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Manuel Mathieu, *Rivière froide 3*, 2017.  
Acrylic, tape, charcoal, chalk, oil sticks on canvas, 72 x 68 in. Courtesy the artist and Sheldon Inwentash, Toronto.

**Welcome back to The Power Plant!**  
The Gallery re-opens its doors to present solo exhibitions by  
Canadian artists Manuel Mathieu, Howie Tsui, and  
Nathan Eugene Carson.

On view from 26 September 2020–3 January 2021, The Power Plant is thrilled to present three new exhibitions that each explore individual and collective histories to consider the political dynamics of place- and identity-making.

The Power Plant also presents numerous virtual and in-person opportunities to complement the exhibitions. Pair a Gallery visit with a workshop, performance, film screening, artist talk, or family activity.

Staff members at The Power Plant and Harbourfront Centre have been working diligently behind the scenes to ensure that our visitors can safely enjoy our Fall 2020 exhibitions. We will be following all COVID-19 guidelines from the federal, provincial, and city public health officials. Please follow [@ThePowerPlantTO](https://twitter.com/ThePowerPlantTO) for updates and more specific information about re-opening and visitor protocols.

Details about the exhibitions and programs are below. For more information, please visit [thepowerplant.org](https://thepowerplant.org) or email [info@thepowerplant.org](mailto:info@thepowerplant.org).

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Manuel Mathieu  
*World Discovered Under Other Skies*

Curator: Amin Alsaden, Nancy McCain and Bill Morneau Curatorial Fellow

Manuel Mathieu is known for vibrant, colourful paintings that seamlessly merge abstraction with figuration. His work reflects on our intertwined lives, in which the boundaries between the past and present or the personal and political are often blurred. Sharing recollections that depict everyday scenes and familial bonds, Mathieu also blends into his canvases an interrogation of the complex history of his birthplace, Haiti. By unearthing the traumas of state violence, he addresses issues that remain as urgent today as they have been throughout Haitian history.

Mathieu's first solo exhibition in Toronto features a constellation of new and past works—including paintings, drawings, and ceramics—shedding light on Haiti's relationship to the world. Positioned at the fault lines of modern political and environmental crises, Haiti epitomizes a global longing for liberation, and grassroots resistance to imperialist and capitalist exploits. At the centre of this exhibition is an examination of the long-lasting repercussions of Haiti's pioneering revolt (launched in 1791) against colonial governments and its quest for self-determination, which have led in more recent decades to embroiling the nation in the intrigues of the Cold War. In *Zapruder/313* (2016), Mathieu borrows from footage capturing the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy to raise questions about American support of Haiti's ruthless dictatorships in pursuit of neo-colonial interests.

Other paintings delve into memories of the Duvalier dictatorships (1957-86), to bring harrowing incidents back into contemporary consciousness. *Fort Dimanche 2* (2017) hints at the atrocities committed at the infamous prison where countless political opponents vanished. Mathieu's work is a reminder that commemorating the tragedies of the past does not fall solely on the shoulders of a nation's local or diasporic communities. Instead, it is part of our collective responsibility. His works suggest a distinct understanding of Haiti's history—a history defined by global currents, which occasionally collide to erupt in frenzied episodes of mass violence. Mathieu, therefore, proposes that the dynamics of the world might manifest themselves in one place, like Haiti. Underlining common links and struggles that unite us despite national borders, he invites us to enter a world discovered under other skies.

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Howie Tsui

*From swelling shadows, we draw our bows*

Curator: Justine Kohleal

The Power Plant presents Vancouver-based artist Howie Tsui's first institutional solo exhibition in Toronto. Growing up between Hong Kong, Lagos, and Thunder Bay, Tsui has described his childhood and adolescence as existing between Chinese and Colonial cultures. In his artworks, he blends classical and contemporary Chinese art, particularly wuxia—a popular martial arts genre advocating for resistance against oppressors that emerged in China during the mid-20th century—with Western popular culture to examine the complexities of the diasporic experience and question official Chinese culture.

*From swelling shadows, we draw our bows* takes as its starting point Tsui's *Retainers of Anarchy* (2017), a five-channel algorithmic animation comprised of hundreds of hand-painted ink drawings of wuxia-style characters. This seminal work was created as a response to the animated scroll *River of Wisdom* (2010), a Chinese government-sanctioned version of a famous Song Dynasty painting. Exhibited at the 2010 Expo Shanghai China, *River of Wisdom's* idyllic marketplace setting negated decades of state-sponsored oppression and civil unrest, particularly recently in Hong Kong. Tsui's animation is set, instead, in the Kowloon Walled City (1898–1994)—a tenement once situated in British-occupied Hong Kong that housed up to 50,000 people in a 2.6-hectare footprint. Rarely patrolled by police, it was known by locals as “the city of darkness.”

The single-channel animation *Parallax Chambers* (2018-ongoing) features many of the same characters as *Retainers of Anarchy*, but emanates a much more claustrophobic feeling. Both animations are accompanied by site-specific frescos in the Clerestory. These automatic drawings are made as the artist's hand moves randomly across walls, conjuring ephemeral, ghost-like images.

