

2026 IA Current Exhibition

Nov 4 – Dec 5 2026

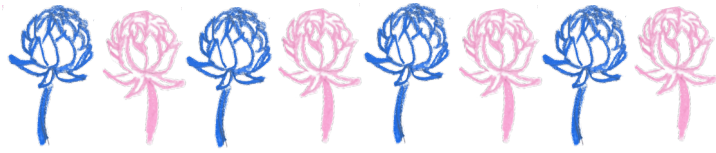
One of my favourite games to play as a kid was called poodle soup, where I took the hose, filled a bucket with water, and picked a bunch of white clover weeds to throw in. I called it poodle soup because the flowers reminded me of poodle tails. I guess.

When I say it was my favourite game ever (or for a summer or two) I do mean it! It was days of following this pattern of fill, stir, empty, repeat. Yes, it was absurd, and yet, this cycle was grounded enough for me to find hours of joy-filled play. I really had a good thing going, it feels like I had ***it*** figured out, whatever that *it* might've been. So it makes me wonder, as we navigate the absurdity that is living life as a human being in a constant search for meaning, what could happen if we begin to (re) embrace this impulse to play? Could we find *it*?

it pron. \ ‘ it

1 : the thing being looked for, often done without a clear idea of what that looks like.

2 : meaning, purpose?



The artists in this show wonder the same. They take technology, something typically built for efficiency, and point at nothing and everything in particular. They find circles and spinning - like a merry-go-round, a continuous receipt printer, a turntable, gears, a button. Yes, our technology loops - rebooting, loading signals, a scroll, whatnot, but these loops always take us to a final location, a final “purpose”, if you will.

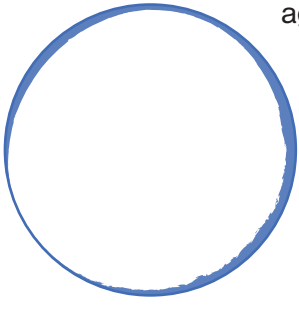
Albert Camus had Sisyphus for this! The cyclicality of the works mirrors his version of the story - just as the loop that Sisyphus was stuck in, endlessly pushing that boulder up the hill, the wheel of life is never-ending, bottomless, like a bucket of poodle soup. Camus argued the best way to traverse this was to imagine Sisyphus happy. I think the way to achieve this joy is through play. Because what better way of navigating a pointless life through (seemingly) pointless actions? The loops these works create, and the play they engage in, are a conscious choice by the artists. Because of that choice, we can decide what attitude to bring to the work.

play as pushing (buttons)

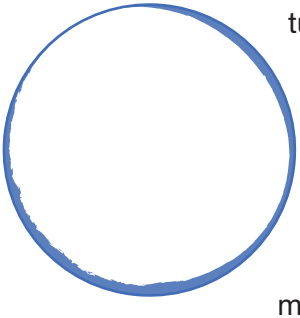
James Rollo's *If this then this otherwise (else)* this is a button tucked away on the left as you enter the space. Press it, the art is on. Press it again, the art is off. Keep pressing, and you'll engage in a fun little conversation with the art. The play of Rollo's piece becomes a negotiation between art and audience. It prompts a bit of discomfort and awkwardness, which is an imperative part of the play process. You have to be uncomfortable, you have to be a little bit ridiculous enough to push the buttons of the button.

play as assembly

Gear Changer by Perspekt Collective is a playground filled with gears, bells, sensors, and lights. The interactions are created through a series of puzzles unknown to the audience - if you pull one gear the whole chain of motion may continue or it may stop. It isn't often that we are prompted to build something, take it apart, and build it again. We see this surface through several means of community-driven learning - things like open-source code, maker culture, hacking, speedrunning, and glitching. These spaces, and this work, is a champion of doing things just for the sake of doing it.



play as intuition



Mad Holl's *Sound Chroma* is a colourful, turntable spinning above an overhead projector. Moveable coloured sheets lay on top of the table, and whichever colour the camera detects plays a different sound. Holl matched each colour to a note by ear, going with whatever sounded like that colour to her - as melodic as it sounds, there wasn't a specific key to unlock the tunes. The composition becomes a duet between both the artist's brain and the audience's hands. She evokes a sense of trust within this relationship, urging us to trust our instincts as she did hers. Doubt kills any sincerity behind the purpose of play.

