



Tilt Retrospective

2014–
2022

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What is Tilt?

Explore
Provoke
Collaborate

Tilt is the fuel to **hcma**'s creative fire. It's where we step out of our comfort zones and explore the unknown. It's where we connect with artists, researchers, and the community to consider unique approaches to social challenges. It's where we embrace the friction that sparks new ideas.

We ask questions, without fixed answers. We learn. We unlearn. We value different perspectives and celebrate the discovery process. And we invite you to join us in exploring with intent.

This retrospective looks back at the past eight years of Tilt, highlighting the catalyst moments, the breakthrough events, and the major learnings that shape **hcma**'s work—now and into the future.

Tilt emerged from a cloud of activity between 2014-2016. In those early days, we were hosting public events and installations to explore novel design ideas for the future of our cities.

The impact of those explorations – both on our work and the people we met along the way – showed us the value of pursuing more of these initiatives with structure and intent. And so Tilt was born.

Julian Thomas The Faraday Café (2014)

"If a café blocks phone signals, will personal connections be formed instead?"

Our first Artist in Residence, Julien Thomas, set out to answer that question with *The Faraday Café*.

People came. They talked. They drew. The Globe and Mail sent a reporter and the story made its way around the world. A neat reminder that local actions can have a global impact.

Draw Down (2014-2016)

For *Draw Down* – Vancouver's annual drawing event – we encouraged passersby to gain a fresh perspective on city life through pop-up events on the Seawall and Granville Island.

Tilt Postcards (2015)

To spark new ideas for our built environment, we distributed postcards around the world, encouraging people to draw a picture of what they wanted to see in the spaces around them.

hcma Day Activate Your Site (2015)

Our first annual office day to explore a big social question. Throw a dart at a map, get a random materials budget, and hit the streets to animate the city – whichever way our teams interpreted that.

Harbour Deck (2016)

Vancouverites walk, run, and bike the Seawall, but rarely dive head-first into the water that surrounds us. *Harbour Deck* rekindles our connection to the ocean by challenging conventions of social space.

More Awesome Now Laneway Opening (2016)

"Instead of avoiding Vancouver's downtown laneways, what if we sought them out as places to play?"

More Awesome Now reshapes laneways into engaging public spaces – injecting vibrancy into our downtown core. Visit Alley Oop and Ackery's Alley if you're ever in the city.



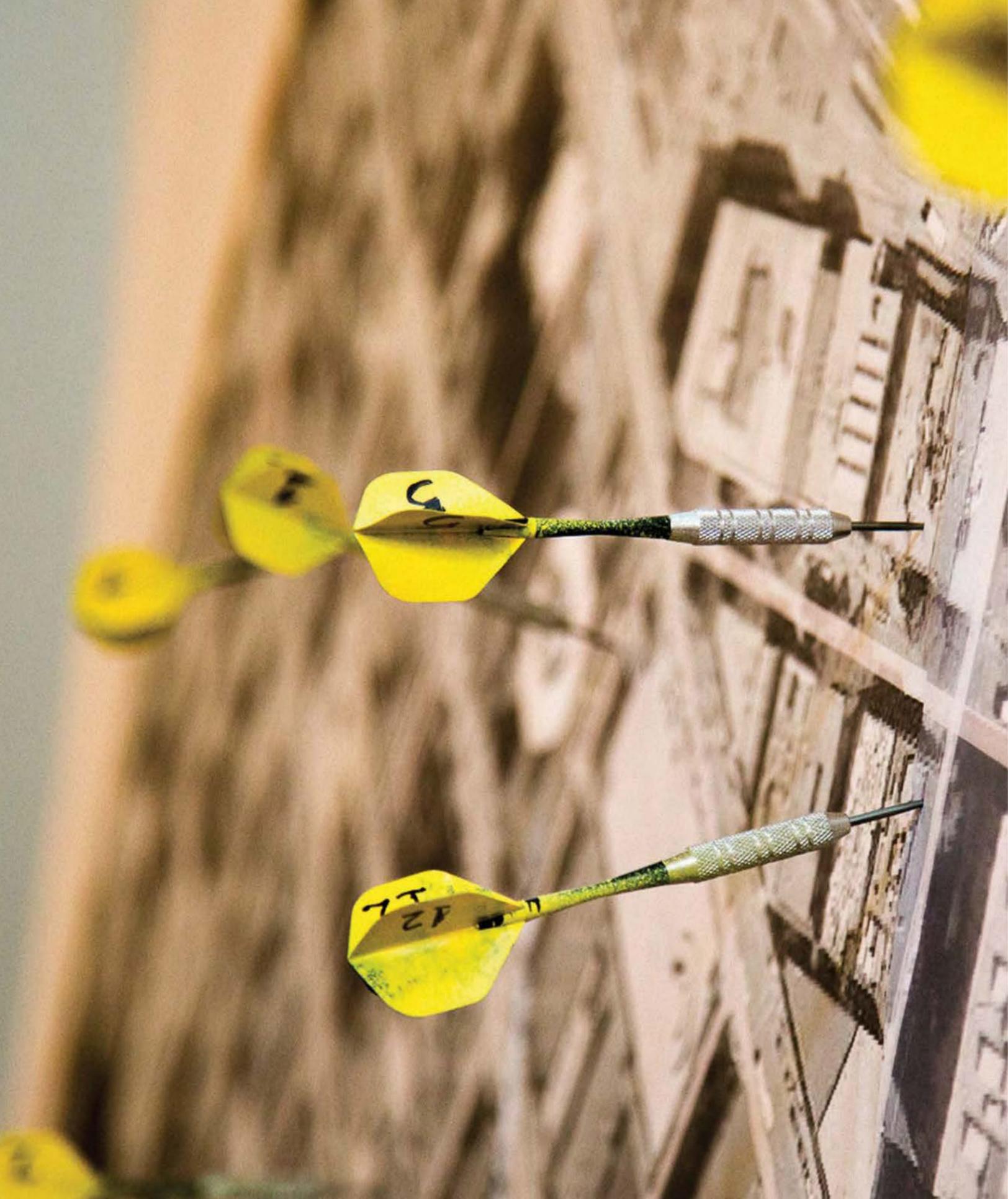
Top: Julien Thomas making pour-over coffee in the Faraday Café



