

You've been called into: *Memory Work* — portraits of Toronto's future.

If you know your extension, press it now.

If you're at the mural on the Bentway site, press 9 now.

For more information, press 0.

When 9 is pressed

Welcome to the *Memory Work* mural — located at the Bentway's Strachan Avenue Gates, beneath the Gardiner Expressway. Before we start, let's make sure you're in the right place. The mural is double-sided. Make sure you're viewing it from the east side of the gates. That's the side with the amphitheatre seating. If you're there, you should be standing on the wooden steps and seating area — face westward and you'll see the mural. Are you there? Good.

You're looking at *some* notable members of the Mothers of Invention. M.O.I. pronounced MUAH, like the sound of a kiss — *MUAH*.

At any time, press a number from 1-6, corresponding to the portraits in order from left to right. I'll tell you about the person in the portrait you select.

In order from left to right, when facing west, viewing the mural:

When 1 is pressed

Timesha

That's Timesha on the far left, barefoot with her palms open facing upward. Notice her tattoo — a continuous braid of hair — reinforcing her ancestral relations. Timesha descends from a long line of healers. See her mirror? Timesha's practice attends to physical, cosmetic, and spiritual wellbeing. Dabbing a serum, rubbing in a cure, washing, braiding, and massaging — this is how we care for people. In unsettling times, Timesha gives space to honor the grief of change. Though her sacred web of care spans continents and generations, it all starts in her tiny apartment, not far from here.

[chime]

To hear about another portrait, press a number from 1-6 corresponding to the portraits in order from left to right.

When 2 is pressed

Bao

That's Bao — showing us the moon phase on the face of her great grandmother's watch. Bao loves to garden by the moon. As you can see, she's in her protective apron, likely working with sensitive biomatter at the time of this portrait. Bao is a creative biologist, working with materials made from living things. She whispers to nature and it does what she says.

See what she's holding? The venus flytrap is one of her favorite creatures to study. It inspires many of Bao's own innovations. Bao's research truly changes how we think about the cycles of our built environment. Notice the cracks in the concrete structures around you. Can you feel Bao's living sealant pulsing within them? Slowly, it's healing their wounds.

[chime]

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When 3 is pressed

River

Looking far off in the distance is River, known as the Transitionist. River has a gift to see other's gifts.

Do you ever wonder how a movement forms? There are intuitive connectors who often go unnoticed. River is one of those. She has a way of flowing with the world's currents.

River guides folks to their confluence, a place downstream, where passion and talent meet.

River plays a cosmic role in the origins of *MUAH*, the Mothers of Invention — quietly nudging its destiny. No one knows for sure whether River really means to introduce two of MUAH's early members — Ego and Dom. But we do know this: When River urges them to journey out of the city — they find each other, and a movement is born.

[chime]

To hear about another portrait, press a number from 1-6 corresponding to the portraits in order from left to right.

When 4 is pressed

Dom

Do you see Dom there? — face forward, gently holding a stock of foliage. That leaf captures energy from the sun. It powers the living internet. You've probably heard of energy grids, right? No one thinks about energy in terms of grids anymore.

Now, we pattern our technical networks after natural ones. As the root grows, so does information flow.

Dom shows us how to coax natural infrastructures, while also bending our human-made systems to the ways nature — navigating as the seed does, by way of wind, water, and animal.

What are your earliest impressions of Toronto? Have you ever left the city? What brought you back?

When Dom arrives in Toronto, it's supposed to be a haven-city for climate refugees like them.

But the signs are glaring: stormwater floods, sewage overflows, and toxic algal blooms in the lake. Dom recognizes it well. Toronto's ecology is in peril. Like many climate survivors here, Dom suffers from paralyzing anxiety — anticipating a repeat of the traumas they've endured.

