



DOC  
NOW  
2025

Toronto  
Metropolitan  
University

The  
Creative  
School



**17th Annual  
Doc Now  
Festival**



# DOC NOW 2025:

FILM SCREENINGS 

## NIGHT 1 JUNE 9TH

Paradise Theatre,  
1006c Bloor St W, Toronto  
Doors Open @ 5:30PM



Language: English, Spanish,  
Cantonese, Ukrainian,  
with English subtitles.

*Stories of migration,  
borders, and dearest families  
(by blood or by choice).*



Open Wounds  
dir. Francisca Rojas

Wen-jin [問津]  
dir. Roy Tsai

The Land of 100 Homelands  
dir. Munner Al Zahabi

I lie behind a blade of grass  
to enlarge the sky  
dir. Sasha Baczynskyj


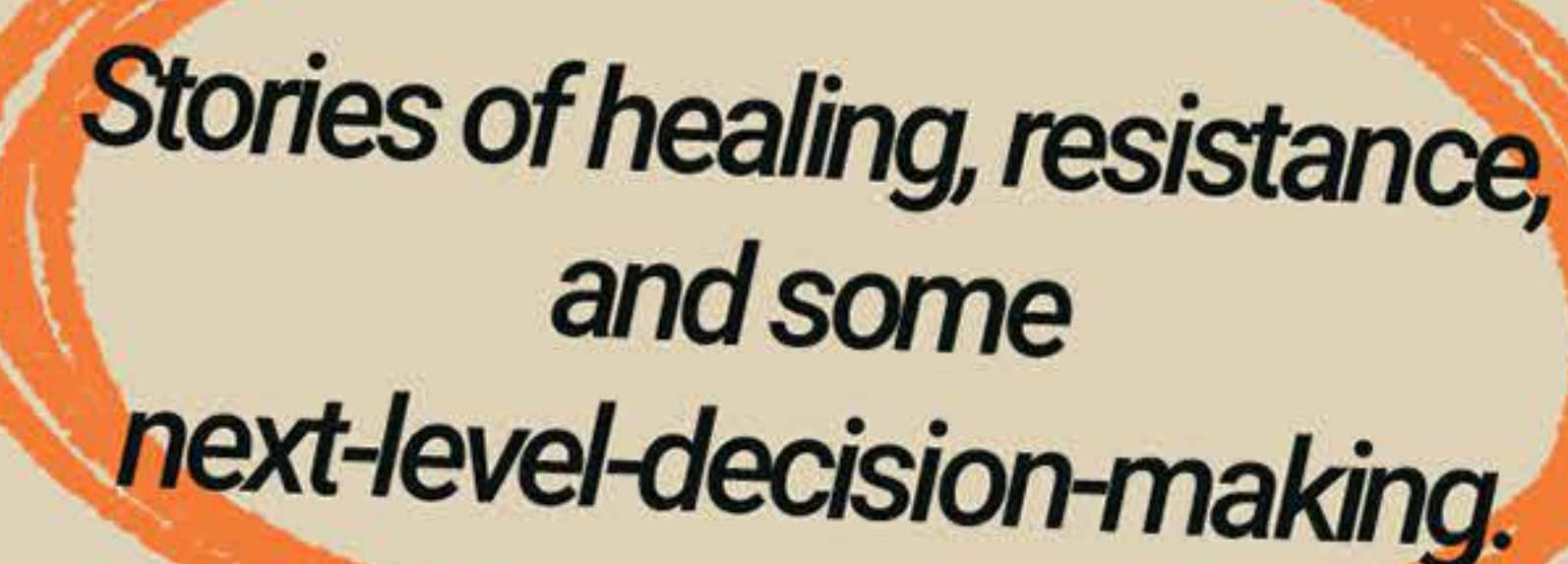
## NIGHT 2 JUNE 16TH

Paradise Theatre,  
1006c Bloor St W, Toronto  
Doors Open @ 5:30PM



Content warning:  
Certain scenes contain nudity,  
not suitable for children.

*Stories of healing, resistance,  
and some  
next-level-decision-making.*



Language: English, Arabic,  
Somali, Farsi, Mandarin,  
with English subtitles.

From Mindbender With Love  
dir. Andy Lee

:)  
dir. Chaitanya Sinha (Misha)

Silent Sea  
dir. Amir Abdolizadeh

Take Care, Till Springtime  
dir. Shi Yi

So Long Tehran  
dir. Kimia Khatibzadeh

Departures  
dir. Jessie Yang

## NIGHT 3 JUNE 23RD

Paradise Theatre,  
1006c Bloor St W, Toronto  
Doors Open @ 5:30PM



Language: English,  
with English subtitles.

