



MAYWORKS 2022

across the city

May 1-31

mayworks.ca

ABOUT MAYWORKS

The Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts is a community-based festival which annually presents new works by a diverse range of artists, who are both workers and activists. The programming presents bold, insightful, responses to pressing issues at the intersection of art, social justice and labour.

Mayworks prioritizes the representation and participation of artists and audiences from communities facing systemic discrimination. We encourage works rooted in the reality of working people's lives that advance the struggle for improved working and living conditions.

Mayworks operates within an anti-oppression framework. We are actively engaged in a social dialogue that challenges the logics of capitalism, and seeks to reimagine and represent a just future.

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FESTIVAL WELCOME

Welcome to the 37th annual Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts.

As we organize this year's festival, we are moved and inspired by the networks of care celebrated through the work of the artists in our festival program. They celebrate how working people extend care to each other through generations, how this care is forged in resistance, and how it is shaped and remembered through story.

We're excited to return to in-person programming while continuing to offer digital art and online events. We encourage you to explore the work of 28 artists in 22 works, which include installation, theatre, visual art, film, poetry, music and other forms of encounters.

We invite you to join this celebration of networks of care.

In solidarity,
Mayworks' Board and Staff

VENUES

The festival, free to all, runs from May 1st to May 31st.

Browse this program guide to discover what's on, when, and where. Be sure to visit mayworks.ca for regular updates, other festival projects and a full festival schedule.

Venues include:

- **Whippersnapper Gallery**
594 Dundas St W, Toronto, ON M5T 1H5
- **United Steelworkers Hall**
25 Cecil St, Toronto, ON M5T 1N1
- **Kennedy Station – TTC**
2455 Eglinton Ave E, Scarborough, ON M1K 2P6
- **Innis Town Hall**
Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave, Toronto, ON M5S 1J5
- **Dentonia Park**
Thyra Ave & Dentonia Park Ave, Toronto
(at Victoria Park Station)
- **Art Gallery of York University**
8 Accolade East Building, York University,
4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
- **Online at mayworks.ca**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Board of Directors

Cynthia Roberts, Co-chair, Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Programming Committee

Pamela Arancibia, Co-chair, Sponsorship Committee, Programming Committee

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Eileen Wennekers, Outreach and Communications Coordinator

Contributing partners: Helen Kennedy, Andrew King, Hima Batavia, Toronto Palestine Film Festival, Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction, Gig Workers United, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, Coalition for Black Trade Unionists, Labour4Palestine, Toronto and York Region Labour Council and Trinity Square Video

Illustrator

Marcia Diaz, Marcia Diaz Design

Graphic Design

Karen Cowl, Stripe Graphics Ltd.

THANK YOU

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Breaking Barriers: The Legacy of 12 Black Trade Unionists Changing Canada



Sankofa by A.J. McIntyre

By **Anna Jane McIntyre**
and **Alexandra C. Yeboah**
in collaboration with the
Coalition for Black Trade
Unionists (CBTU).

Breaking Barriers is a bookwork and poster that highlights the experiences of organizers, artists and participants of the CBTU including: Albert Jackson, Violet King Henry, Stanley Grizzle, Fred Upshaw, Bromley Armstrong, June Veacock, Herman Stewart, Marie Clarke Walker, Mark Brown, Janice Gairey, Christopher Wilson and Yolanda McLean.

Research, interviews and text
by **Alexandra Yeboah**
Illustrations by **Anna Jane McIntyre**

Breaking Barriers Book Launch
Friday, May 20
7pm – 8pm (Doors open at 6:30pm)
United Steelworkers Hall

➔ Register at mayworks.ca

Breaking Barriers Poster
May 1 – 31
Foyer Window,
United Steelworkers Hall
(available to view from outside,
dusk until dawn)

Printed copies of the book will be available at the book launch and other festival events while quantities last. The book can also be viewed at mayworks.ca.

This project was developed through
Mayworks' Labour Arts Catalyst.



Revolution Must Mean Life



By **Maysam Khreibeh**
in collaboration with
Nasim Asgari and
Labour4Palestine.

