

# RACHEL GRAY

Ottawa, ON

## BIOGRAPHY

Rachel Gray is a Canadian interdisciplinary artist based in Ottawa. She works in drawing, animation, painting, puppetry, podcasting, printmaking and comics. Her projects have been exhibited at City Hall Art Gallery (Ottawa), General Assembly (Ottawa), Blackhouse (Montreal), Tangled Arts + Disability (Toronto), and in the AIRIE Nest Gallery as part of a residency in the Everglades National Park (Florida). In 2020, Rachel completed her first graphic novel *Jess*, sections of which are available online.

Rachel has collaborated extensively with musicians, film makers, and dancers and her animations, writing, illustrations, costumes and puppets have been featured in films and productions including *Witch Woman* (2022), *Today!* (2019), *Dreamscapes* (2024) and *Raccoon Opera* (2024).

Rachel is a former Executive Director of BEING Studio, a community of artists with developmental disabilities and a founding member of Ghost Rooster, a disability arts collective at the intersection of dance, film and visual art.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

My work explores the potential of a creative lens to amplify and extend the act of listening and merge exterior and interior experience. I approach art as a customizable language, drawing on a multitude of mediums to speak into the places everyday language leaves blank. I use large-scale drawing, painting, puppetry, video and animation to create immersive environments that seek to reimagine perception, give weight to non-human experience and explore the potential of non-linear storytelling.

My work grapples with what it means to connect with and depend on other organisms during a time of widespread environmental change, and the potential and limitations of empathy as a path for connection and exploration. A commitment to dialogue and a belief in art as a site for exchange runs through my creative process. This has led me to collaborate with musicians, composers, dancers, choreographers, academics and filmmakers as well as a deep involvement in community art practices.

# CV

## EDUCATION

- 2019 BFA, University of Ottawa, concentration in photography, summa cum laude  
2014 BA, University of King's College and Dalhousie University major in English Literature, first class honours

## SOLO & DUO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *Connections and Alliances*, AIRIE Nest Gallery, The Everglades, USA  
2019 *Imprint*, Blackhouse, Montréal, QC  
2019 *I Came Back and Things Were Different*, City Hall Art Gallery, Ottawa, ON  
2018 *Alidade*, General Assembly, Ottawa, ON

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Contours of the Everglades*, AIRIE Nest Gallery, The Everglades, USA  
2024 *The Marks We Make*, Gallery Annexe, Ottawa, ON  
2023 *New Directions*, Lee Matasi Gallery, Ottawa, ON  
2022 *Holding Pattern*, City Hall Art Gallery, Ottawa, ON  
2017 *Object/Project*, Possible Worlds, Ottawa, 2016 *Voix Jeunes Talents*, Voix Visuelle, Ottawa, ON  
2016 *Ode*, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON

## SCHOLARSHIPS + AWARDS

- 2024 (Ghost Rooster Collective) Public Outreach, Canada Council for the Arts  
2023 Notable Project Winner, Awards for Digital Excellence, Opera America  
2023 Media Arts Production Fund, Digital Arts Resource Center  
2023 (Ghost Rooster Collective) Diversity in the Arts, City of Ottawa  
2023 Pitch Program Prize, Association for Opera in Canada, Azrieli Foundation  
2023 (Ghost Rooster Collective), Concept to Realization, Canada Council for the Arts  
2023 Research and Creation, Canada Council for the Arts  
2022 Research and Creation, Canada Council for the Arts  
2022 Mécénat Musica Prix 3 Femmes  
2021 Research and Creation, Canada Council for the Arts  
2019 Visual Artists Creation Project, Ontario Arts Council  
2018 Exhibition Assistance, Ontario Arts Council  
2018 Jumpstart Mentorship Program, SAW Video

- 2018 Artist Studio Program, City of Ottawa
- 2016 City of Ottawa Youth in Culture Pilot Program grant
- 2016 Paradigm Purchase Prize, University of Ottawa

**VIDEO WORK & ANIMATION**

- 2024 Director, *Dreamscapes*, Ghost Rooster Collective (upcoming)
- 2023 Illustrator, *The Pavillion*, Directed by Pixie Cram
- 2022 Director, *Into the Light: An interpretation of two research papers*, video commissioned by ReVision: The Center for Art and Social Justice, University of Guelph
- 2021 Art Director, Animator and Illustrator, *Witch Woman*, Directed by Pixie Cram
- 2021 Producer, Animator and Script Writer, *Artist Connect Report*, BEING Studio
- 2020 Director, *Interchange*, 9min, HD Video 2019 Director, *BUCKO*, 6min, HD Video

**PERFORMANCES AND SCREENINGS**

- 2024 *Into the Light: an Interpretation of two Research Papers*, Resolutions, DARC, Ottawa, ON
- 2024 *Raccoon Opera*, Salle Bourgie, Montréal, QC
- 2021 *Interchange*, "The Ground We Grow On", 2 Rivers Film Festival, Toronto, ON
- 2020 *Interchange*, "PostScript", Tangled Art + Disability online exhibition and screening, Toronto, ON
- 2019 *Bucko*, "Output" Saw Video Screening, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2016 *Love, Dear Love*, House of Common, Ottawa, ON