*Stories of friendships, ethics,  
and... wait, what exactly is this?*



Waiting for Paul  
dir. Paul Janicki

Cans of Worms  
dir. Natalie Vaughan-Graham

Trying to Explain Myself  
dir. Ajay Rakhraj

# DOC NOW 2025:

EXHIBITION

JUNE 3RD - 14TH

*OAK TREE / HUMAN* BY LISA MURZIN  
*NO. 14 VILLAGE* BY DOROTHY WANG (王智琦)  
OPENING RECEPTION: JUNE 6TH, 2025 | 6PM-9PM

JUNE 17TH - 28TH

*UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY* BY SAMUEL TOWARD  
*IN/SECURITY* BY FISAYO ADELUSI  
OPENING RECEPTION: JUNE 20TH, 2025 | 6PM-9PM

ASpace  
Gallery

EXHIBITION

JUNE 5TH - 21ST

*LIKE THE SEAMS OF A COAT* BY DAWSON COX  
OPENING RECEPTION: JUNE 6TH, 2025 | 6PM-9PM

Artspace  
TMU

EXHIBITION

JUNE 18TH - AUGUST 7TH

*ON BEING DESPISED* BY REBECCA WOOD  
OPENING RECEPTION: JUNE 18TH, 2025 | 6PM-8PM

The Image Centre,  
Student Gallery

ONLINE

*MAMA, IN YOUR ABSENCE* BY MUNA NZERIBE

Interactive Web  
Documentary



# EXHIBITIONS

***Like the Seams of a Coat*** By Dawson Cox

**Artspace TMU**

**Opening Reception: June 6, 2025 | 6pm-9pm**

Like the Seams of a Coat investigates the role that landscape photography played in the processes of nation-building and the construction of a Canadian visual identity rooted in the myth of superabundance. Alexander Henderson (1831-1913) was a Montreal-based photographer who documented transnational railway projects in the years after Confederation, tasked with making images of major benchmarks in their country-wide expansion. Growing alongside a young nation, photography’s development as a commercial, social and representational tool determined how Canada was seen. By presenting scenes as natural and given, 19th-century landscape images “mask(ed) how labour binds human and nonhuman nature.” Following in Henderson’s footsteps, my images push back against idealized representations of land seen in commercial photography of the time, identifying sites of human intervention in nature, the residual effects of resource extraction, and traces of colonial violence.

***On Being Despised*** By Rebecca Wood

**The Image Centre, Student Gallery**

**Opening Reception: June 18, 2025 | 6pm-8pm**

On Being Despised reimagines a second Eden through the lens of history and personal archive. In the works presented, Toronto-based artist Rebecca Wood re-exposes and layers her late maternal grandmother’s wartime images with contemporary photographs of garden spaces linked to Virginia Woolf — the source of the exhibition’s title. Through the use of collage and homemade botanical developers, Wood explores themes of war, gender fluidity and creative transformation. At this time of intersecting crises, Wood invites us into a speculative garden, a space for metamorphosis, healing, and the layering of stories.

***Oak Tree | Human*** By Lisa Murzin

**A Space Gallery**

**Opening Reception: June 6, 2025 | 6pm-9pm**

Oak Tree | Human is the artist’s contemplation through time and space to communicate with the two-hundred-year-old tree that lives in front of their home - a relationship that is embodied in a visual and auditory experience. As co-author of the process, the Oak Tree invites us to re-imagine our connection with trees through an animist lens that regards human and non-human in partnership. Using sound recordings, video, sculpture, experimental analogue and digital photography, this multi-documentation through human technology explores the tree’s deeper existence beyond its physical form. The texture and grooves of the tree bark become a sound wave; the leaves, catkins and acorns imprint the film emulsion, and the pinhole photographs consider seeing through the tree’s eyes. Each process contributes to sensing the Oak’s presence.

***Unauthorized Personnel Allowed***  
By Samuel Toward

**A Space Gallery**

**Opening Reception: June 20, 2025 | 6pm-9pm**

Unauthorized Personnel Allowed is a photographic series documenting the Ontario Line subway’s construction, rapidly reshaping the Don River’s Lower and Western branches, and the neighbourhoods of Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park, and around the now-shuttered Ontario Science Centre. Through repeatedly walking the landscape and responding to its continual changes, I use the camera as a mnemonic device to process and archive the active construction and redevelopment of the land. Unauthorized Personnel Allowed questions how the surrounding landscape is documented while in flux, and how the photographic process has historically been used to obfuscate the changes brought upon by human dominance over nature.

***No.14 Village*** By Dorothy Wang (王智琦)

**A Space Gallery**

**Opening Reception: June 6, 2025 | 6pm-9pm**

In 2021, it was declared that China had achieved “comprehensive poverty alleviation” and a “moderately prosperous society,” a proclamation that effectively removed rural hardship from the media agenda. Meanwhile, an alternate narrative emerged online: one where influencers aestheticized rural life, portraying it as idyllic while glossing over economic struggles. Both of these representations erase the realities of those who remain in the countryside, reinforcing systemic neglect while distorting public perception. No. 14 Village explores the lived experiences of one such community — the artist’s mother’s hometown — where she lived with relatives who work the land. Through interviews and observational footage, the artist challenges the romanticized depictions of rural life and highlights the resilience of those left behind by modernization. Rooted in familial ties, this project critiques state narratives while offering an intimate perspective on the sociopolitical disparities shaping rural China. Blending domestic ethnography, participatory storytelling and sensory media, the work examines inequality, cultural transformation and perseverance. By interweaving personal experience with larger systemic issues, immersive narratives that encourage critical engagement with the complexities of rural life are created.