With poetry at the core, this project weaves together film, music, installation, and performance. Tracing the “crevice between hope and despair”, a space that Palestinians know all too well, the work presents a glimpse into the intersections of the labour movement and the Palestinian liberation movement. The project amplifies

a collective call to action from Labour For Palestine that transcends BDS resolutions and highlights the central role of workers’ struggles in the resistance against the Zionist regime. This work was envisioned and supported through a series of interviews with organizers from Labour for Palestine on Turtle Island and organizers on the ground in Palestine, situated in Al Khalil, Nablus, Qalqilya, and Ramallah.

The violent attacks on Palestinians throughout 2021 exposed realities of settler colonialism, apartheid and occupation in ways the world could no longer shy away

from. Taking the lead from Palestinians on the ground, dockworkers to labour unionists mobilized en masse against the ongoing oppressive systems of occupation, ethnic cleansing, and land theft. Revolution Must Mean Life explores the power of the people and all the ways that they create cracks, breaks and fissures within an oppressive system.

Exhibition

May 4 – 31

Whippersnapper Gallery
(storefront window, available
to view from outside 24/7)

Gallery Visit

Sunday, May 22, 2pm – 4pm

Visitors are invited to drop by Whippersnapper Gallery, meet artist Maysam Khreibeh and make or bring a poster relating to Palestinian liberation that will later be added to the exhibition walls.

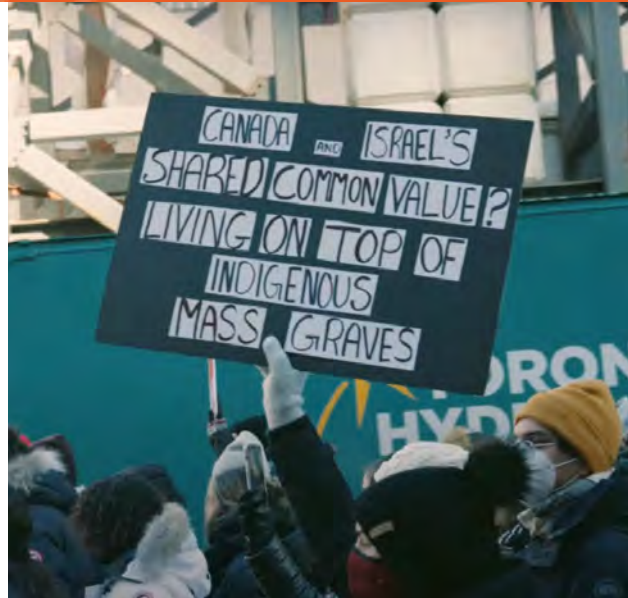
Poetry Reading

Friday, May 6

at the Living Voice (see page 18)
United Steelworkers Hall, 7pm

And on **Saturday, May 28**

at the Mayworks Closing
Celebration (see page 20)
Dentonia Park, 1pm



Video

May 4 – 31

mayworks.ca

This project was developed through
Mayworks' Labour Arts Catalyst.



Soon and Very Soon

By **David Yu** in collaboration with **UNITE HERE Local 75** and **Toronto and York Region Labour Council**.

Soon and Very Soon is a multi-sensory installation that incorporates audio and video interview recordings from current and past members of UNITE HERE Local 7, a union which supports hotel and hospitality workers. This site specific work, set in a Toronto hotel room, pulls together sound-bites from multiple hotel workers (room attendants, shop stewards, organizers, housemen) into an oral history grafted onto a representation of the “back of house” – an area in the service industry which connotes and supports specific class disparities.

The title refers to a song which the UNITE HERE Local 75 choir recorded and that reflects a shared community of people who gather in order to advocate for better labour rights for themselves and for future generations.

The site ceremoniously brings invisible narratives back to their location of inception



and celebrates the successes of how far this industry has come in terms of workers rights. It relives the narratives which we would rather forget in a field deemed “unskilled” and sings the songs that lifts us up as a community that cares for one another. It shows us that no matter where we stand, the boundaries erected between environments do not matter—there is actually no back of house.