Right: Pickup basketball at the Alley Oop laneway opening party



Centre: Planning urban activations at Tilt City



SFU How Tilt City was born

Left: Contestant's darts, marking their site.

Right: Pre-game pep talk before transforming empty hoardings.

Spotlight



The idea for our first public facing **hcma** day, *Activate Your Site*, was inspired by the small moments that add richness to everyday public life. Street performers. Public art. Chance encounters with a friend. The moments that bring people together and make you realize what a city can really be.

Following the success of *Activate Your Site*, SFU Public Square invited us to recreate the event at their annual conference.

Rebranded "Tilt City", over 100 designers, architects, students, and community members took to the streets to temporarily transform downtown Vancouver. With budgets ranging from \$0-\$100, each team spent the day crafting their urban interventions.

The event furthered conversations about how we can think differently about our cities, challenging traditional views of our public spaces – and who they're really for.



Within hours, physical installations were popping up on one corner, choreographed performances the next—with passersby stopping to join the fun. Above all, it showed that it only takes small actions to help people think differently about our public spaces—and who they're really for.



Tilt City participants take to the streets of Vancouver to activate various neighbourhoods.



The Catalyst to More Awesome Now



Above: hcma's Ali Kenyon and Steve DiPasquale, enjoying the results of our team's work.

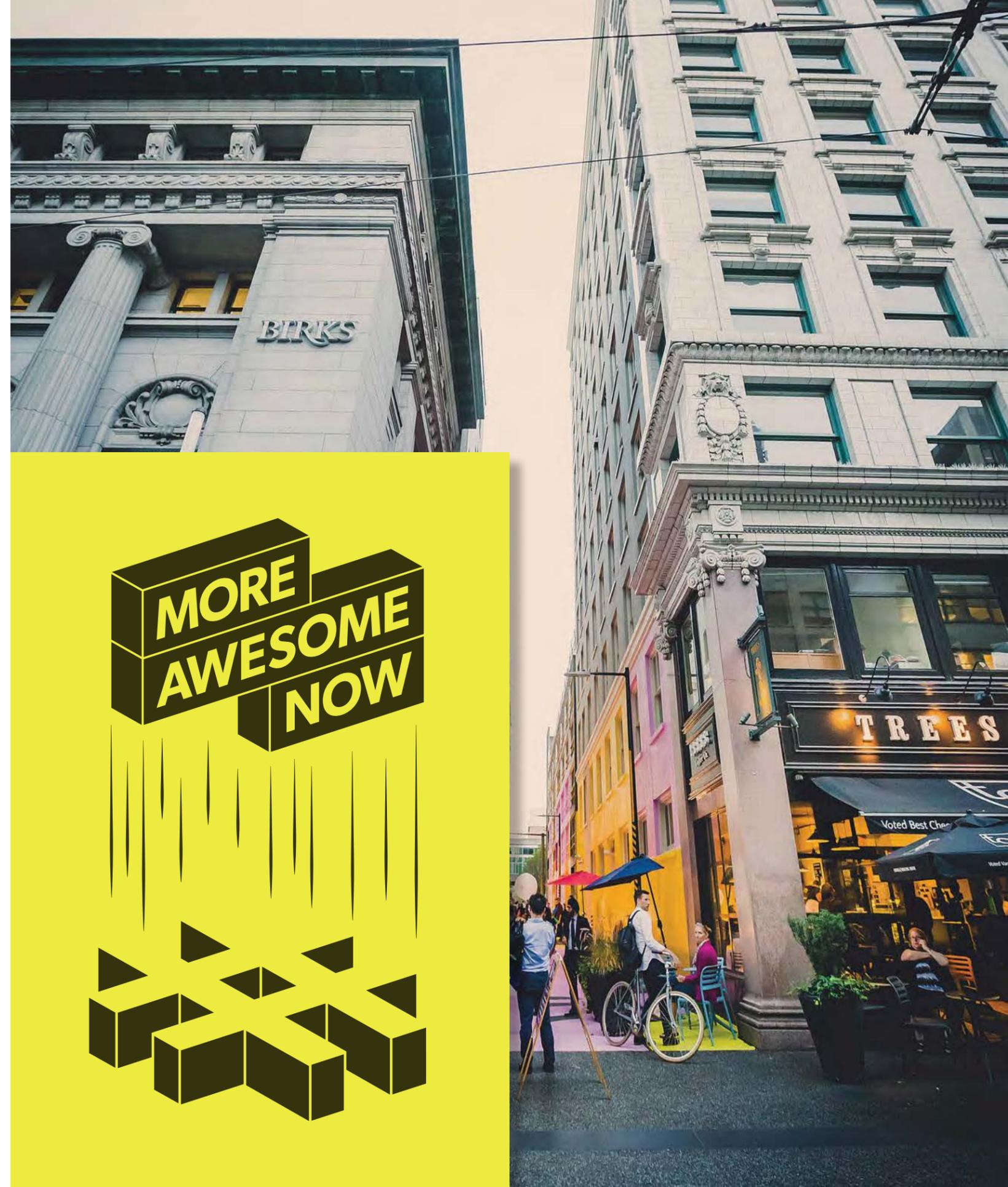
Right: Alley Oop laneway party in full swing, 2016.

