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The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery Delivers Art Workshops with Christie Refugee Welcome Centre

The gallery is piloting a program to nurture young refugees and their families through creativity and engagement with contemporary art



Power Kids workshop participant at The Power Plant, Toronto, 2023. Photo: Hyerim Han

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery is proud to announce its collaboration with Christie Refugee Welcome Centre, enabling a creative welcome to Canada for their residents.

As part of The Power Plant's mission to connect all communities with leading contemporary art, the gallery will host a series of art-making workshops at Christie Refugee Welcome Centre over March break next week (March 13–17, 2023). This week-long itinerary of art activities will culminate in a guided tour of the gallery to see solo exhibitions by Amartey Golding and Brenda Draney, alongside a group exhibition by Ontario-based artists titled *in parallel*.

Located in downtown Toronto, Christie Refugee Welcome Centre (CRWC) has provided emergency shelter and a warm welcome for refugee families from all ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds for more than two decades. Every year, CRWC hosts more than 200 residents, with 50% of them being children. At CRWC, refugees receive the care, support, and assistance they need to pursue their refugee claim and to reconstruct and begin their new lives in Canada.

Nilou Salimi, Power Kids and Outreach Coordinator at The Power Plant and a Toronto-based artist, will lead the series of art-making workshops at the shelter. The workshops will draw on critical themes from The Power Plant's Summer 2022 exhibitions, which featured works by Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian artist

Paulo Nazareth and Iraqi Kurdish artist Hiwa K, who tackle critical issues of migration, displacement, and identity.

“We’re very excited to deliver creative workshops to the children staying at Christie Refugee Welcome Centre over March break and invite them to the gallery for a guided tour. I hope that through art-making and immersing themselves in contemporary art, the participants will find subject matter that resonates with them and an outlet to express themselves.”

—Nilou Salimi, Power Kids and Outreach Coordinator, The Power Plant

“We are so grateful to The Power Plant for partnering with us on March break programming. The refugee children that live in our shelter are unbelievably resilient. They’ve experienced and seen things during their refugee journey that are heartbreaking. Despite the children’s resiliency, we also recognize that they may be dealing with trauma and difficult emotions that they struggle to express. These art workshops will help the children’s creative skills and expression through art.”

— Manny Wong, Executive Director, Christie Refugee Welcome Centre

The Power Plant offers free access to its exhibitions and public programs through its *All Year, All Free* initiative. Families in Toronto can attend Power Kids—free, creative workshops for children aged 7–12 on select Sundays, and schools can participate in our school visits program. Furthermore, the gallery invests in community outreach through creative workshops in partnership with community organizations. Past partners have included the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Making Art Making Change, March of Dimes, and Campfire Circle.

About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery is Canada’s leading public gallery devoted exclusively to contemporary visual art. It is a vital forum for the advanced artistic culture of our time and offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while also engaging equally diverse audiences. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications, and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art. For more information, please visit thepowerplant.org.

About Christie Refugee Welcome Centre

Christie Refugee Welcome Centre (CRWC) operates a 76-bed emergency shelter and offers initial settlement services to refugee claimants from around the world. It also provides an Outreach Program for families after they have moved out of the shelter to provide ongoing settlement, referrals for essential services, and basic needs support. For more information, please visit christiestreetrc.com.

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