Installation

Date, time and location
at mayworks.ca

Appointments are necessary.

Video mayworks.ca.

David Yu and Maandeeq Mohamed:
In Conversation

Friday, May 27, 6pm
via Zoom

➞ Register at mayworks.ca

This project was developed through Mayworks' Labour Arts Catalyst where David Yu was paired with writer Danny Torres.

Hey Mama 2

By **Danny Torres**

Hey Mama 2 is a poem inspired by the stories of UNITE HERE Local 75.

Poetry Reading

Friday, May 6

at the Living Voice (see page 18)
United Steelworkers Hall, 7pm

And on **Saturday, May 28**

at the Mayworks Closing
Celebration (see page 20)
Dentonia Park, 1pm



A Day in The Life



By **Lola Lawson** and
Maandeeq Mohamed in
collaboration with Jane Finch
Action Against Poverty
(JFAAP)

This spoken word audio visual piece reflects the stories and voices of the community that JFAAP represents. Written and performed by Lola Lawson, the work highlights the struggles, journeys and triumphs that residents of Jane and Finch have endured throughout the years while reflecting on the work JFAAP has done for this community.

An accompanying personal essay, written by Maandeeq Mohamed, provides history and context for Lawson's piece.



Exhibition

audio recording accompanied
by Maandeeq Mohamed's essay
May 2 – 31
Art Gallery of York University

Spoken Word Live Performance Friday, May 6

at the Living Voice (see page 18)
United Steelworkers Hall, 7pm

Spoken Word Video and Essay May 1 – 31 mayworks.ca

David Yu and Maandeeq Mohamed:
In Conversation
Friday, May 27, 6pm
via Zoom

➔ Register at mayworks.ca

This project was developed through
Mayworks' Labour Arts Catalyst.



In Transit



A series of installations and activities curated by **Mitra Fakrashrafi**

In Transit responds to existing and deepening divides in Toronto, especially as shaped by transportation infrastructures with long histories of connecting and fracturing communities. Playing with language commonly associated with delivery services, In Transit links mobility networks such as roads and rails to questions of work, housing, and other disparate spatial organizing of our lives.

In Transit represents the works of artists **L. Akhter** (see page 15), **Jessica Kirk** (see page 16), and **Sarom Rho** in collaboration with **Gig Workers United** (see page 17).

On **May 1** join Mayworks to march with Gig Workers United at the Province Wide Day of Action for a Workers First Agenda. **Meet up details:** mayworks.ca

On **Saturday, May 21**, join **In Transit** artists, organizers, and curator for day-long activities in Dentonia Park.

12:00pm: How can we live? An artist talk and community dialogue with Jessica Kirk and Dr. Stephanie Latty

2:00pm: Revolutionary Optimism and the Migrations of Gig Economy Organizing A workshop with Sarom Rho in partnership with Gig Workers United

12:00 – 4:00pm: সাবধান / SHABDHAN (“careful”)
Installation by L. Akhter

সাবধান / SHABDHAN ("careful")

By **L. Akhter**

সাবধান sits at the easternmost Scarborough subway station; central to the homes, workplaces, and lives of migrant South Asians. The installation explores the literal and lateral surveillance faced by the marginalized in South Asian (Bengali) communities. **সাবধান** is an interrogation of and a plea to the community, of caring and being careful. It asks those who engage with the work—*Is this what you meant?*—to reflect upon the ways that performative respectability become violent microcosms of living in surveillance states: we are surveilled, and we surveil each other. On May 21,

postcards with prompts on the culture of care and surveillance within the community will invite community members to engage with the work in their own words. The project accompanies a longer poem on literal/lateral surveillance accessible online.