Through Tilt City, we built a closer relationship with the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DBVIA). Around that time, they'd recently completed a visioning plan for the city's commerce, culture, creativity and community, with an emerging goal to activate underused spaces.

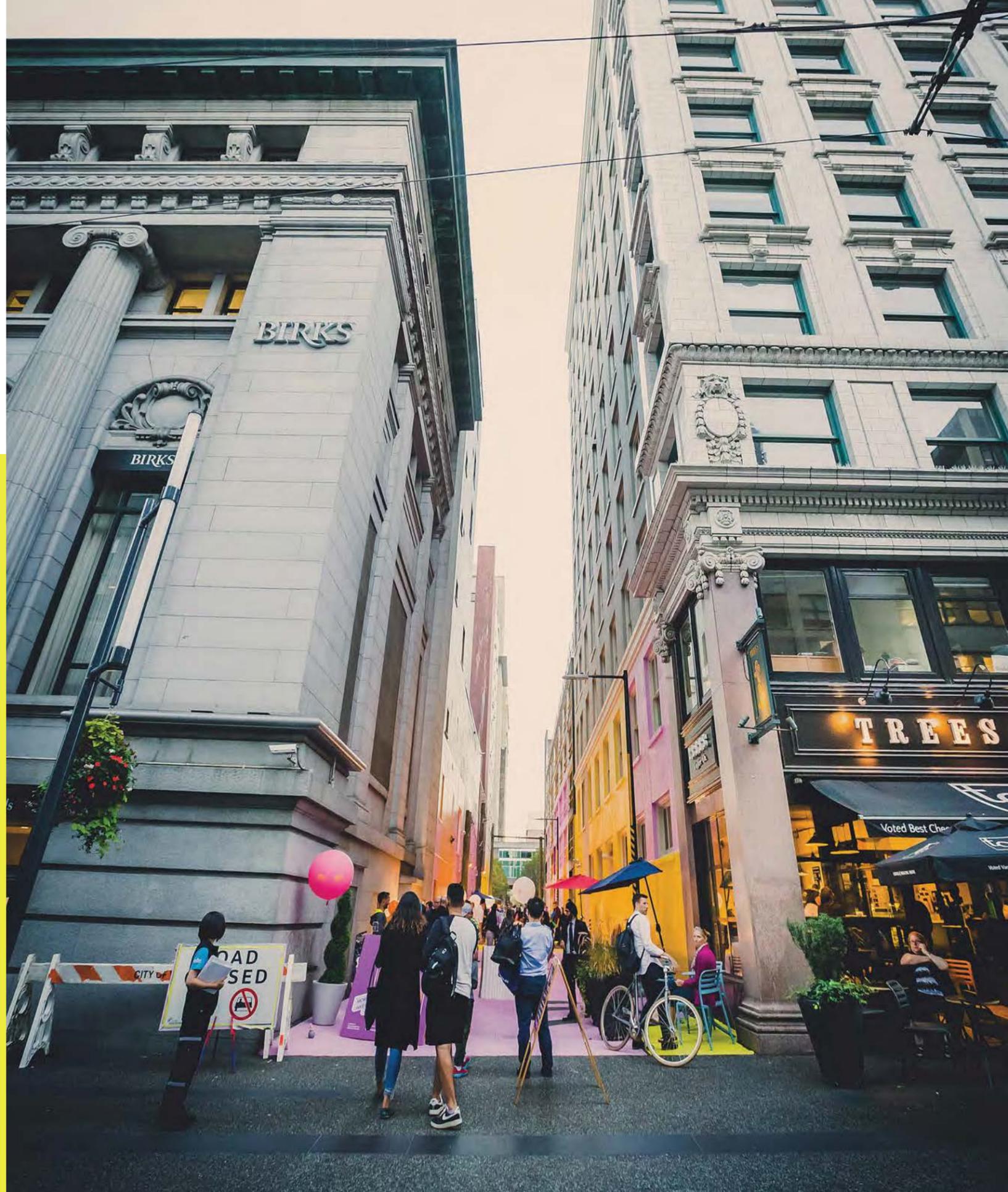
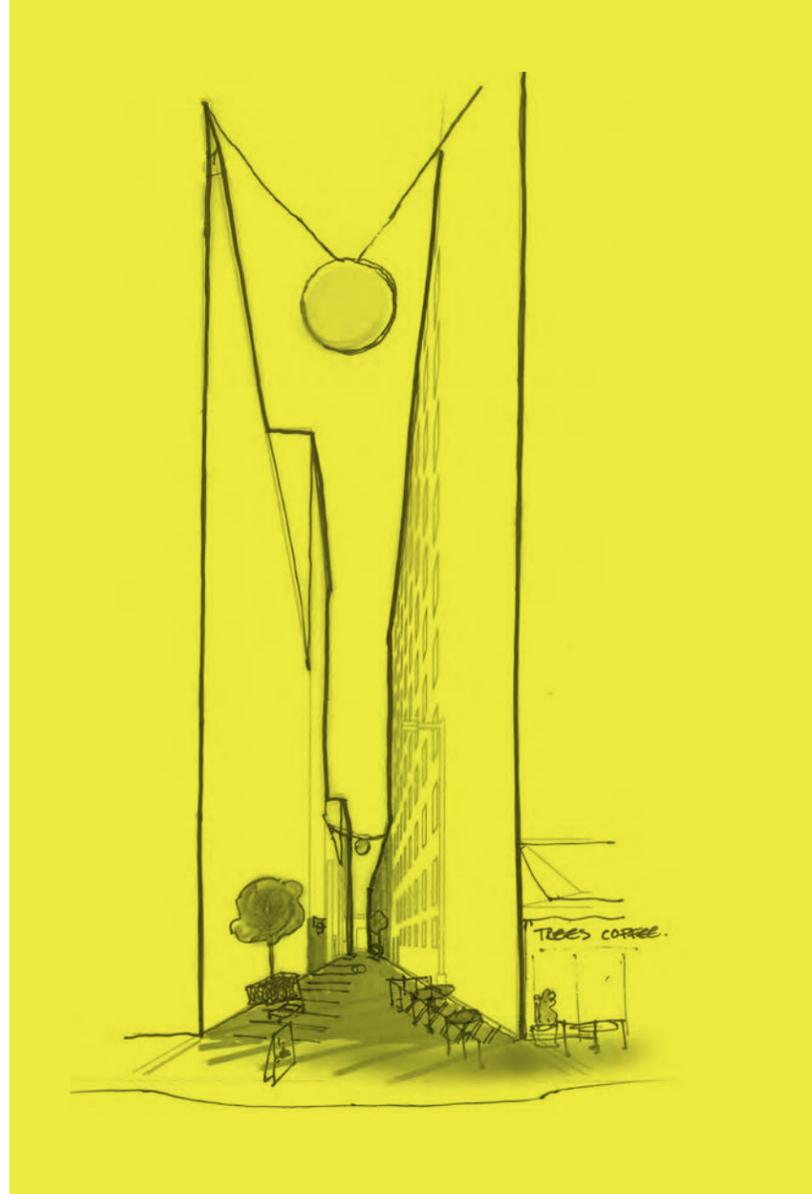
This led to the idea that we could breathe life into the city's laneways. Imagine if instead of avoiding them, or just using them as a shortcut to the next street, you actively sought them out as spaces to socialize and play?

The result was More Awesome Now, an initiative to reshape laneways into engaging, accessible public spaces that contribute to the vibrancy of Vancouver.

If you're in Vancouver, take a walk through Alley Oop or Ackery's Alley...



