day, and creates at night. Whether it's an interior-design project, painting, or sculpting she always has a project on the go. Dana uses mixed media for her art. Her love of design started as a child competing in the Markham Fair & Ontario Horticultural Society, and it has stayed with her as an adult.



**Angela Qin**

*The Doctor's Bag(gage)*

60" w x 50" h x 50" d

Sculpture and paint

"The Doctor's Bag(gage) is a reaction to the increasing levels of burnout and suicide among healthcare workers, in particular physicians, and trainees. It is an interactive sculptural piece with an audio-recording component intended to collect positive messages from audience members for frontline healthcare workers."

[angela.yang.qin@gmail.com](mailto:angela.yang.qin@gmail.com)

Angela Qin is a medical student at the University of Toronto and a founding member of *Not Just Tourists Toronto*. In her life, art and science have always been integral, complementary, and interdependent. She hopes to use art as a medium to spark discussions around critical issues in healthcare at home and around the world. Angela is the Project Director for *From Toronto, with Love*.



**Alex Richter**

*Rowing Against the Tide*

36" w x 48" h x 36" d

Sculptural w/ objects; wood, metal, fibreglass construction

"Rowboat in a Suitcase: The boat is a powerful symbol for a person's life and the ability to decide in which direction we travel on the ocean of life. Throughout time the traveler has carried the suitcase, this vision of a suitcase transforms the suitcase into a boat that can carry the traveler. The passenger in this boat is a child and the suitcase provides the ability to escape the limitations and adversity affecting countless underprivileged children."

[arichter@adamson-associates.com](mailto:arichter@adamson-associates.com)

Alex Richter is a Toronto based architect. Having lived and worked in over 9 countries, Mr Richter has seen that different cultures imagine, create and build architecture in profoundly different ways. Working with simple materials and found objects, Mr. Richter creates objects that are simple yet complicated, to find themes that cross borders created by language, religion or tradition.



**Amina Samac**

*Luna's Uprising*

23.5" w x 17" h x 5.5" d

Exterior: Acrylic paint on hard shell, string on suitcase handle.

Interior: Gesso, chalk, ink, charcoal, paper, and string

"Dreaming or delirium? Through word art and visual story telling - *Luna's Uprising* was born. My reflection of the precipitous climate of today. This is a cheeky story of the universe fighting back and Luna, a goddess at the forefront. The rolls of paper tied with red string are Buddhist prayers (offerings from the repentant)."  
aminasamac@gmail.com

Amina Samac studied at Ontario College of Art (now OCAD) in the early 90s. Past work was in experimental furniture design, photography and sculpture with a slow move towards painting primarily in acrylics and gouache. In the late 90s she started working extensively in graphic design and illustration for a brief period only to return to her true love – painting nudes and the female form, primarily in oils.





## Schairelle

*Connection Over Convenience*

20" w x 15" h x 6.5" d

Plastic, fabric, cardboard, lights, hardware

"This suitcase is inspired by the value of human connection at *Not Just Tourists Toronto*. Instead of buying large convenient cargo containers to ship used medical supplies, a group of compassionate volunteers collect, sort, pack and hand deliver suitcases. As a result, more than medical supplies get delivered; friendships are formed and community connections are fostered at all levels of the process!"

chairelle@gmail.com

In the world of art, I compare myself to a jazz musician: I understand the basics and past concepts, but choose to build upon them instead of being limited by them. You could say I'm a "Jill" of all trades in the art world. What connects these projects is connection itself. My art serves a purpose, whether that means redesigning an apartment or painting a portrait, I use my creativity to design works that beautify, are restorative and meaningful.



**Tom Schloessin**

*The Destination in a Suitcase*

25" w x 20" h x 6.5" d

wood, fabric, gouache

*"The Destination in a Suitcase* is a memory of where I went, what I saw & did and what I think it meant. I brought it back to share the experience."

[tschloessin@rogers.com](mailto:tschloessin@rogers.com)

Tom Schloessin is a Toronto based architect.



## **Julia Selinger**

### *Desert Infusion*

21" w x 19" h x 6" d

Watercolour paint, human hair, pressed leaves, embroidery thread, beads, objects, carpet, LED candles

"Exploring what we leave behind and what keeps us safe; this artwork tells the story of one of my most challenging journeys. This is what I brought back in my suitcase after living in the Middle East for many years, where I underwent surgeries and debilitating treatments for a rare and aggressive cancer. It is filled with things I never expected to be carrying home to Canada - the hair I lost to chemo, 50 scarves I wore on my bald head in the desert, and the many tokens of love and protection gifted to me."

[j.selinger@njttoronto.com](mailto:j.selinger@njttoronto.com)

Julia Selinger has been a graphic designer, visual artist, and design instructor for more than 25 years, living and working around the globe in locations including Toronto, Canada; New York, USA; Nassau, The Bahamas; and Abu Dhabi, The United Arab Emirates. (Artist Profile *continued next page*)



**Julia Selinger**

*My Mother's Leash*

20" w x 16" h x 14.5" d

Medical bandaging, pressed autumn maple leaves, ,  
used oxygen lines, acrylic coating, conjoined matching suitcases

"Examining breath, air, and the blessings vs restrictions of health care as we grow older; this artwork tells the story of my mother's 24/7 dependency on an oxygen compressor, her incredible resilience, and the inspiring way she navigates her old/new normal in her elder years."

