

THE DELANEY
FAMILY
EMERGING
CURATOR'S
PRIZE

JAN 21
→ MAY 16
2026

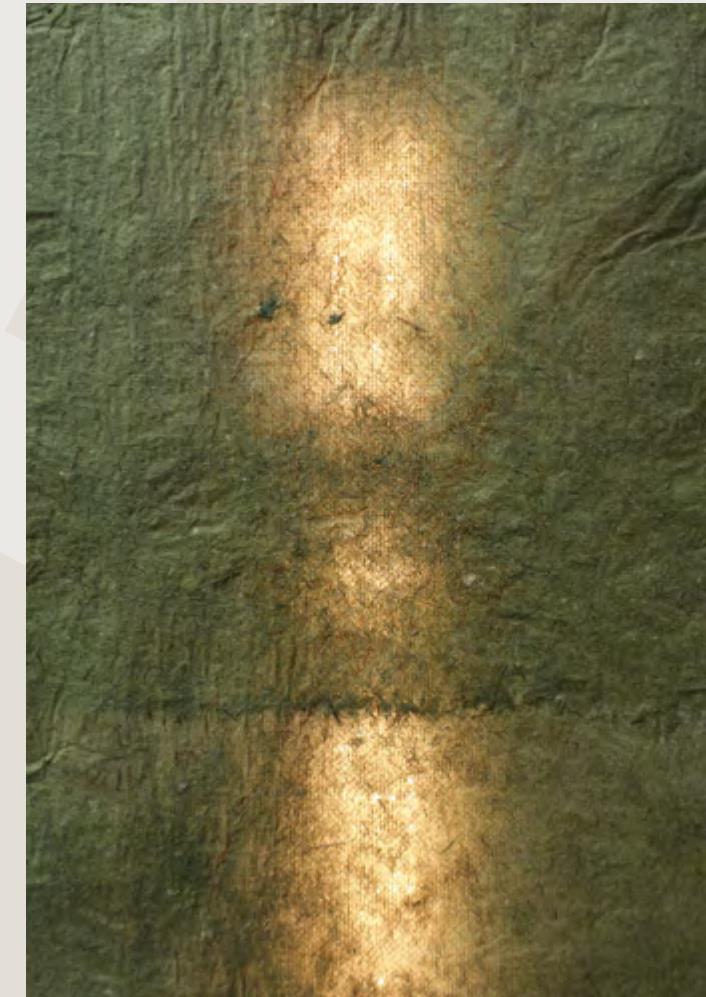
Metabolic Loop



ONSITE GALLERY
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Alyssa Alikpala
Maria Simmons

GUEST CURATED BY **GAS Collective**





“Metabolism is
everywhere and
nowhere.”

— Hannah Landecker

Metabolic Loop

By GAS Collective

Metabolic Loop explores the in-betweenness of natural and artificial environments through the concept of metabolism. Curated by GAS Collective, the two-person exhibition features multi-sensory works by artists Alyssa Alikpala and Maria Simmons. It foregrounds their artistic practices that render largely inaccessible environments such as peatlands, and invisible experiences such as metabolism and fermentation, more accessible, accentuating the tension and balance involved in translating natural phenomena into gallery spaces through technological means.