So, Dom leaves the city, unsure what they're seeking, or if they'll return. [PAUSE]

On their journey they find tutelage from the Great Lakes guardians. The work restores their self-esteem. Do you know the feeling of spring soil on your hands? Dom reinterprets ways of working with the land, mixing what they know from back home with the new techniques of Ancestral Intelligence.

[chime]

To hear about another portrait, press a number from 1-6 corresponding to the portraits in order from left to right.

When 5 is pressed

Ego

Ego stands proudly with one hand on her hip, gazing south toward the lake.

Ego is the loving matriarch of the Mothers of Invention. Look at her uniform, an expression of abundance.

In her youth, Ego is an artist-athlete. Ego lives for the sublime power of cooperative play. She designs games. A few of them grow to be so popular, they replace the old arena sports. Have you ever played Rose-Maize? We call it the pleasure sport.

The shift from elite competition to social athletics foreshadows a much bigger transition for society. And once again Ego is at the forefront.

Can you imagine what a more participatory society might be like?
How would decisions be made?

Ego orchestrates the 2048 Convergence, a gathering of millions, stretching the length of the Gardiner Expressway — all in their patched up aprons.

Ego wouldn't use the word *leader*. But she is a leader, in the sense of a synthesizer; she listens to the many; she clarifies and amplifies. Her voice is a reorganizing force.

Standing right here at the amphitheater, she leads the chorus, singing the Glissando to honour Toronto's transition.

Can you hear it?

[chime]

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When 6 is pressed

Sam

Set your eyes on Sam, striking a power curtsy — her elegant sleeve wafting overhead. Sam's a glamorous and influential figure in her day. Look at the gold-ribboned fan protecting her wombspace.

Sam's just 17 when she live-casts her first embryo transfer ritual. She only means to share **with** kin and community. But the demonstration of strength catches the culture's imagination. As her belly grows, so does her audience. A fertile womb, and healthy sperm, are hard to come by, and Sam's in high demand. She's becoming a serial surrogate — and she is storytelling every detail through the recorder on her necklace.

Sam lays it all out — the hard negotiations, uncomfortable procedures, dietary regimens, postpartum healing, the whole taxing cycle.

She carries for 31 trimesters before retiring to start an enterprise with her best friend Timesha.

Together they build a network of whole health clinics, offering spiritual and medical care to *parents becoming*. They provide guidance for the healthy passing of genetic traits.

Sam and Timesha's practice is based on *Alignment of Conception*. The body must be energetically ready to receive and procreate, just as community must be healthy if it is to grow.

How do you conceive of community?

[chime]

To hear about another portrait, press a number from 1-6 corresponding to the portraits in order from left to right.

When 7 is pressed

This is Dom, one of the initiators of the crossway on the lake, where the wildlife cross and the internet connects. Dom stewards the living internet.

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But the signs are glaring: [SLOW] stormwater floods, sewage overflows, and toxic algal blooms in the lake. Dom recognizes it well. Toronto's ecology is in peril. Like many climate survivors here, Dom suffers from paralyzing anxiety [PAUSE]— anticipating a repeat of the traumas they've endured.

So, Dom leaves the city, unsure what they're seeking, or if they'll return. [PAUSE]

On their journey they find tutelage from the Great Lakes guardians. The work restores their self-esteem. Do you know the feeling of spring soil on your hands? Dom reinterprets ways of working with the land, mixing what they know from back home with the new techniques of Ancestral Intelligence.

Do you ever think about what Toronto will be like a long time from now? How are you shaping the city's future?

[chime]

Memory Work is a monument to Toronto's potential.

You can visit the mural at The Bentway, located at 250 Fort York Blvd, Toronto, ON, at street level on the East side of Strachan Avenue, under the Gardiner Expressway.

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Memory Work was initiated by studio From Later, with Rajni Perera and Memory Work Collective. It offers a portal to a speculative future world.

Memory Work is co-presented by From Later and The Bentway with support from the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival as part of ArtworxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021–2022. With additional support by the Canada Council for the Arts, City of Toronto, and the Toronto Arts Council.