Transit Ad Poster

May 8 – 30 Kennedy station

Interactive Installation

**Saturday, May 21,
12 – 4pm** Dentonia Park

Poetry Recording

May 8 – 30
mayworks.ca

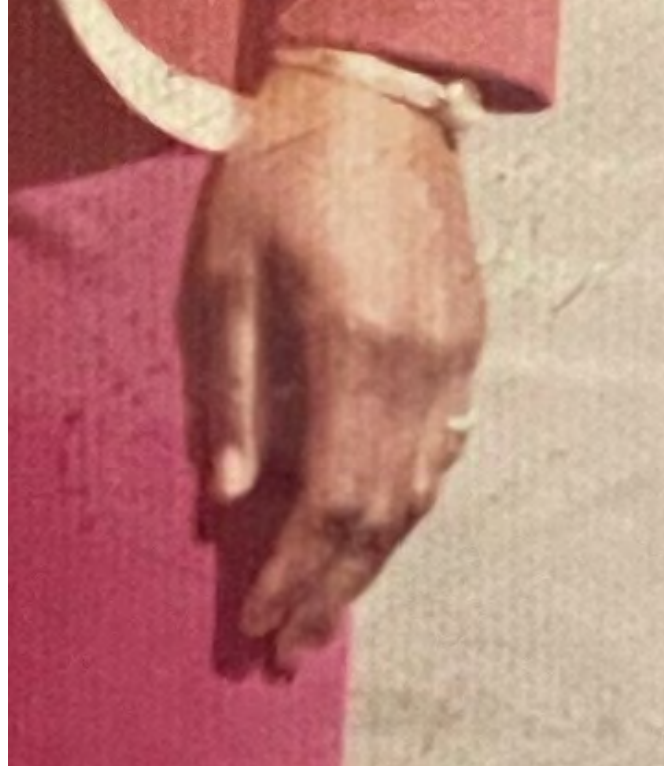
Wuk Exhibition

By **Jessica Kirk**

“In the 1960s, my grandmother was one among many Trinidad and Tobagan women to arrive in Montreal through Canada’s West Indian Domestic Scheme Program. While many Afro-Caribbean women migrated to this country through initiatives like these, we know that Canada’s linkage to Black movement is purely conditional. On these lands, there are documented histories of forcing displacement, restricting entry, and encouraging movement by way of labour exploitation, each of which suit its political ambitions at different points in time.

While movement can engender a sense of rootlessness, lateral care work creates foundations that renew some semblance of place. Still, there’s something to be said about gendered assumptions of care being taken up by some of our city’s most vulnerable. Therein lies the reality of labour performed by so many Black women – often extractive and simultaneously invisibilized.”

Even amid these layered relations, Black women are often at the forefront of cultivating spaces of belonging. But when care work is presumed, the plot of her undoing begins (Hartman, 2019). Through a collaged photo essay, Wuk seeks to use



historic archives and contemporary expressions to story imagined futures rooted in honour and connective care.

Installation May 6 – 31 Dentonia Park

How can we live? An artist talk and community dialogue with Jessica Kirk and Dr. Stephanie Latty

Saturday, May 21, 12pm Dentonia Park

View photographs of the Wuk installation at mayworks.ca

Revolutionary Optimism



By **Sarom Rho**

"On May 1, 2019, Foodsters United, now known as Gig Workers United, publicly announced our struggle and intent to fight misclassification and unionize. To date, multinational tech companies like Uber are pouring millions into a campaign to normalize inequality, precarity and poverty, all in the interests of corporate greed and profit. To date, workers hold our collective line and vow to accept nothing less than full and equal rights for all of us. Our concept of "us" remains ever expansive."

Placed across the city, Sarom Rho's poster project made in collaboration with

Gig Workers United advocates for the rights of gig workers who are continuously invisibilized and subject to missclassification.

Poster Series

May 1 – 31, Across Toronto

Banner

Date, time and location
at mayworks.ca

Saturday, May 21, 2pm (see page 14)
Dentonia Park

Revolutionary Optimism and the Migrations of Gig Economy Organizing, a workshop

View photographs of the poster series and banner at mayworks.ca

The Living Voice: An Evening of Labour Arts Poetry

Three poets read recent work
followed by a short film.