[j.selinger@njttoronto.com](mailto:j.selinger@njttoronto.com)

Artist Profile (continued) A graduate of the 3 year Graphic Design program at St. Lawrence College, Kingston ON, and the Computer Graphics & Multimedia Design postgraduate program at Sheridan College, Oakville ON, Julia is the recipient of an American Design Award for graphic design, a published author, a speaker for The Canadian Cancer Society, and was a TEDx talk presenter at the Paris- Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, 2013.

Julia is the curator of *From Toronto, with Love*.



## **Nektarios Solakofski**

Friction Fit Models

*Offcuts- 01*

36" w x 18" h x 24" d

Mixed media multi scale model comprised of offcuts; balsa wood, papier-mâché, mdf, sheet acrylic, polycarbonate, styrene, steel wire, 3d printed acrylic resin, adhesive films, acrylic paint, slate

"This work is an attempt to reclaim and repurpose materials that I use in my commercial work, briefly retaining some of the energy that was spent to produce them. Each ingredient has its own backstory and hundreds if not thousands of hours that led to its condition before it is reclaimed and repurposed here, much like the suitcase that holds them."

[models@frictionfitmodels.com](mailto:models@frictionfitmodels.com)

Nektarios graduated from Waterloo pre-Professional Architecture in 1995, and has worked as a mixed media visual artist/sculptor: making, reclaiming, object hacking and building scale models. He is also actively producing and a part of several music and recording projects. In 2006 he founded Friction Fit Models, and has produced unique scale models and prototypes in many formats.



**Joanne Tatone**

*Hive & Heart*

7'6" w x 8' h x 3' d

Natural tree bark, chicken wire, craft paper, acrylic paint

"I needed to do this project now more than ever ... forward thinking to a more caring collective consciousness of "hive & heart" where what is good for the heart (humankind) is also good for the hive and vice versa. We are all a part of one universal hive and the heart of that hive is struggling. We must all seek to do our part in supporting each other, the heart, so that the hive stays healthy and strong. This is our purpose. This is our future."

[jmtatone@hotmail.com](mailto:jmtatone@hotmail.com)

My works explore the inorganic, bringing things to life by infusing them with nature. I am particularly interested in the found object and transforming every day perceptions of objects into the unexpected and the extraordinary. The subject of the scene often naturally contains composition, a pattern of light and dark, of shape and form, of colour and contrast and that is what captures my imagination and gets my creative juices flowing. The art I make is not particularly serious, there's always a wink, a nod and a grin.



**Samantha Wehbi**

*What Comes With Us...What Stays Behind*

34"w x 17h x 10"d

Photographs, maps, glass bottles, negatives, newspaper



"Using the suitcase as a symbol of the space of belonging we carry within us, this artwork invites the audience to reflect on the meaning of home. A child of war and displacement, my own story has been marked by transitions from and in between spaces, borders and lands. What to take and what to leave behind is a question that dominated my existence for long periods of time. For many of us whose lives have been shaped by displacement, home is a complex proposition and belonging is a constantly fluctuating state of yearning."

[samantha.wehbi@gmail.com](mailto:samantha.wehbi@gmail.com)

Samantha Wehbi holds a PhD in Social Work and an MFA in Documentary Media with a focus on photography. Building on her background of international and local community development work, her artistic practice explores our relationship to the communities we inhabit, urban landscapes and issues of displacement and cultural hybridity.



**Monica Wickeler**

*Riding the Waves*

27' long, 13 suitcase mural

Latex and aerosol paint



“As a large-scale artist I like the idea of painting not only one suitcase but an entire row of suitcases with a continuous image of waves overlapping onto each one. The waves represent the ebb and flow / highs and lows / busy and slow of our journey and how the ripple effect of each step we take will affect one another.”  
mwickeler@gmail.com

Monica Wickeler is a trained visual artist who has worked in Toronto for more than 15 years, in outdoor advertising for MURAD as an advertising mural artist and in the film and television industry as a scenic painter. Wickeler has found a love of community and public based art, painting murals and streetart for Toronto Business Associations, Pan Am Para Pan Games, private property owners and during community and City events. For several years she has taken part as an Artist in Residence at several TDSB schools in the Scarborough area as well becoming an Artist Mentor.





**Wilfrid Laurier University  
Recruitment & Admissions**

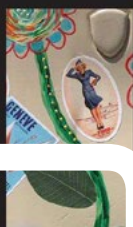
*My Home Away from Home*

23.5" w x 16.5" h x 7.5" d

Pompoms, cardstock paper, string, laundry clips, construction paper, ribbon

"The new experiences, environment, friends, education, and growth that shape an individual during their years at Laurier is encompassed in the creation of this artwork. It tells the story of the students that come to Laurier who leave their initial homes behind, while starting a new one in Laurier – their home away from home."  
dmontgomery@wlu.ca

Recruitment and Admissions at Laurier is dedicated to recruiting and admitting bright and passionate students to our university from all different backgrounds. Our department works with students right here in Ontario, in other provinces across the country, and around the world. We take great pride in celebrating diversity on all our campuses, and welcoming all students to an inclusive and supportive community.



## Not Just Tourists Toronto

OUR THANKS TO:

# NUIT BLANCHE TORONTO

Nuit Blanche is produced by the City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Division in partnership with Toronto's Art community.

**LAURIER**   
*Inspiring Lives.*



**adamson**  
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