***In/Security*** By Fisayo Adelusi

**A Space Gallery**

**Opening Reception: June 20, 2025 | 6pm-9pm**

In/security draws from both the lived experiences of being unhoused and as a witness to the difficulties of being precariously housed, confronting the issue faced by unhoused people in Canada. This project explores the subjects of belonging, community, security, insecurity and affordable housing. This is an experience shared by many African immigrants working as security guards. The participants in this project hold their shoes in front of their faces to conceal their identities, thereby expressing how widespread these struggles are, and how they’re often hidden from the public gaze. The shoes held by each participant are their individual work shoes. Each pair of shoes bears the marks of their struggles and personal journey in pursuit of a home. The artist shares a similar social-economic background with the participants.

# INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY

***Mama, in Your Absence***  
By Muna Nzeribe

**Artspace TMU | ONLINE**

**MAMAINYOURABSENCE.COM**

*Mama, in Your Absence* is an interactive web documentary exploring the literary legacy of my grandmother, Flora Nwapa: the first African woman to publish a novel in English. Through archival materials, narrative letters, mixed-media manipulated diaristic footage and interactive storytelling, the project reflects on my grandmother’s legacy in relation to the creative careers of myself, my mother and my sister. This intergenerational dialogue becomes a reflection of the ways Igbo women’s stories are preserved, erased or reimagined. By weaving together personal and collective narratives, it challenges traditional archival practices and static portrayals of African women’s legacies, exploring how digital media can bridge past and present to foster an evolving dialogue on legacy and identity.



**Best viewed on laptops and desktops!**



1

FILM SCREENINGS

7

NIGHT 1			JUNE 9TH		
<b><i>Open Wounds</i></b> dir. Francisca Rojas		<b><i>i lie behind a blade of grass to enlarge the sky</i></b> dir. Sasha Theodora		<b><i>Wen-jin</i></b> (問津) dir. Roy Tsai	
An estranged granddaughter embarks on a journey to trace the steps of her grandfather's experience as a political prisoner during Chile's military dictatorship.		An exploration of civilian life in war time Ukraine.		A grandson investigates the historical significance of his grandfather's once lost post-WWII Malaysian Chinese film after Googling his name, uncovering his family's conflicting views and facing a choice: believe his ancestor was a genius or a slacker.	
				<b><i>The Land of 100 Homelands</i></b> dir. Muneer Al Zahabi	
				An immigrant from the former Yugoslavia who rebuilt her life in Canada and helped dozens do the same reflects on identity, displacement, and belonging in a deeply personal journey that explores what it means to call a place home.	
NIGHT 2			JUNE 16TH		
<b><i>Silent Sea</i></b> dir. Amir Abdolizadeh		:) dir. Misha		<b><i>From Mindbender With Love</i></b> dir. Andy Lee	
In Bandar Abbas, a southern Iranian city on the Persian Gulf, fishermen confront dwindling resources and economic pressures, battling not just for their livelihoods but for their very survival against unregulated foreign fishing that threatens their community's future.		An exploration into the intertwining of tragedy and comedy in the lives of stand-up comedians, revealing how humor helps them cope, heal, and find redemption.		A Black Queer rapper and sex worker disrupts the conservative, homophobic Toronto hip-hop community by embodying sexual freedom, body positivity and new expressions of masculinity.	
				<b><i>Take Care, Till Springtime</i></b> dir. Shi Yi	
				After a Chinese medicine practitioner is brutalized by police at a recent protest, the community comes together in quiet acts of care.	
				<b><i>So Long Tehran</i></b> dir. Kimia Khatibzadeh	
				Amid social turmoil, a young woman returns to Tehran after a year, using her phone as a travel notebook to capture the rhythm of daily life.	
				<b><i>Departures</i></b> dir. Jessie Yang	
				In the aftermath of the pandemic, an international student explores reasons behind recent middle-class Chinese migration to Canada. Caught between different social environments and quality-of-life considerations, some choose to leave, some choose to stay, and some are still hesitating.	
NIGHT 3			JUNE 23RD		
<b><i>Cans of Worms</i></b> dir. Natalie Vaughan-Graham			<b><i>Trying to Explain Myself</i></b> dir. Ajay Rakhraj		
Caught in the fog of social, political, and environmental doom, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students talk about the dynamics of the university, their classroom, and moving boundaries between liberal-arts education and the outside world.			A graduate student undergoes psychoanalysis to unravel the fallout of fractured friendships amid Toronto's affordability crisis while revisiting personal archival materials and staging improvised performances that probe how soaring rents and broader economic pressures erode the bonds of everyday life.		
			<b><i>Waiting for Paul</i></b> dir. Paul Janicki		
			A film made by a man about two men.		





DOC  
NOW  
2025