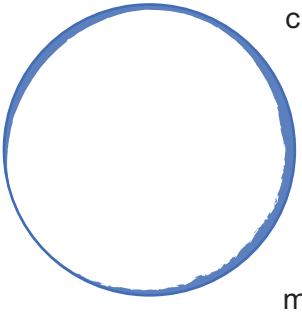
play as a dice roll

Shihab Mian created a collaborative poetry "choose your own adventure" experience titled *Seas of Hestia*, where the artist provides the building blocks and the user is meant to complete. He wrote the story in fragments, allowing the viewers a great deal of agency in creating their own meanings. And while there is a level of randomness, there is also still a level of constraint; similar to dice. A run has no definitive ending either - the interaction allows you to print the receipt, and you can choose to take it or let it accumulate with the

rest of the stories. In being playful, it allows us to take these decisions a little less seriously.

play as pretend

You'll see Yusuf Shamma's work scattered throughout the gallery. Titled *Automated Play*, you'll also see them in an endless loop of continuous swinging and spinning. In Shamma's world (and yours as well, if you prefer!), he is a highly respected researcher in automation. Make-believe is a wonderful way of navigating absurdity because it has the best comprehension that meaning is created within the circumstances. It lies, yet is honest in its intentions. Nobody needs to be fooled for the meaning to remain clear and allow the authorship visibility. My mother certainly wasn't fooled by my idea of soup, but that didn't prevent her from giving me the bucket just to see me smile.



play as learning
play as repair
play as mess
play as research
play as rest
play as disobedience
play as mentoring
play as math
play as noise
play as labour
play as trust
play as design
play as life
play as nothing
play as exploration
play as ritual
play as empathy
play as questions
play as science
play as building
play as inheritance
play as work
play as a pause
play as survival
play as curiosity
play as mindfulness
play as rebellion
play as solution
play as spite
play as

> “I said that the world is absurd, but I was too hasty. This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world.” - Camus

None of these works are trying to be useful, they’re just trying to exist in what they are - that in turn, makes them useful. So why keep trying to make these big things happen, place meaning into everything? Why not enjoy? Why not play?

But whatever, what do I know. Are you really going to take life advice from a 22 year old? Every birthday, I think I figure *it* out less every time. Besides, little Komal wasn’t exactly interested in putting words to those feelings - she was busy cooking soup and feeling the warmth of our mothers presence.

(play as poodle soup)



poodle soup

Ingredients

- *Water (from hose) (lots)*
- *Poodle tails (maybe like, a handful?)*
- *Stick (large)*

Instructions

i. Fill bucket with water (from hose).

ii. Sprinkle in your poodle tails.

iii. Stir.

iv. Serve hot.

Yusuf Shamma 14 days ago



Sipping once, sipping twice! Sipping poodle soup with rice!

Liam Mackenzie 5 days ago



Are the soups in my poodle organic and free range?

(via Instagram comments)

Thank you to Evangeline Y Brooks for her continuous support and guidance, Shani K Parsons for the thoughtful notes, Emma Kardar for the stamp designs, and all seven artists in the show for sharing their work with us.

About the Curator

Komal Lally is an emerging interdisciplinary artist and curator based in Tkaronto.

Her artistic practice is material focused, valuing experimentation, and exploration. She is interested in working (or fighting) with light materials, like paper and fabric, to create immersive environments. In her curatorial work, she uplifts the idea that technology should be for everyone through well-meant nonsense and irony. Encouraging curiosity and creation over credentialism, Lally aims to create ongoing spaces of encounter. She is dedicated to working with and in service of other artists to create works that feel honest, responsive, and warm.

Lally has a BFA in New Media from Toronto Metropolitan University, where she co-founded and led NEXT (New Media Exhibition Team), her program's first curatorial collective, leading her to oversee her thesis exhibition, METAMORPHOSIS. She founded machines of, an artist collective dedicated to uplifting and creating new media art, with which she made "synthesis" an interactive art installation funded by the Creative School in 2024, and co-curated a garage group show, Residua and Remnants in July of 2025. Most recently, she independently curated i see myself and no one in millions of other systems, a new media group exhibition at Little Robot Friends. Her artwork has shown with the Art Gallery of Ontario's Art Bash Fundraiser and Nuit Blanche Toronto. She is eager to continue bringing a DIY ethos and passion for strange art into every single thing she does.

About InterAccess

Founded in 1983, InterAccess is a non-profit gallery, educational facility, production studio, festival, and registered charity dedicated to emerging practices in art and technology. Our programs support art forms that integrate technology, fostering and supporting the full cycle of art and artistic practice through education, production, and exhibition. InterAccess is regarded as a preeminent Canadian arts and technology centre.

About IA Current

The InterAccess Current program supports the professional development of emerging curators and artists interested in new media and electronic practices. Each year, InterAccess selects an emerging curator, who works closely with InterAccess staff to conceptualize and execute an exhibition of works by emerging artists. "Current" refers to the now, but it is also an energetic charge that causes light, heat, and all manner of electronic life; an apt metaphor for emergent creative practices within the ever-expanding field of new media.

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