Revolution Must Mean Life

(see page 8)

by Maysam Khreibeh

Hey Mama 2

(see page 11)

by Danny Torres

A Day in The Life

(see page 12)

by Lola Lawson

The Heartbeat of Poor Tom

by Lisa Nasson

Poor Tom is a fictional story about a woman dealing with the aftermath of the racist attacks in Mi'kma'ki last year over the broken Peace and Friendship Treaty concerning fishing for moderate livelihood.

Friday, May 6, 7pm

United Steelworkers Hall

Doors open at 6:30pm



Radical Housewives, A Play

Presented with the The Toronto Workers' Theatre Group

What happens when women have had enough with rising prices? At many points in history, they rose up angrily and demanded justice. Toronto had an example of that kind of action that has been almost forgotten. In 1937 hundreds of housewives came together to protest the high cost of food in the city. For the next decade the Toronto Housewives Consumer Association defied gender stereotypes of passive women and mobilized thousands of housewives to keep the prices of domestic goods under control. After World War Two they led huge national demonstrations in Ottawa to demand that price controls stay in place and laid out clear proposals for a more economically just society. What they got instead were withering blasts of Cold War hysteria that undermined their efforts.

The Toronto Workers' Theatre Group has revived the story of these determined women in the hopes that their passion and commitment can inspire new struggles for social justice for working people in the 21st century.

Written by **Craig Heron**

(in collaboration with
TWTG members)

Directed by **Aida Jordão**

Based on the book *Radical Housewives: Price Wars and Food Politics in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada* (University of Toronto Press 2019), by Julie Guard



Cast: Paul Bilodeau, Merlin Charles, Alireza Gorgani Dorcheh, Nadia Geith, Fatemah Gharibi, Craig Heron, John Humphrey, Lev Jaeger, Diana Barrero Jaramillo, Holly Kirkconnell, Janet Lewis, Mike Phillips, Ester Reiter, Karlene Robertson, Marilyn Tate, Virginia Thomson

Tuesday, May 3, 7pm

Thursday, May 5, 7pm

Sunday, May 8, 2pm

United Steelworkers Hall

→ Register required
at mayworks.ca

Mayworks Closing Celebration

Join us at Dentonia Park for
an afternoon celebration
featuring music and poetry.
Refreshments served.
Everyone welcome.

1PM Music Performance

Lacey Hill

(see page 21)

1:30PM Poetry Readings

Revolution Must Mean Life

(see page 8)

by Maysam Khreibeh

Hey Mama 2

(see page 11)

by Danny Torres

2PM Music Performance

Aysanabee

(see page 22)

3PM Music Performance

Others to be announced

- check mayworks.ca for updates

Saturday, May 28, 1pm – 4pm

Dentonia Park

Lacey Hill



Lacey Hill is Oneida/Mohawk of Six Nations of the Grand River Reservation, Wolf Clan. She is a singer/songwriter and inspirational speaker. Lacey went solo launching her debut album titled 528, independently, in 2013, which put her in the music scene and opened up the stage to perform her original songs. 2017 Her sophomore album 528 Volume II M has taken Lacey across Canada and on to international stages. 2018-19 Lacey traveled to New Zealand, Australia and UK, stage managing and providing original compositions for Tara Beagans' theatre production DeerWoman. 2020, Covid hit,

so Lacey released and premiered "The Shiner" as a single for APTN's Amplify series, was one of RogersTV Highlight artists and performed alot of online gigs! Lacey is set to release more music for her 3rd album.

Saturday, May 28 at the Closing Celebration (see page 20) Dentonia Park

Aysanabee



Aysanabee is an Oji-Cree singer songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist who was first recognized performing for the Indigenous Music Awards emerging artist series in 2020. His songs and storytelling landed him a part in the Giiwewizh documentary series featuring 16 Indigenous artists from across Turtle Island. The series was directed by Sarain Fox and hosted by the International Indigenous Music Summit. He has since signed with Ishkode Records, one of the first

Indigenous owned labels in the country and has played several major Canadian music festivals and opened for notable acts. He has released two singles with Ishkode and is currently working on his debut album with producer Hill Kourkoutis, the first woman to ever be never nominated for recording engineer of the year at the Junos.

