



# Making Art Making Change

## 2024 Annual Report





# MAMC envisions a society where everyone feels a deep sense of belonging, nurtured by relationships that transcend cultural, social, and economic barriers.

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## **Our Mission**

To strengthen social connections through art-making projects that foster support, belonging, and engagement, improving personal well-being and building stronger, more inclusive communities.

## **Our Approach**

In an era marked by rapid change, social fragmentation, and growing polarization, the need for meaningful connection has never been greater. Many individuals experience disconnection from their communities, leading to feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging. Research has shown that strong social ties are vital for mental and physical well-being, helping to reduce stress, build resilience, and foster a sense of purpose.

MAMC responds to these challenges by offering art-making as a means of social connection, self-reflection, and community-building. Our programs provide a space where participants can explore who they are, process their lived experiences, and build relationships through creative collaboration. Delivered in partnership with community organizations, these workshops reach participants where they live, ensuring accessibility and relevance.

Led by two facilitators, workshops provide a safe space for self-expression, storytelling, and relationship-building. Each program is tailored to the community, reflecting participants' uniqueness and lived experiences. Spanning 8 weeks, 2 hours per week, the structure fosters trust, reflection, and personal growth through collaborative exploration.

Beyond artistic skills, MAMC's workshops combat isolation by strengthening social ties and community belonging, enhancing well-being and resilience.



Image: Mayor Olivia Chow, Elena Soni, Vanessa Barnett, Councillor Chris Moise

# Message from the Artistic Directors

In 2024, Making Art Making Change (MAMC) deepened its commitment to bringing people together through creative expression. Across communities, our workshops provide a space for participants to share their stories, form new connections, and explore their creativity in ways they never thought possible.

This year, we welcomed Gillian Hards as Executive Director, bringing leadership that will help shape the future of MAMC. We also expanded our facilitator team, introducing Denise Gordon, whose background in education and the arts has allowed us to reach more participants and enrich our workshop experiences.

As we reflect on this year, we are grateful for the growing community that surrounds MAMC—our participants, partners, donors, Board and supporters. In 2024, our commitment to community-building was recognized when we received the Community Champion Award from the United Way and the City of Toronto, underscoring the transformative impact of our work.

This impact is evident not only in the art created but in the relationships built, the confidence gained, and the personal transformations that emerge through the process.

With appreciation,  
Elena Soní & Vanessa Barnett, Artistic Directors



# Our Projects

## Building Confidence & Connection Through Art

Our foundational program invites participants new to MAMC to explore personal narratives through the creation of accordion books. Participants learn techniques in painting, embroidery, drawing, and collage to transform their stories into vibrant, tactile art.

Guided by artistic prompts, participants craft self-portraits, depict meaningful spaces, and capture personal views while sharing their creative journeys. This collaborative process sparks deep conversation, fosters mutual support, and builds a community where everyone feels seen and heard.

Ultimately, our workshops merge artistic exploration with personal storytelling to build individual confidence and forge strong bonds. This approach has proven to be a powerful entry point into MAMC's broader creative methodology, helping individuals build confidence as artists while forming deeper connections within their communities.

