



Unarchive + Stairmasters Exhibitions

January 9-March 30, 2014

ARTSCAPE YOUNGPLACE



## Welcome to the Artscape Youngplace Hallway Galleries

Artscape Youngplace is a 75,000 square foot community cultural hub in the heart of the West Queen West neighbourhood. Following many years of community consultation and planning, Artscape completed a \$17 million transformation of this repurposed century-old school, and opened the doors of Artscape Youngplace on November 19, 2013. Artscape Youngplace is named in recognition of a generous lead gift from The Michael Young Family Foundation.

The artists and organizations inside the building represent a vibrant mix of art forms and cultural mandates and provide many programs and events to enjoy. The surrounding neighbourhood is one of the country's most creative, and is a major centre for contemporary art in Canada.

The Hallway Galleries at Artscape Youngplace are a collection of new spaces for art exhibition. In total, the Hallway Galleries occupy 9,350 square feet of space in the hallways and stairwells of this historic school. Featuring dramatic ceiling heights and period details, the Hallway Galleries are unique and evocative—the perfect place for inspiration, learning and discovery.

Our inaugural exhibitions, *Unarchive* and *Stairmasters* feature new works commissioned from local artists, curated by Heather Nicol. We are so pleased to open our doors with such a special exhibition that reflects the past, present and future potential of this beautiful exhibition space.

Spend some time in the Hallway Galleries, and return again and again for year-round art exhibitions organized by Artscape, local curators and artists. Wander the halls and examine the vitrines, explore the stairwells to take in the displays. While you're here, take advantage of the Urban Living Lounge and Youngplace Coffee Pub on the first floor for the full Artscape Youngplace experience.

The Hallway Galleries are open seven days a week with free admission. We hope you'll visit often.

Visit [artscapeyoungplace.ca](http://artscapeyoungplace.ca) for information on exhibitions, events and spaces in the Hallway Galleries. All or part of the Hallway Galleries can be booked for art shows and other events. To inquire about availabilities and details, please get in touch!

Sincerely,

**Natasha Mytnowych**

Managing Director, Artscape Youngplace

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*Photo credits: documentation of artwork, Steve Payne; all other, Garrison McArthur Photographers.*

# Unarchive

**Lee Henderson**

**Nina Levitt**

**Dave Dymant**

**Ian Carr-Harris and Yvonne Lammerich**

**Jessica Vallentin**

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# Stairmasters

**Debbie Adams**

**Melissa Fisher**

**Seth Sriver**

The echo of children's voices has long since faded from the hallways and classrooms at 180 Shaw Street. Announcing a new era of creative intervention, two inaugural exhibitions in the public spaces explore the past while moving decisively into the future.

**UNARCHIVE** occupies the grand hallways of the first, second and third floors, employing the rich Givins/Shaw School archival collections as the basis for an exhibition that features new work by six contemporary artists, historic displays, and projects made in collaboration with school children. As the passage of time and human intervention threaten to erase the past, relics that have been collected and saved gain importance as portals to memory, nostalgic yearnings, and the teaching of history. Whether cracking open a box of old photographs, looking through a dusty filing cabinet of letters and documents, or double-clicking a .ZIP file of compressed digital information, the provocative pleasure of encountering archival content is a catalytic moment of reorder and reappraisal. The exhibition considers some of the ways that cultural artefacts such as archives, edifices, repertoires and monuments frame our understanding of that which is no longer viscerally accessible.

**STAIRMASTERS** is an exhibition of site-specific installations developed in the building's three stairwells. While each project occupies a distinct, immersive vision, together they signal how the creative territorialization of often-overlooked architectural space can heighten the connective, liminal experiences of ascent, descent, and moving in between. Stairwells are open-access, but they are often travelled alone; this interface between public and private is well considered by the artists as they explore themes of interiority, individuated thought process, and the singularity of life experiences.

I wish to thank Tara Burse, assistant curator, and the fantastic team at Artscape Youngplace.

**Heather Nicol**, *curator*

# Unarchive

In the Urban Living Lounge, four vitrines showcase items from the Givins/Shaw School archive, unearthed from locked closets and over-stuffed cabinets. The collection highlights the presentation of history to children. The displays are activated by student artwork from the Givins/Shaw Jr. Public School, created with exhibition's curator, **HEATHER NICOL**.