The Catalyst to More Awesome Now



Above: hcm's Ali Kenyon and Steve DiPasquale, enjoying the results of our team's work.

Right: Alley Oop laneway party in full swing, 2016.



Artists

in

Residence



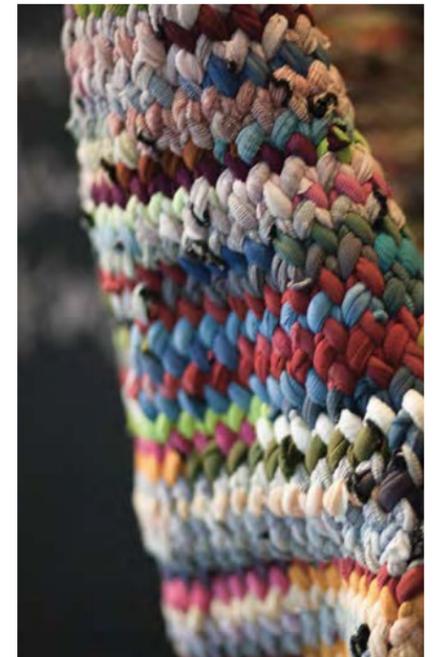
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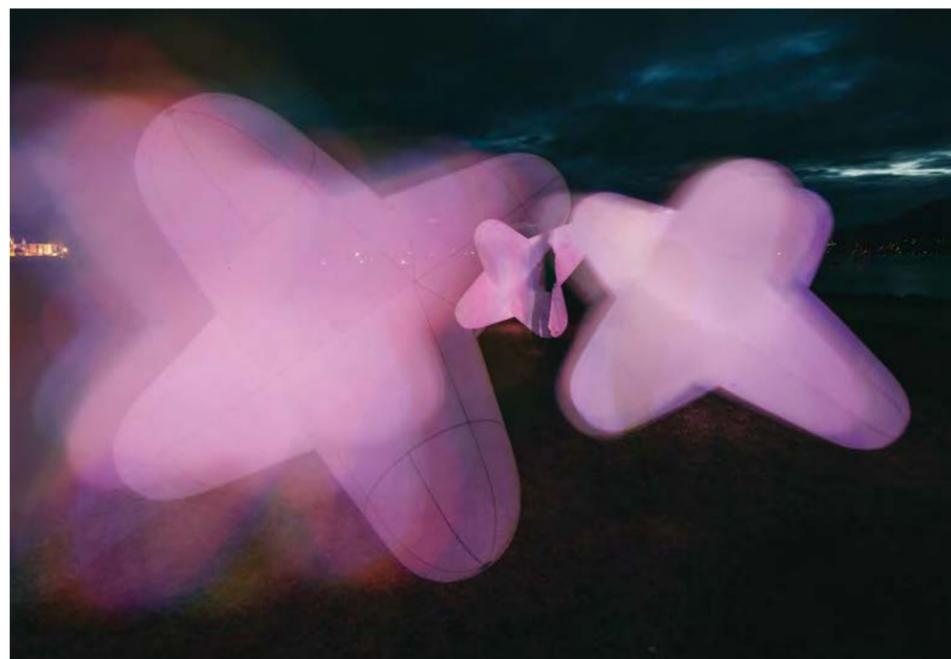
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Artists in Residence

Over the years



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Sometimes you need to step back from the day-to-day and do something different.

Our Artist in Residence program explores what happens when different creative disciplines exchange processes, knowledge, and opinions.

For several weeks at a time, we invite artists to step into our studio and they invite us into their worlds.

Read on to see how these projects take on a life of their own, helping everyone see things a little differently than before...





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Alma Louise Visscher	2022
George Rahi	2022
Collin Elder	2022
Cara Guri	2021
David Ellingson	2021
Breanna Barrington	2021
Shirley Wiebe	2020
Travis Skinner	2019
Annabelle Choi	2019
Julia Taffe w/ Aeriosa	2018
Roxanne Nesbitt	2018
Alex Beim	2018
Shane Koyczan	2018
Ola Volo	2017
Katherine Soucie	2017
Heather Myers	2016
Michael Rozen & Scott Sueme	2015
Krista Jahnke	2015
Julien Thomas	2014



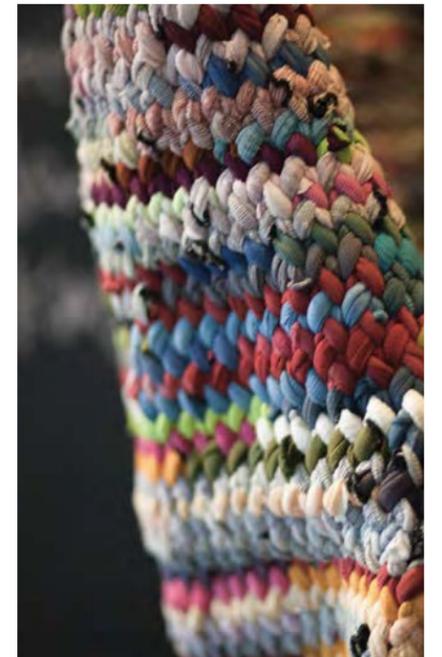
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“It was a pleasure to do an art residency for Tilt at hcma. I’ve had an incredible insight on the world of architecture and the beautiful people behind the craft.”