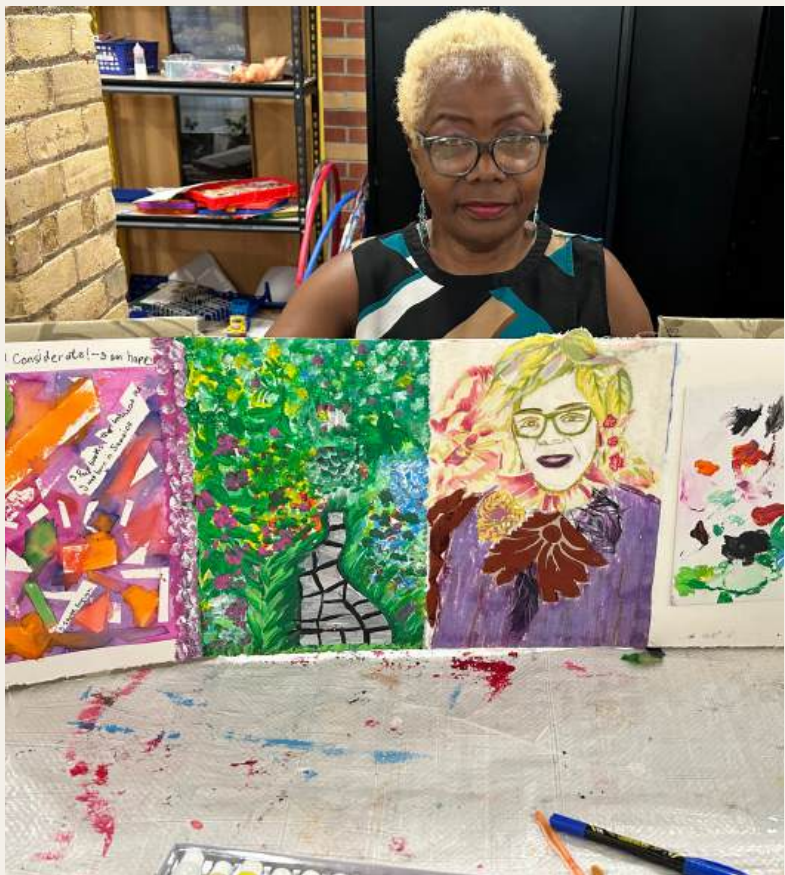


# WORKSHOPS IN ACTION

## Inspiring Transformation

In partnership with the West Active Living and Learning Centre, MAMC's 8-week workshop series successfully inspired transformation in a group of wise, resilient senior women of Portuguese, Vietnamese, American, and Central American backgrounds. Participants shared their experiences as immigrants, reflecting on the challenges of leaving their birthplace, adapting to a new language, and the pride of building a life in a new country. Through creating accordion books, they expressed memories of place and belonging, forging new connections through art.

Community Partner: West Neighbourhood House



## Esta Soy YO! This is Me

The project with the Davenport Perth Seniors was a journey over eight weeks combining painting, images, embroidery, drawings, and impressions that were layered inside their 6-page accordion book.

During these sessions, participants explored different materials and techniques as they developed their artwork. The focus each week was on a different aspect of the participants' lived experience, including self-portraits created with fabric and stitching; a view through the window; a place of memory and a significant object.

Community Partner: Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre





## Deepening Artistic Exploration & Community Connection

In addition to our core workshops, MAMC offers thematic experiences that dive deeper into creative expression. These sessions explore place, identity, history, and storytelling through collaborative art-making.

In 2024, we launched Faces and Places, a series inviting participants to reflect on their connections to local neighborhoods. Art became a tool for celebrating community, honoring lived experiences, and shaping shared spaces.

The impact lasts beyond the workshop. Completed artworks stay with our community partners, turning their walls into living galleries that reflect the stories and people that define each space. These workshops build creativity, connection, and a strong sense of belonging.

### Faces and Places of Davenport Perth

MAMC collaborated with participants from the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood to create a four-panel installation reflecting the people and places of the Davenport Perth community. Through drawing, painting, and collage, participants explored themes of identity and belonging, weaving together historical and contemporary imagery.

*When I came to Canada from Nigeria I stayed in this building on Davenport Road with my young family. Later I owned the Dollar Store on Old Weston Road. I have drawn both buildings because they tell my story. - Workshop Participant*

Community Partner: Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre







## Faces and Places of Lawrence Heights

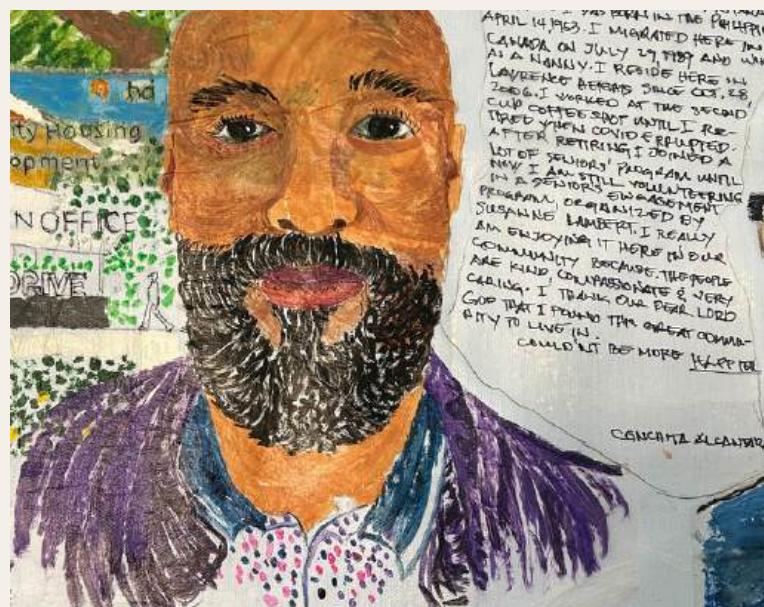
This project invited participants to document the visual and emotional landscapes of their neighbourhood.

Longtime residents and newcomers engaged in conversations about home, change, and resilience as they co-created a collective artwork that now resides in a local community space. Their stories, captured through artistic expression, became a shared reflection of the evolving identity of Lawrence Heights.