Tsui's version of Hong Kong is, at times, nightmarish, full of violence and permeated with a sense of hopelessness as the characters struggle to survive the horrors that befall them. But in the shadows—liminal spaces, like the Kowloon Walled City, or as members of the diaspora shift between cultures—exist the tools to fight against injustice, untruths, and fear.

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Nathan Eugene Carson  
*Cut from the same cloth*

Curator: Laura Demers, TD Curator of Education and Outreach Fellow

In his first solo exhibition, Nathan Eugene Carson presents several interrelated bodies of work. Known for figurative explorations of hybrid creatures, animals, and human figures—both fictional and historical—Carson’s subjects emerge from richly-pigmented surfaces, and shed light on narratives that weave together themes of Black identity and history, personal memories, familial lineages, and charged symbolism.

In the *Negro* series (2015), one of the artist’s most extensive bodies of work to date, Carson draws on his experiences growing up as a racialized youth in a white-dominated world. His works command attention in these current times when historical figures of anti-Black persecution resurface in contemporary attires. Rendered in a muted palette with vigorous strokes, these evocative drawings are punctuated by subtle hints of color: a blue shadow on a young man’s face, the white hood of a Klan member, a ribbon of gold framing a portrait of Martin Luther King Jr. Carson’s expressive mark-making conveys a sense of immediacy echoing both the whirlwind of brutal images that saturate the mediasphere, and the continued urgency of Black struggles.

The *Shine On* series (2016) marks a point of departure from previous works. Abstract portraits float on otherwise blank pages, occupying a space that is imagined or conjured from memory. As the masked jester makes an appearance next to the police officer, these works reveal anecdotes and inner questionings related to identity.

The exhibition also presents a new series, which consists of brightly coloured works heavily layered with paint and collage elements. Carson scratches and rubs away at the pigment, wearing off each surface; it is through the subsequent process of mending and reassembling—a sort of patchwork—that imagery is developed. The sheer eclecticism of Carson’s imagery stems from his interest in depicting events that reveal oppressive societal systems in a state of unravelling. Select artworks make use of colours and symbols associated with various African traditions, which on one hand conjure Carson’s own ancestry, and on the other, reclaim power over depictions of people of African descent—past and current—around the world.

The title of the exhibition, *Cut from the same cloth*, an expression meaning “of a similar nature or kind,” encapsulates the aims of Carson’s works—from a rekindling of lost familial ties, searching for personal connecting threads within the tapestry of global events, to questionings about broader notions of human kinship

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### Fall 2020 Season Programs and Events

This season, The Power Plant presents numerous opportunities to expand on exhibition visits by engaging with thought-provoking perspectives and meaningful insights—both in person and online. All in-person programs will follow COVID-19 protocols as mandated by federal, provincial, and city public health officials.

Learn more about exhibiting artists' processes and works during In Conversation programs featuring Manuel Mathieu with award-winning author Edwidge Danticat, in partnership with the Toronto International Festival of Authors, and Howie Tsui with art historian and curator Rhiannon Vogl. Ground and hold space for yourself in Saturday meditation sessions with Nathan Eugene Carson.

In a continued partnership with Art Toronto, The Power Plant is thrilled to present three online studio visits with established and up-and-coming Canadian artists Brenda Draney, Curtis Talwst Santiago, and Nathan Eugene Carson. Free creative writing workshops, in collaboration with the Toronto Writers' Collective, provide a safe and inclusive setting for both new and experienced writers to explore their written voice as they respond to artworks on view at the Gallery.

Participate in Portfolio Nights and Master Classes, which provide Artist Members the opportunity to discuss their work with our curators, exhibiting artists, and special guests. Post-secondary students and emerging art professionals are invited to make new connections at a student-focused event, in partnership with Alpha Arts at the University of Toronto.

Our Sunday Scene series brings in artists and professionals from across disciplines to offer dynamic perspectives about on-view exhibitions. Fall 2020 speakers include emerging artist Khadijah Morley and Dr. Jing Jing Chang, a specialist in political and social turmoil in postwar Hong Kong. Be sure to visit [fieldtrip.art](https://fieldtrip.art) for engaging programming from The Power Plant and other top arts organizations from across the country.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring children to our widely popular Power Kids programs, each of which begins with a brief, socially-distanced tour of the galleries, followed by a hands-on art making activity.

As a public institution, we are determined to ensure our exhibitions and programs are accessible to all. With the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Gallery continues Expanding Access programs to welcome and better serve visitors who have lived experience with disability. Programs include audio recordings of wall texts, select programs with American Sign Language interpreters, and outreach workshops, among other initiatives.

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About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

The Power Plant 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 that offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while engaging equally diverse audiences in their work. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications, and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art.

Director: Gaëtane Verna

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Providing as many people as possible with access to these programs and events remains the gallery's top priority. The initiative leading these efforts is a renewed partnership with BMO Financial Group, whose support of the ALL YEAR, ALL FREE initiative is vital to expanding and diversifying audiences by eliminating the cost of admission to The Power Plant's exhibition program.

For bios, images, interview requests, or more information please contact:

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