— Ola Volo

Artists in Residence



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1 Julia Taffe Aeriosa

How can we give underused spaces a new lease of life?

Challenging perceptions of our natural and urban spaces – and inspiring Vancouver’s first International Dance Summit – we helped Julia turn local landmarks into vertical dance stages.

2 Julien Thomas Faraday Café

What happens if a café blocks phone signals, will personal connections be formed instead?

People came. They talked. They drew. They wrote. The Globe and Mail sent a reporter to the Faraday Café and the story made its way around the world. Our first realisation that local actions can have a global impact.

3 Alex Beim JAX

Can we offer passersby a moment of surprise and delight?

Alex’s installations encourage interaction and offer moments of unexpected delight for passersby. We helped him create Jax, a collection of two-metre high, illuminated, inflatable geometric shapes that turn any public space into a vibrant, active play zone.

4 Annabelle Choi Dictionary Dining

How do cultural narratives around food shape personal connection?

Annabelle led us through an exploration of how shared stories around food influence our personal connections. COVID hit mid-residency, forcing whole new perspectives around our relationships with food – and our loved ones.

5 Katherine Soucie Cast ON, Cast OFF

“What role do textiles play in our built environment?”

Katherine spent three months hand knitting 15,000 inches of hand-dyed hosiery waste material. Weighing 50lbs and over six feet tall, Cast On, Cast OFF explores the valuable role textiles serve in our environment.

6 Heather Myers Solid Liquid Ether

How does spatial design influence movement?

Through a choreographed dance – inspired by the water, roof structure, and community spaces at Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre – we explored how dancers understand space and what we can learn from that.

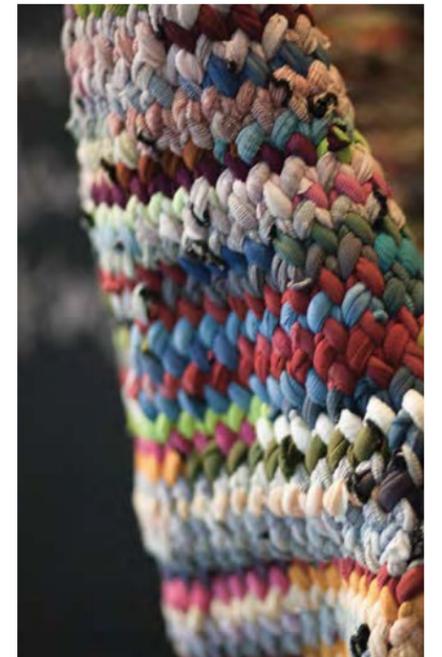
7 David Ellingsen Projections

How can we address the mounting extinction crisis on our doorstep?

Through David’s photography, we explored how our ever-expanding built environment affects the climate – specifically deforestation and biodiversity loss here in BC – and the urgent need to reduce the environmental impact of buildings.



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Artists in Residence



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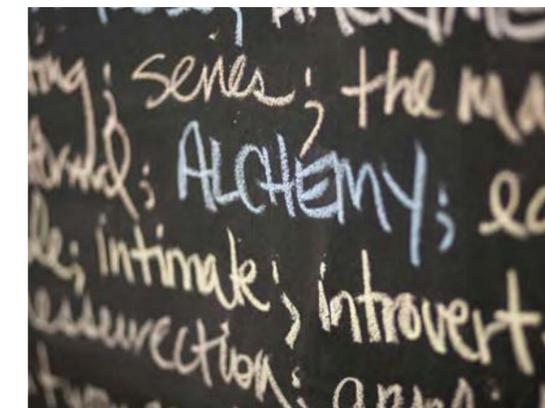
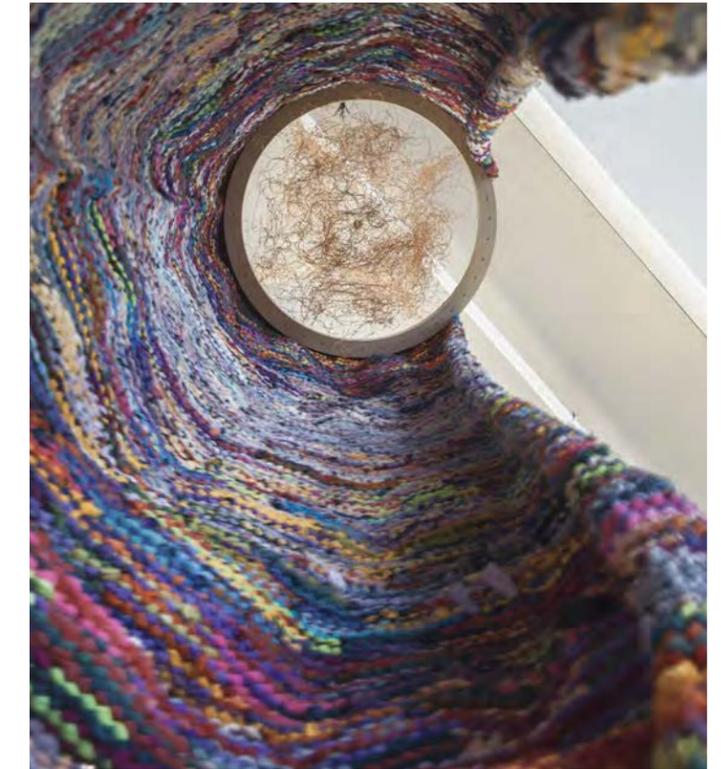