*I love the community where I live, I was born here and my children were born here too. This project gave me the opportunity to use my attention to detail to draw the sites of my community. Our group reminisced about our growing up here and the changes that are taking place through the revitalization of Lawrence Heights. Tracing the images helped me calm down and spend some quality time with my neighbours. -*

*Workshop Participant*

Community Partner: Toronto Community Housing





## A Body of Work: Who Did You Invite to This Conversation?

Since 2021, MAMC has partnered with Progress Place and Dixon Hall. In 2024, participants drew inspiration from artist Anna Boghiguian's themes of political and cultural revolutions, creating marionette-like figures of historical changemakers. Over eight weeks, they engaged in deep discussions, collaborative art-making, and creative exploration using mixed media.

The experience didn't end in the studio. Their finished works were exhibited at Daniels Spectrum's Hallway Gallery, giving participants a platform to share their perspectives with the wider community. This public showcase sparked conversations about history, influence, and artistic growth—demonstrating MAMC's belief that art can be a powerful tool for connection, storytelling, and social change.

Partner: Progress Place and Dixon Hall



## FROM GARDEN TO TABLE THE STOP COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE 2024

MAMC led an 8-week project with 12 artists from The Stop Community Food Centre, beginning with a visit to the AGO through its Community Access Programme.

In the workshops, participants created artwork inspired by culturally significant foods and personal memories, using layering techniques influenced by Idris Khan. Through storytelling and creative exercises, they connected over shared experiences of food, place, and heritage. The Stop's hospitality reinforced the power of art and community, and participants expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity.

Partner: The Stop Community Food Centre





## Women Make Your Mark

This project brought together 48 women through four workshops, celebrating their resilience and contributions as they navigated migration, loss, and rebuilding their lives in Canada. Inspired by Filipino artist Pacita Abad, participants explored mixed-media art, embracing bold colours and trapunto techniques under MAMC facilitators' guidance. Initially hesitant, many discovered confidence in their artistic voices, forming new friendships and deepening their sense of community.

Each finished piece is a testament to resilience, triumph, and joy, capturing personal stories of courage and transformation. Each finished piece is a testament to resilience, triumph, and joy, capturing personal stories of courage and transformation. The collaborative spirit of the project reflects MAMC's belief that art can build connection, spark healing, and uplift entire communities. The completed works will be exhibited at the unauagation of the TNO facilities in Spring 2025.

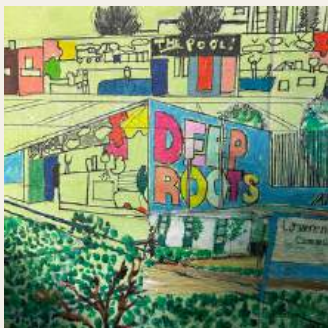
The project culminated in a visit to the Art Gallery of Ontario's Pacita Abad exhibition, a meaningful celebration of the women's achievements.

Community Partner: The Neighbourhood Organization





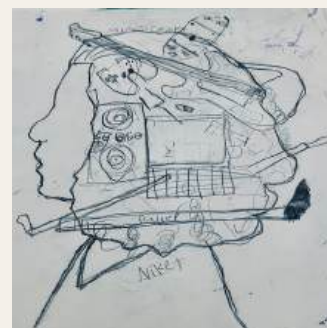
# 2024 PROJECTS GALLERY



**Faces and Places of Lawrence Heights**  
Toronto Community Housing



**Women Make Your Mark**  
The Neighbourhood Organization



**The Brain Project**  
The Mabin School



**New Encounters - Rare Space**  
Rare Dementia Support Canada



**Esta Soy YO! This IS ME!**  
DPNCHC



**Inspiring Transformations**  
West Neighbourhood House



**Faces and Places of Davenport Perth**  
DPNCHC



**From Garden to Table**  
Stop Community Food Centre



**A Body of Work**  
Progress Place



**Turning Heads**  
Syme 55+



**About Face**  
Toronto Community Housing





# HIGHLIGHTS

*I had never made art and this project was challenging. However, it gave me the opportunity to tell my story of acceptance, resilience, and achievements. The MAMC teachers were patient, generous and really listened to my story. In my piece I realized how proud I am of how far I have come as a woman. MAMC has shown me abilities I never knew I had. - Workshop Participant*

200+

Participants

280+

Hours of Community Engagement

*In this project I find I am calm. I have been so sad for a very long time. Here with you I feel happy. - Workshop Participant*

*When [I] was asked us to think about a character from history who we would like to depict, I thought of Frida Khalo. She represents strength, individuality, courage and what it takes to be a feminist. I think I have many of these qualities too...But how to create this when I am not an artist?*