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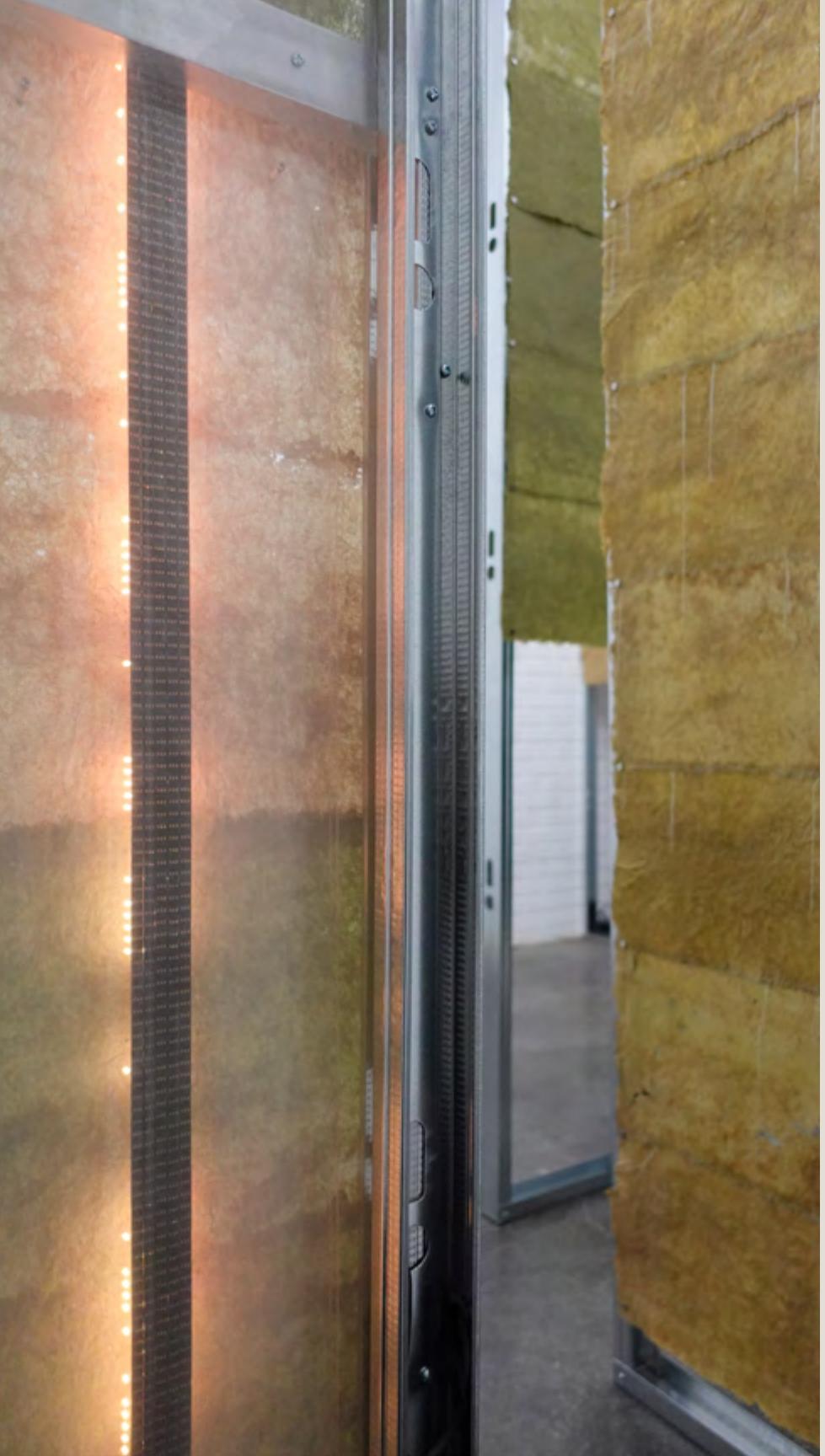
Alyssa Alikpala, *even when a body is at rest*, 2024, paper handmade from grass, steel framing studs, cotton thread, silk voile organza, magnets, repurposed aluminum, repurposed plexiglass, LEDs, arduinos, various wires, cables, and other electronic components. Image courtesy of the artist.

Right:

Maria Simmons, *Membranous Boundaries* (detail), 2025, dimensions variable, ceramic installation. Image by Sasha Azanova.



Metabolism can be understood as a fundamental biochemical process that sustains life. The notion of process is emphasized as the concept involves continuous exchange of matter breaking down (catabolism) and building up (anabolism), maintaining and changing across cycles of organisms, bodies, and environments. Life sciences historian and sociologist Hannah Landecker describes metabolism as “the interface between inside and outside, the space of conversion of one to another, of matter to energy, of substrate to waste, of synthesis and break down. A process-thing, it is always in time.”² Taking this



definition as a departure point, the exhibition investigates the creative potentials of metabolism in gallery spaces and exhibition-making through the works of Alikpala and Simmons.

Both artists' practices are grounded in processes that embody the traits of metabolism. In the book *After Eating: Metabolizing the Arts*, artist and scholar Lindsay Kelley has described how art and metabolism both reflect "the processes of making, unmaking and transforming matter, prioritizing immersion and encounter over distant observation."³ Works of Alikpala and Simmons echo this notion: they attend to organic matters and discarded materials, engage in processes such as papermaking and fermentation to "unmake" them, and transform them into new structures and entities through incorporation of digital approaches.

Simmons' video work *Anoxic Memory* (2023), alongside her hands-on (re)creations of fermentations, bogs, and peatlands, reveals the process of slow decomposition in these landscapes to audiences as a form of metabolism. For Alikpala, her immersive installation *even when a body is at rest* (2024–26) embodies metabolic circulation in the body and its surroundings. It investigates the constant exchanges of energy and the traces that are left behind or carried forward within the body and environments.

Together, the artists bring these omnipresent yet invisible processes into the gallery space, inviting audiences to reflect on their roles in these loops of metabolism. *Metabolic Loop* also reimagines gallery spaces as dynamic,

potentialized environments. Curator Chus Martinez in her *e-flux* article “The Octopus in Love” has asked readers to envision art spaces as organisms that host artworks and visitors instead of merely exhibiting them within fixed guidelines.⁴ This raises curatorial questions such as: What curatorial strategies can be employed to metabolize the gallery space, both literally and metaphorically? How can curators navigate the tension and balance between entangled concepts of exhibition-making nature and technologies, organic and inorganic, change and stability?