“For me, it’s been amazing to be introduced to all of these people and their diverse set of expertise and processes.”

Left: Enjoying Katherine’s Cast ON, Cast OFF chair

Right: Inside view of Cast ON, Cast OFF

homa-er on Tilt



People set up in the office and you can just stop by and see what they’re working on – and it’s usually a wildly different realm to what you’re used to. We’re able to rub elbows and get intimately acquainted with their creative processes.

Whether it’s an artist or a talk or an event, someone might arrive with a preconceived notion of what they want to do, but there’s always openness to push things in different directions. Sometimes it can be challenging or uncomfortable, but the end result is usually far more compelling.

Katherine (Soucie) said to me, “I never would have done this project if I hadn’t come here”.

It made me realize how much these people make you think differently.

When we’re all siloed, you don’t get that same friction or have those sparks flying. It’s a blast.

“Tilt has been an outlet for my own creativity as I’ve progressed in my career.”



While architectural projects are creative in themselves, they’re also serious. Buildings have far reaching, real life implications, with huge budgets, lots of people, and schedules that can take years to complete.

Tilt is lighter touch, it’s fast, and it gives us an opportunity to quickly test and iterate and then see these ideas appear in the real world.

That agility is invaluable.

I guess it’s the same reason I do ceramics and pottery. It’s free form and I can get my hands dirty.



Shirley Wiebe's piece in Victoria, installed by staff during the height of the pandemic.



Tilt

Community

Values

Tilt's primary focus is to engage hcma staff.

Exposing our teams to alternative creative perspectives is one way we can better understand the issues that affect the people and places we design for.

Initiatives like Tilt City, Harbour Deck, and Artist in Residence are examples of how Tilt shapes our thinking. These exploratory events inspire more meaningful ideas to address societal challenges, showing Tilt's indirect impact on the communities we work with.

Naturally, opportunities also arise to work directly with the local community.

Events like *Life Drawing*, *Tilt Talks*, *Hoovie Movie* viewings, and SideDoor gigs invite the community into our space for a pressure-free, creative outlet, while fundraisers for Binners' Project and *Plenty of Plates* help raise money and awareness for important local causes.

The following pages show Tilt in action with the local community.



Right: *Life Drawing*



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1 Binnors' Project

Binnors make their living collecting recyclables and taking them to the depot for a small fee. We hosted workshops and helped raise over \$45,000 for their Binnors' Project cart share system, which equips them with better tools for the job.

Side Door Gigs

2 By turning any space into a venue, SideDoor allows us to give a platform (quite literally) to local musicians – and an opportunity for attendees to let their hair down, discover new music, and meet new people.

Life Drawing

3 We all need space for creativity and connection. That's why we open our studio doors for free life drawing sessions. Two hours of timed poses for all abilities, in a welcoming, relaxed environment.

Plenty of Plates

4 For many in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a hot meal can be a luxury.

We took part in A Better Life Foundation's Plenty of Plates, a powerful initiative that creates a full dining experience for those most in need, while breaking preconceived notions of our neighbours in the DTES.

Kriss Munsya

5 'The Eraser' was artist Kriss Munsya's debut solo exhibition. It speaks to the trials and tribulations of race, gender, and identity, as well as Kriss' personal experiences with discrimination and trauma as a Black man. Working with the DBVIA, we helped Kriss host the exhibition at the Pendulum Gallery.

Hoovie Movie with the Typewriter Society

6 From the stomach-churning performances of artist Chris Burden to the bittersweet moment when a beloved technology, the typewriter, faces extinction – Hoovie Movie viewings open the doors to more esoteric explorations.