*Elena and Vanessa gave me the tools, the courage and the confidence to create my Frida. I wrote my story on her skirt under which is her wooden leg. Thank you Making Art Making Change for giving me the confidence to find my creative soul. - Workshop Participant*

17

Eight-week long  
Workshops

4

Exhibitions or Art Installations

*I am Beverly, a woman who has lived in Lawrence Heights for over 30 years. This project with Vanessa and Elena gave our group the opportunity to remember and celebrate our lives in this remarkable community. I never thought of myself as an artist and yet in this class I believe I became one. - Workshop Participant*

*This program was so successful, and it couldn't have happened without the incredible care, dedication and passion demonstrated by the both of you. Every person I saw in the program and every picture I looked at showed happy, excited participants experiencing something new that brought a smile to not only their faces but all of ours. - Program Partner*

10

Community Partners



# FINANCIAL REPORTING

## 2024 Revenue

Donations & Grants	\$214,168
Program Fees	\$69,519
Interest & Misc.	\$4,429
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	<b>\$285,686</b>

## 2024 Expenses

Program & Staffing	\$223,761
Services & Consultants	10,682
Office & Administration	\$8,494
Fundraising	\$2,339
Promotion	\$4,608
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	<b>\$249,883</b>

**Revenue/ Expenses**                      **\$38,233**

**Accumulated Surplus**                      **268,994**  
**End of Year**



Auditors Report available upon request

# We'd like to thank all our donors for their generous support

## Changemakers (\$20,000+)

Anonymous  
Kingfisher Foundation  
Alison and Bruce McDonald  
H. John McDonald Foundation  
Marjory and Ian McDonald  
McDonald Family Foundation

## Visionaries (\$10,000+)

Purpleville Foundation  
Anonymous

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## Community Builders (\$5000+)

Gillian Graham  
Martha McDonald  
Ivan & Lynda Silver

## Champions (\$1000+)

Derrick Barnett  
Janice Carlyle  
Paul Cohen  
Katherine Graham Debost  
James Graham  
Sue Howe  
Nancy Lang  
Audrey Loeb & David Ross Foundation  
Elizabeth Trotter

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## Connectors (up to \$1,000)

Katherine Ashenburg  
Hazel Bader  
Marni Binder  
Claire Buré  
Tecca Crosby  
Shirley Dawe  
Martha Digby  
Thomas Digby  
Ann Dowsett Johnston  
Robin Farb-Eckler  
Joanna Gertler  
Bethany Harper  
Pauline Hodge  
Sharon Hunter  
Tai Huynh  
Lise E Labine

Nancy Lang  
Alexandra Magistretti  
Caroline Macfarlane  
Jennifer Marks  
Kelly McEvenue  
Trudy Michielsen  
Mansell Nelson  
Nice Future Corp  
Ian Pearson  
Maria Piazza  
Janet Purcell  
Celia Rhea  
Barbara Romcke  
Stella Rastogi  
Sam Dubeau Small  
Mary Yamanaka

*We support MAMC because we have  
seen work done by some of the  
participants and are so impressed.*

*We see how much benefit the  
participants derive from the interaction  
with the staff and the other group  
members.*

*We are so proud to help MAMC do this  
wonderful community building.*

*- Audrey Loeb & David Ross Foundation*



# COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERS



Image: Denise Gordon, Facilitator

## Staff

Vanessa Barnett, Artistic Director  
Elena Soni, Artistic Director  
Gillian Hards, Executive Director  
Denise Gordon, Facilitator

## 2024 Board Members

Marjory McDonald (Chair)  
Gill Evans (Vice Chair)  
Gillian Graham (Secretary)  
Vanessa Eckstein - Director  
Pamela Meredith - Director  
Jerry Koh - Director  
Dr. Ivan Silver - Director

## 2024 Community Partners

Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Community Health Network  
Dixon Hall (Regent Park) and Progress Place (St James Town)  
The Mabin School  
Progress Place (St. James Town)  
Rare Dementia Support Canada  
The Stop Community Food Centre  
Syme 55+  
Toronto Community Housing  
The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO)  
West Neighbourhood House

With heartfelt gratitude, we  
celebrate the dedication of our  
staff, volunteers, donors,  
partners, and Board members.

Your commitment and passion  
make MAMC's work possible.

Thank you for being part of this  
journey!





**Making Art Making Change is a non-profit charity committed to giving voice to communities through the use of visual arts, and storytelling.**

**Charitable registration number:  
770955870RR0001**

**All artwork in this report was created by MAMC project participants.**