



Exhibition highlighting the complexities of vaccination opens at the McMaster Museum of Art

For its debut presentation in Canada, the evidence-based art exhibition addresses the role of global vaccination through collaborative art and research projects.

*<Immune Nations>
Curated by Natalie Loveless
September 14 – December 10, 2021*

Featuring collaborative art and research projects by Jesper Alvær, Sean Caulfield, Timothy Caulfield, Patrick Fafard, Caitlin Fisher, Steven J. Hoffman, Johan Holst, Annemarie Hou, Alison Humphrey, Rachele Viader Knowles, Kaisu Koski, Vicki S. Kwon, Patrick Mahon, Lathika Sritharan, and Mkrtych Tonoyan.

September 14, 2021 — Hamilton, ON — <Immune Nations>, an evidence-based exhibition that addresses the constructive role that art can play in public discourse around life-saving vaccines, debuts for the first time in Canada at the McMaster Museum of Art on September 14. The exhibition brings together art and research projects to explore complex issues related to the use and distribution of vaccines in the world today, and the capacity of artistic research to encourage public engagement and nuanced debate on pressing global issues. Curated by Natalie Loveless, an Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Alberta, the exhibition is the outcome of a research project developed prior to the pandemic (2014-2017), which spanned across continents and cultures.

The opening of the exhibition marks a significant milestone for the museum as it re-opens to visitors for the first time since closing its doors in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We are thrilled to be welcoming guests back

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into the museum with this timely and thought-provoking exhibition.”
says Carol Podedworny, the museum’s Director and Chief Curator.
“Presented during this critical moment in the country’s re-opening, <Immune Nations> highlights the role that art can play in responding to difficult social and political topics such as vaccination.”

Following a series of interdisciplinary workshops in which scientists, artists and policymakers shared their perspectives and expertise, <Immune Nations> first debuted at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art’s Galleri KiT in March 2017 and was soon followed by a second exhibition at the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in Geneva. Now in its third iteration, the exhibition at the McMaster Museum of Art presents original work alongside new work produced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Comprised of a range of multimedia including prints, books, postcards, videos, and interactive projections, the exhibition highlights the work of researchers and visual artists aiming to constructively reframe current discourses surrounding vaccines, and to identify the limitations of existing approaches.

From Annemarie Hou and Patrick Mahon’s *Design for a Dissemunization Station*, portable printed tent structures accompanied by ambient sound that invoke an “inner bodyscape” as a vaccine ostensibly moves through the body, to Kaisu Koski’s poetic documentary film *Conversations with Vaccine Critical Parents*, made up of interviews and raw home videos, the exhibition offers a multitude of ways to engage with and contemplate the topic of vaccination, demonstrating the value of combining art with research to encourage and facilitate dialogue.

According to the curator Natalie Loveless, “Over the past several years we have witnessed extremely heated and polarized international public debate on vaccines, ranging from questions related to their safety to their unacceptably high price in many of the world’s poorest countries. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has raised urgent questions related to effective use of vaccines and has led to polarized global debates on vaccine

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equity. <Immune Nations> brings attention to these debates and the often-complex emotional states that surround them.”

McMaster’s Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Susan Tighe recognizes the importance of this exhibit arriving at this point in history to the McMaster Museum of Art. “<Immune Nations> raises thought and conversation on the vital topic of immunization, both at McMaster and around the world. We must approach this topic using every discipline, involving science and technology as well as art, history, and culture,” says Tighe. “We are very fortunate to have world-renowned experts at McMaster who are leading research in these areas and have been guiding our policies and practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. <Immune Nations> draws on some of these experts and will act as a spark for critical discourse, which is central to our operations as a university.”

To learn more about <Immune Nations>, visit the project [website](#) and view the [Virtual Exhibition Tour](#).

To visit the exhibition, please schedule an appointment via the museum’s [bookings page](#). Note appointments are limited to 15 people per time slot.

Events

A series of free, online panel discussions will take place throughout the run of the exhibition. Pre-registration for these events will be required. Registration will be available soon via the M(M)A website.

Ensuring Equitable Access: Life-Saving Vaccines during COVID-19 and Beyond

Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 12-1:30 pm ET

Panelists: Steven J. Hoffman, Director, Global Strategy Lab, York University [Panel Chair]; Annemarie Hou, Executive Director, UN Office for Partnerships;



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Alison Humphrey, Vanier Scholar, York University; Lauren Paremoer, Senior Lecturer, University of Cape Town; John-Arne Røttingen, Norway's Ambassador for Global Health

Research-Creation and Global Crisis: Interdisciplinarity, Creativity, and Collaboration

Thursday, November 25, 2021, at 12-1:30 pm ET

Panelists: Natalie Loveless, associate professor of contemporary art and theory, University of Alberta [Panel Chair]; Ted Hewitt, President of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Charu Kaushic, Scientific Director of the CIHR-Institute of Infection and Immunity, and professor in the Department of Medicine at McMaster University; Caitlin Fisher, Professor, Director, Immersive Storytelling Lab, and professor of Cinema and Media Arts, York University; Patrick Mahon, Artist, Curator, and Visual Arts Professor, Western University; Kim TallBear, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Peoples, Technoscience and Environment, and professor of Native Studies at the University of Alberta

Vaccine Confidence, Fear, and Misinformation in an Age of COVID

Thursday, December 9, 2021, at 12-1:30 pm ET

Panelists: Sean Caulfield, Professor, University of Alberta [Panel Chair]; Timothy Caulfield, Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy, University of Alberta; Rachelle Viader Knowles, Associate Head of School-International, Coventry University; David Price, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine at McMaster University; Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada

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ABOUT MCMASTER MUSEUM OF ART

The McMaster Museum of Art is a meeting space for both the University campus and the community situated within the traditional territories of the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee nations. The M(M)A engages and inspires through arts presentation and promotion, as well as by: growing an awareness of the interconnectivity of the past, present and future; advancing de-colonization; engaging in innovative and imaginative research; dismantling institutional and ideological boundaries; partnering and collaborating with intentionality; diversifying the collection; and building capacity.

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