The school's archival treasures have been unpacked, examined and used to inspire and provoke the creation of new works, on view in the upper-level Hallway Galleries.

**LEE HENDERSON** explores embodiment, impermanence, passion, and the brevity of individual lives. His work here uses sports memorabilia, which preserves the legacy of athletic victory at Givins/Shaw, but also speaks to decay and loss.

**NINA LEVITT**'s *Elemental* redeploys class photographs from Givins/Shaw with images from local archival and personal collections, in a bittersweet examination of collective memory and the passage of time.

**DAVE DYMENT**'s work involves the obsessive collecting and cataloguing of cultural data, from which he gleans unexpected meanings. "What might kids find interesting about their school's history?" These idiosyncratic displays may provide an answer.

**IAN CARR-HARRIS AND YVONNE LAMMERICH**'s collaboration resulted in the creation of two works that mirror, rebound and cross-reference, highlighting their shared concerns and divergent practices. His text-based work delivers the historic school chant in a fresh form; her architecturally oriented project collapses distant, frozen moments within new frameworks of time and space.

**JESSICA VALLENTIN**'s practice explores the senses and perception. Her sly, interactive interventions with the other artists' works provoke us to consider framing, inclusion, and the inevitability of omission.



LEE HENDERSON *The Nature of the Victory* (detail)

**JACKIE O'KEEFE**

In Grade 6 I got nits in my hair. Several of us were forced to sit on the bench outside the principal's office. I was humiliated when all the other kids gave us a wide berth to avoid getting bugs on them. I had to get my hair cut off, which was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was delighted and pledged to get nits again if my mother made me grow my hair back. She didn't.





*Do we like it WELL & BUESS! Givems Givems YES YES YES!*  
*Do we like it WELL & BUESS! Givems Givems YES YES YES!*

IAN CARR-HARRIS *Do We Like It!* & YVONNE LAMMERICH #3 *Givins*, 180 Shaw (detail)



JESSICA VALLENTIN *From Nothing to Something, and Back Again*

# Stairmasters

Often-overlooked architectural zones, stairwells are liminal, in-between and connective spaces. These qualities are explored in new site-specific interventions by artists with wide-ranging practices that span animation, design, sculpture, book- and filmmaking. Using Vinyl as their medium, these “stairmasters” playfully explore the material’s associations with signage, temporality, and mutability, inviting viewers on an experiential ascent or descent as they travel through Artscape Youngplace’s inaugural season.

**DEBBIE ADAMS** appropriates imagery from 1950s phonetics flashcards to consider the subjectivity of knowledge, language and meaning. Challenging our understanding of semantic forms of representation, she confounds and captivates viewers by simulating the experience of “not knowing.” This varies tremendously: influences like mother tongue, cultural background, and age affect viewers in different ways. *Flash* honours the many decades of learning experiences that have transpired within this building—or that may well have been evaded in her stairwell.

**MELISSA FISHER** considers the private and interior quality of her windowless site as a mirror of the individual, occupying her space by demarking its parameters. She employs both positive and negative material in her vinyl-cutting methodology, embracing both yin and yang, leaving no by-product. Viewers encounter familiar shapes, such as circles and triangles—or forms, such as arcs and zigzags—which the artist deftly morphs into evocations of fanciful, dark and enigmatic territories.

The unabashed nature of **SETH SCRIVER**’s humour is both delightful and unsettling. Across his creative production, misfortune, misunderstandings or misfits can take on epic proportions; in this “animated mural” he employs the stairs’ descent as a platform for witnessing the painful effects of life’s compounding, passing events. In spite of it all, Scriver has noted that his protagonist “is still smiling!”



DEBBIE ADAMS *Flash*





MELISSA FISHER *lately, I've just been trying to find the balance*



SETH SCRIVER *Oukee Oukee's Trip*



# ARTSCAPE YOUNGPLACE

Part ideas laboratory, part creativity workshop, Artscape Youngplace is a community cultural hub located in Toronto's West Queen West neighbourhood, with 75,000 square feet of space devoted to artistic inspiration, learning, growth and expression.

Artscape Youngplace

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**ARTSCAPE**

Artscape operates Artscape Youngplace and is responsible for ensuring it continues in the vision of the community. Artscape is a not-for-profit urban development organization that makes space for creativity and transforms communities. | [artscape.ca](http://artscape.ca)