Explore

Provoke

Collaborate

The Future of Tilt

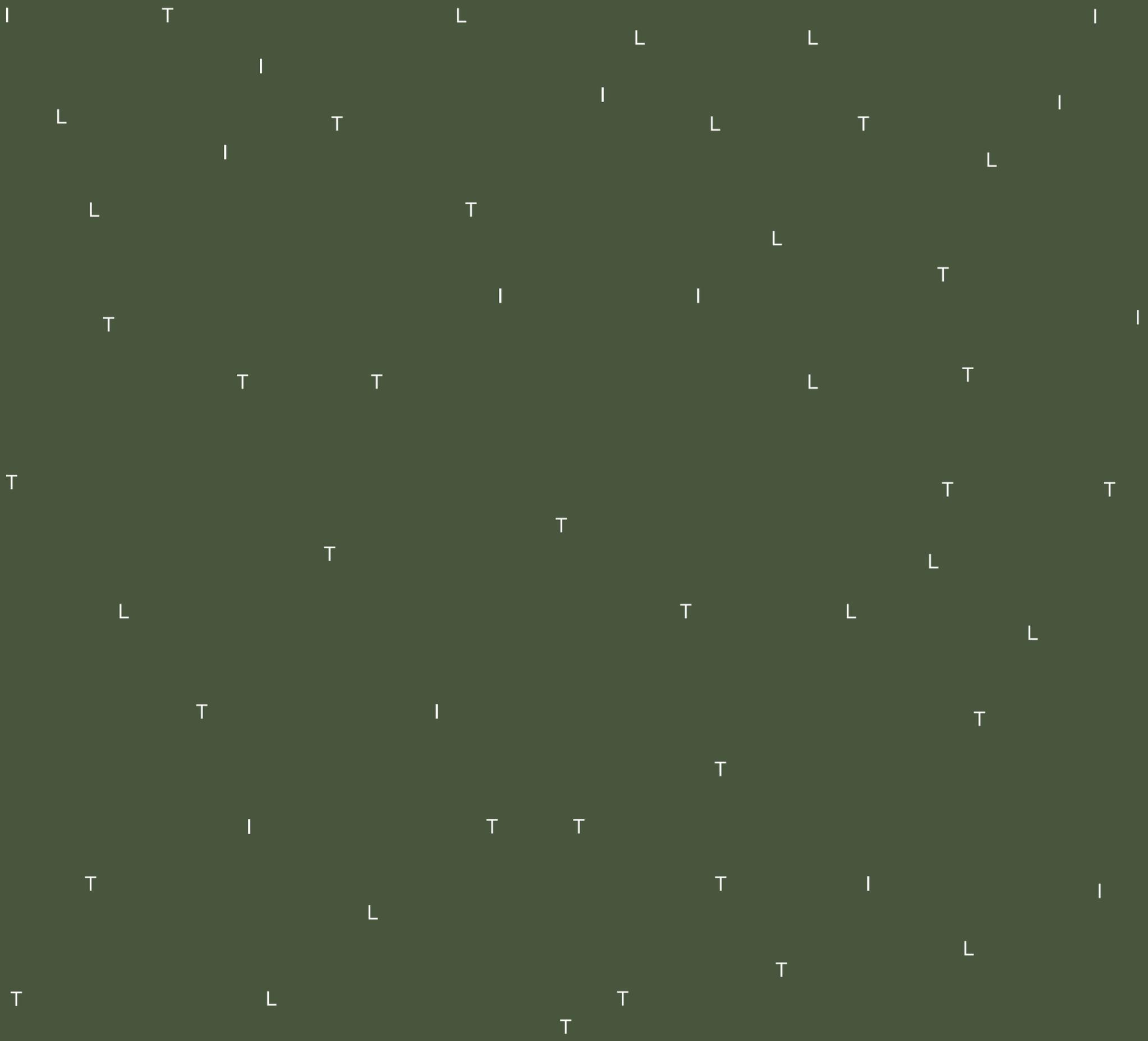
The pandemic was a forceful reminder of why we need connection and community.

When we didn't have it, we missed it.
And we probably took it for granted before.

With in-person events back on the agenda, we're reaffirming our commitment to Tilt. Our commitment to explore and provoke the important issues of our time.

To build community.
And to foster human connection through design.
How do you measure happiness?
How do you measure laughter?
How do you measure being part of a community?

Join us on the journey as we try to find out.



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Niitsitpaaisini (Blackfoot),
Métis, Dene, Nakota Sioux

Green-e: The paper for this project was printed and manufactured using 100% certified renewable electricity.

Ancient Forest Friendly: This paper was manufactured with 100% post consumer recycled content and bleached using chlorine-free bleach.

ZERO: Greenhouse gas emissions from the paper lifecycle, the transport, and the printing of this item have been offset through investments in energy efficiency and non-fossil fuel energy technologies.