Saturday, May 28 at the Closing Celebration (see page 20) Dentonia Park

A Feeling Greater Than Love

Presented with The Toronto Palestine Film Festival



By **Mary Jirmanus Saba**

Lebanon

Dreams of popular revolution, erased by civil war. A young girl martyred at a factory strike in Beirut in 1972 – her identity shrouded in mystery. A meditation on revolution, cinema and their possibilities, past and present.

The film will be introduced by a guest speaker and followed by moderated Q&A, via zoom, with the filmmaker.

Saturday, May 7, 7pm

Doors open 6:30pm
Innis Town Hall

➔ Register at mayworks.ca



Company Town



By **Peter Findlay**

Canada — 52 minutes

On the anniversary of General Motors' 100th year of manufacturing vehicles in Oshawa, Canada, union workers are forced into a life-and-death fight to save their members' jobs when the company announces it will be shuttering the plant at the end of the next year.

Followed by Just Transitions panel with Simon Black, lead organizer with Labour Against the Arms Trade, Sam Gindin,

former research director of the Canadian Auto Workers (now Unifor) Chris Ramsaroop, organizer with Justicia for Migrant Workers, Pamela Arancibia, labour organizer and Co-Chair of the Mayworks Board of Directors.

Saturday, May 14, 6:30pm

Doors open 6:00pm
Innis Town Hall

➔ Register at mayworks.ca

Displaced Labour

Exploring the ways that migration and forced displacement, on a global and local scale, shape our relationships to work and the communities that sustain us.

Sunday, May 15, 3pm

Doors open 2:30pm

Innis Town Hall

Register at mayworks.ca

Displaced Labour

A Horse Has More Blood Than a Human

by Abolfazi Talooni,
***Iran and UK* 20 minutes**

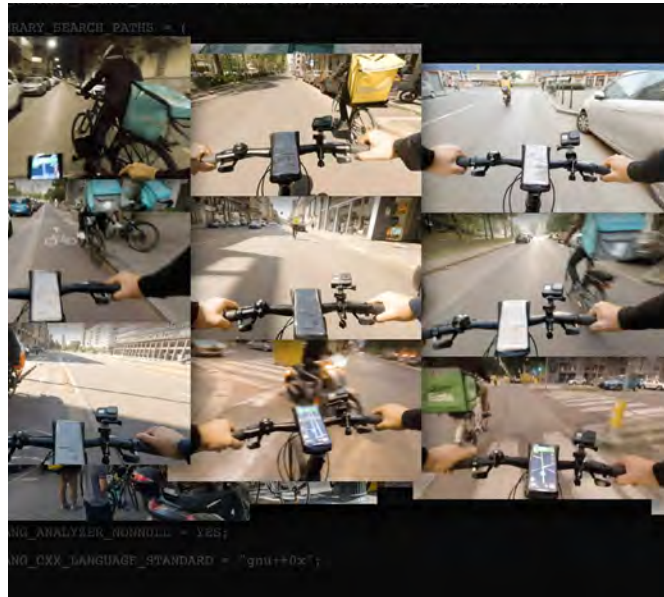
An older couple leave Tehran and return to their idyllic home town on the Turkish border, but their dreams of quiet retirement are shattered by the realization that their town has become a smuggling gateway into Europe.



Riders Not Heroes

by Davide Rapp and
Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli,
***Italy* 14 minutes**

Riders Not Heroes is a short video essay that investigates the precarious conditions of food delivery riders in Milan. The film makes a strong case for riders as essential workers, lying at the intersection of platform capitalism, gig-labor, the refugee crises and COVID-19.



Displaced Labour



X by Mareike Wegener,
Germany 29 minutes

A reimagination of the demonic crossroad myth, *X* takes place in the post industrial landscape of Germany's western coal mining region. Ecker searches for work, but his hands are too shaky. Dieter attempts to breathe, but his remaining lung is too dusty. An eerie music emerges from the combination of gasping, metallic clatter, the humming of power lines and the sound of hoofbeats in the old mines. Until the devil appears in the tunnels below to form a pact. *X* is a cinematic ritual aimed at appeasing

the ancestral spirits of the industrial workforce. The surreal road movie is inspired by the lives of the filmmaker's father and grandfather, who also play the lead roles.