**RESIDENCIES**

- 2023 KIAC (Klondike Institute of Art and Culture), Dawson City, Yukon
- 2018-2021 Artist in Residence, Ottawa School of Art, Ottawa
- 2020 AIRIE (Artist in Residence in the Everglades), Everglades National Park, Florida
- 2019 LMCLM (Montréal Contemporary Music Lab), Montréal

**COLLABORATIONS**

- 2022-2024 *Raccoon Opera*, Libretto and Scenography Rachel Gray, composer Rebecca Gray, commissioned by Musique 3 Femmes
- 2024 (Upcoming) *Storytelling and Palliative Care*, interdisciplinary storytelling initiative commissioned by Radical Connections, Ottawa, ON
- 2022 *Imago*, Costume Designer, performance by Kim Farris-Manning, Chamberfest 2022 *What Connects Us*, Co-Creator, Research and Creation

- project directed by Jessie Huggett, Canada Council for the Arts
- 2022** MONAHAN, Community Outreach and Content Collaborator, City of Ottawa
- 2022** Jess, for voice and violin, text and artwork Rachel Gray, composition  
Rebecca Gray, Opera Victoria
- 2019** For Jessie, for voice, piano and projection, text and projection Rachel Gray,  
composition Kim Farris-Manning
- 2019** TODAY!, for puppets, soprano, clarinet, bass clarinet, cello, piano, libretto  
Rachel and Rebecca Gray, puppets Rachel Gray, composition Rebecca Gray
- 2016** Love, Dear Love, for soprano, mezzo-soprano, string quartet, projection,  
and large scale drawings. Text by William Shakespeare, adapted by Rachel  
and Rebecca Gray. Pojection: Mathieu Hallé, large scale drawings: Rachel Gray

## PRESS

- 2023** A Bug's Life, Dave White, CBC radio, Aug 25
- 2022** Ottawa sisters win major prize for opera creators, Ottawa Citizen, Lynn  
Saxberg
- 2021** Rachel Gray: Empathy, Honesty and Visual Storytelling, Nosy Mag, by  
Atticus Gordon (online publication)
- 2021** The problem and possibility of language in Rachel Gray's Interchange, Off  
Center, by Adrienne Scott (online publication)
- 2020** Common Ground Collective: Growing the Arts in Ottawa, Glue Ottawa
- 2019** I Came Back and Things were Different, Exhibition Catalogue with  
interpretive text by Rose Ekins
- 2019** I Came Back and Things were Different, Exhibition feature on Apt613 by  
Livia Belcea (online publication)
- 2018** Alidade, Exhibition feat. on Apt 613 by Dexter McMillan (online publication)

## PUBLISHED WORKS

- 2022** Interchange, Access Aesthetics, PUBLIC 66, edited by Mary Bunch, Julia Chan  
and Sean Lee
- 2020** Jess, Graphic Novel, excerpts available online

## ARTIST TALKS & PANELS

- 2023** KIAC (Klondike Institute of Art and Culture), Artist Talk, 'Insect Worlds', Dawson  
City, Yukon
- 2022** Canada Council for the Arts, presenter, 'Deaf and disability arts gathering',  
online 2021 Bodies in Translation, Moderator, 'Practicing the Social', online

- 2021 Propeller Dance, Workshop, 'Writing Identity', ECP Program, online
- 2021 Partners in Art, Artist Talk, 'Postscript', Online
- 2021 University of Ottawa, Artist Talk, Fine Arts Program: Professional Practice (prof. Andrew Wright), online
- 2020 University of Ottawa, Artist Talk, Fine Arts Program: Expressive Drawing (prof. Jennifer Macklam), online
- 2020 Tangled Art + Disability and Public Access, Artist Talk, online
- 2020 AIRIE Nest Gallery, Artist Talk, The Everglades, Florida, US
- 2020 Arts Network Ottawa, Panelist, 'Engaging Communities Remotely', Ottawa 2019 City Hall Gallery, Artist Talk, 'I Came Back and Things Were Different'
- 2019 Arts Network Ottawa, Panelist, 'Community Arts Gathering: Breaking Barriers to Arts in the Community', Ottawa, ON
- 2019 Ottawa Art Gallery, Panelist, 'Community and Connection: Social Responsibility in the Heritage Sector', Ottawa, ON
- 2019 Heritage Canada, Presenter, 'BEING Studio: (Dis)ability Education and Awareness Campaign', Ottawa, ON
- 2018 Ottawa Art Gallery, Workshop, 'Large Scale Drawing', Ottawa, ON

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**

- 2021-2022 BEING Studio, Executive Director, Ottawa
- 2020-2021 BEING Studio, Artistic Director, Ottawa
- 2020-2022 SPEAK podcast, Producer, Ottawa
- 2022 Ghost Rooster Collective, Co-Founder, Ottawa
- 2018-2020 BEING Studio, Coordinator: Special Projects and Communications, Ottawa
- 2018-2020 Common Ground Collective, Co-Founder, Ottawa
- 2017 H'ART of Ottawa, Director, Ottawa