The exhibition creates a visual and conceptual interplay where the natural and artificial co-exist, constantly undergoing metabolic transformation. Works of Alikpala and Simmons engage audiences in the ever-expanding cycles of breakdown and renewal, activating *Metabolic Loop* within the gallery and beyond. ■

NOTES

1. Hannah Landecker, “The Metabolism of Philosophy, In Three Parts,” in *Dialectic and Paradox: Configurations of the Third in Modernity*, eds. Berhard Malkmus and Ian Cooper (Peter Lang, 2013), 193–224.
2. Ibid.
3. Lindsay Kelley, *After Eating: Metabolizing the Arts* (The MIT Press, 2023), 22.
4. Chus Martinez, “The Octopus in Love,” *e-flux* Journal 55 (2014).



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Alyssa Alikpala, *even when a body is at rest*, 2024, paper handmade from grass, steel framing studs, cotton thread, silk voile organza, magnets, repurposed aluminum, repurposed plexiglass, LEDs, arduinos, various wires, cables, and other electronic components. Image courtesy of the artist.

Above:

Maria Simmons, *Anoxic Memory*, 2023, video still. Made in collaboration with Ingrid K. Bjørnaa. ■

Curators

GAS is a curatorial collective that explores the notion of balance and tension in ecology, exhibition-making and collaboration. The members, **Gizem Candan** and **Steffi Ng Sin Tung**, came together during their MFA studies in the Criticism and Curatorial Practice program at OCAD University, sharing the identity as first-generation Asian immigrants and women of colour working in the art scene.

instagram.com/thegascollective

Gizem Candan is a curator and visual artist based in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke, with a focus on interdisciplinary practices and living materials. She graduated from OCAD University, where her thesis explored tangible and metaphysical aspects of composting and life inside compost piles.

IG: [@gizemcandanart](https://www.instagram.com/gizemcandanart)

Steffi Ng Sin Tung curates, writes, and takes photos to explore the complexities of the Asian immigration experience. Her curatorial work centers on creating joyful, participatory spaces for cross-cultural exchanges. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she is now based in Toronto/Tkaronto.

IG: [@steffitung](https://www.instagram.com/@steffitung)

Artists

Alyssa Alikpala is an interdisciplinary artist and designer working across sound, sculpture, installation, and ephemeral forms. Reflecting on cycles and traces left in the built and natural environment, her practice explores the ongoing process of becoming. Through material fragments she addresses the site in flux and how an absence can implicate the body. She is currently based in Toronto.

alyssaalikpala.com

Maria Simmons is a Canadian sculpture and installation artist embracing contamination as an act of collaboration. She collects garbage, buries butter, ferments plants, and nurtures fruit flies. She makes art that eats itself. Simmons holds an MFA from the University of Waterloo and a BFA from McMaster University and is currently undertaking a PhD at Concordia University.

maria-simmons.com

Onsite Gallery presents contemporary, Indigenous, and public art and design to advance knowledge creation and stimulate local and international conversations on the urgent issues of our time.

ONSITE GALLERY FREE PUBLIC EVENTS

Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Onsite Gallery's Annual Curatorial Lecture

Andrea Fatona: Making Our Way

100 McCaul Street, MCA 190 (Auditorium),
OCAD University

Saturday, April 11, 2026, 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Curators Steffi Ng & Gizem Candan of GAS Collective In Conversation with *Metabolic Loop* artists Alyssa Alipaka and Maria Simmons

Onsite Gallery

Visit ocadu.ca/onsite and social media channels for up-to-date information on free program of events

ONSITE GALLERY

Becoming (in the light of the miracle)

JAN 21 → MAY 16, 2026

SPECIAL PROJECTS GALLERY

Metabolic Loop

THE DELANEY FAMILY
EMERGING CURATOR'S PRIZE

JAN 21 → MAY 16, 2026

STREET-LEVEL MURAL

The Shared Flight

DIEGO SANTAMARÍA (HIDROCK)
IN COLLABORATION WITH
CULTURANS

DEC 2025 → APR 2026

 199 Richmond St. W.
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5V 0H4
ocadu.ca/onsite
onsite@ocadu.ca
416-977-6000, Ext. 265

 Wednesday
noon to 7 p.m.
Thursday – Saturday
noon to 5 p.m.

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 Onsite Gallery
at OCAD University

ONSITE GALLERY STAFF

Ryan Rice, Executive Director + Curator, Indigenous Art
Lisa Deanne Smith, Senior Curator
Susan Jama, Programs + Community Coordinator
Kesa Smith, Curatorial Assistant
Heather Darling Pigat, Collections Steward

DESIGN: Tom Chaggaris
© Onsite Gallery 2026

COVER: Maria Simmons, *Membranous Boundaries* (detail),
2025. Image by Sasha Azanova. Alyssa Alipaka, even
when a body is at rest, 2024. Image courtesy of the artist.



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