Displaced Labour

Ticketed for What
by Yvonne Sung,
Canada 18 minutes
(set in Toronto)

A peek into Toronto's homeless community being unfairly ticketed under the Ontario Safe Streets Act.



If There is Not Struggle
by Jared Katsiane,
US 14 minutes

A young photographer celebrates historical figures via Boston's public art.



Displaced Labour

seeing her
by Lindsay McInyre,
Canada 3 minutes

seeing her is a silent portrait of the filmmaker's great-grandmother's amauti. This analogue animation weaves the beaded textures that give space to the labour, skill, and memories that this amauti holds.



Shea, by NASRA
by Effy Adar,
Canada 3 minutes

A family displaced by greed searches for a new home in a foreign place. As they explore they discover pieces of themselves; old and new. "Shea" celebrates what has always remained in Black/African peoples, an innate sense of home, luxury and interconnectedness



Lapsis



By **Noah Hutton, USA**

108 minutes

New York, an alternate present: the quantum computing revolution has begun and investors are lining their pockets in the quantum trading market. Building the network, though, requires miles of infrastructure to be laid between huge magnetic cubes by “cblers” - unprotected gig workers who compete against robots to pull wires over rough terrain.

Queens delivery man Ray Tincelli (Dean Imperial) is skeptical of new technology, and the buy-in to start cabling is steep, but he struggles to support himself and his ailing younger brother, who suffers from a

mysterious illness. So when Ray scores a shady permit, he believes their fortunes may have finally changed. What he doesn't expect is to be pulled into a conspiracy involving hostile cblers, corporate greed, and the mysterious “Lapsis” who may have previously owned his medallion. Called “a smart class-conscious sci-fi parable” by The Hollywood Reporter, LAPSIS is a darkly comic and timely look at the gig economy and the failed utopian promises of big tech.

May 9 - 15

Online screening

Visit mayworks.ca to receive a link to the film.

Kímmapiiyipitssini: The Meaning of Empathy



By **Elle-Maija Tailfeathers**,
Canada 185 minutes

Follow filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers as she creates an intimate portrait of her community and the impacts of the substance use and overdose epidemic. Witness the change brought by community members with substance-use disorder, first responders and medical professionals as they strive for harm reduction in the Kainai First Nation.

May 16 – 22
Online screening

Join us for a conversation with
Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction
Wednesday, May 18, 7pm
via Zoom

Visit mayworks.ca to receive
a link to the film and to register
for the discussion.

Dreaming of Words



By **Nandan**, India 60 minutes

INjattela Sreedharan, a fourth standard drop-out, compiles a dictionary connecting four major Dravidian languages. Traveling across four states and doing extensive research, he spent twenty five years making the multilingual dictionary. This unique dictionary offers a comparative study of Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. 'Dreaming of Words' traces Sreedharan's life, labour, love for languages and the struggles to get the dictionary published. The film also explores the linguistic and cultural diversity in India.

May 23 – 31

Online screening

Visit mayworks.ca to receive a link to the film.

LABOUR ARTS CATALYST

Initiated in June 2021 with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Labour Arts Catalyst is a new program of Mayworks where artists and writers are paired with labour organizations in a collaborative art-making process. The program is in line with Mayworks' vision "to incite the creation and production of art that engages diverse artists and workers in the advancement of cultural, economic and social justice."

From an open call for submissions, an independent jury consisting of Laura Tibi, Adwoa Afful, Ahlam Hassan, Mariam Zaidi and Pamela Arancibia selected four artists and four writers to participate in the first edition of the program. As a result, four distinct artworks have been created and we are proud to present them in this year's festival. Descriptions of these projects can be read on pages 6-13.

Mayworks is pleased to offer a 2nd edition and the call for submissions will open in June.



MAYWORKS

FESTIVAL