



**Vanessa Maltese**

*Fact or Fiction*

**June 18 -July 24, 2021**

Artist Talk: Friday July 9, Noon EST

Zoom ID: 845 0978 0905

**COOPER COLE** is pleased to present *Fact or Fiction*, a solo exhibition of the work of Toronto-based artist Vanessa Maltese.

In her practice, Maltese is interested in questions of visual and cognitive perception, specifically *pareidolia*— the psychological phenomenon in which recognizable patterns are identified in unrelated contexts. Each of her new works in *Fact or Fiction*—which include painting, sculpture, and video—deploy varied forms of visual trickery as a way of questioning the relationship between perception and truth.

Maltese's painterly images combine both trompe l'oeil and flat planes of colour, a technique that challenges the desire for illusion associated with the history of painting. Using familiar patterns and shapes, Maltese explores the psychoanalytic connections between pattern recognition and the subconscious. In her *Desk* series, the artist's paintings resemble messy table tops and are framed by table legs mounted to the walls. Her emphatic play between realism and the absurd provides an opening for viewers to understand her inquiries into the concept of truth. In addition, Maltese provides moments that acknowledge the psychological aspect of cognitive perception, for example by reproducing Joseph Jastrow's 'Duck-Rabbit' and Edgar Rubin's 'Vase Illusion', in some cases uncannily appearing to be on taped up sheets of paper.

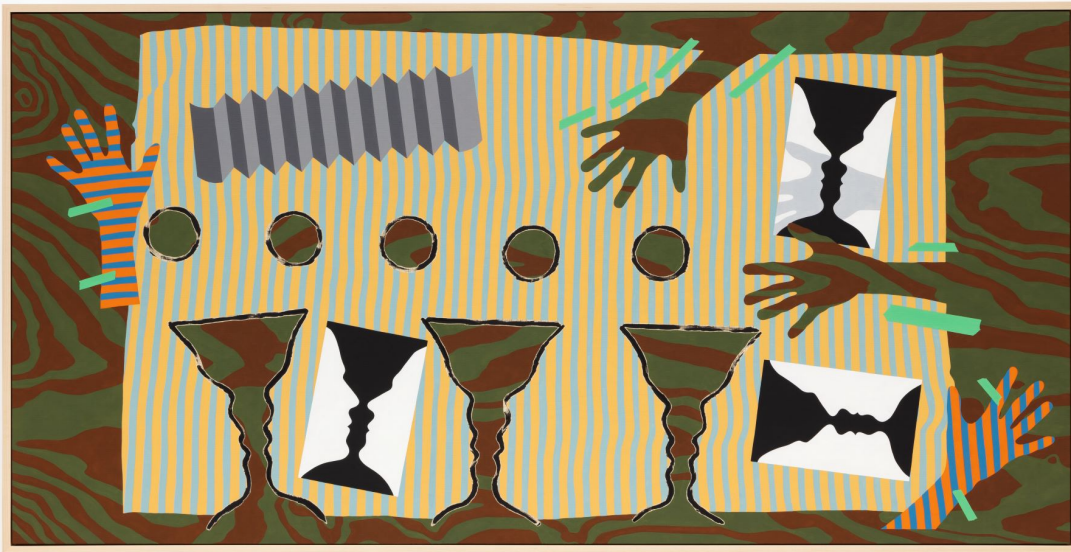
These inquiries extend into Maltese's sculptural practice, in which the artist creates realistic replicas of mundane objects. For *Fact or Fiction*, Maltese has created a series of slightly larger than life-sized house flies made of oxidized silver and adhered them sporadically onto surfaces in the gallery. Referencing the famous fly in Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* (c.1310)—which was considered a symbol of death and plague at the time— Maltese taps into the visceral effects of visual trickery, gesturing to its sensationalizing potential for better or worse.



In her video work *The Sky is Blue*, Maltese switches to sound, exploring the manual creation of everyday sound effects using props unrelated to the visuals they are trying to emulate, also known as Foley exercises. *The Sky is Blue* explores pattern recognition processes to suggest that our brains are not truly objective, as Maltese synchs one sound with two images. Maltese is interested in the plasticity of the brain, and how conflicts of perception have the power to change our methods of thinking, even in common everyday experiences. Her questioning of the relationship between what we see, and what is true, is increasingly resonant in a world where anyone can search for the truth they desire. Maltese suggests that, in fact, nothing is completely knowable.

**Vanessa Maltese** (b. 1988, Toronto, Ontario, Canada) works in painting and sculpture, referencing familiar patterns and shapes to pose questions about visual and cognitive perception. Specifically, through her research on *pareidolia*— the psychological phenomenon in which recognizable patterns are identified in unrelated contexts— and *klecksography*—the process of making images from inkblots— Maltese explores the psychoanalytic connections between pattern recognition and the subconscious. The flatness of her images is meant to challenge the desire for illusion associated with the history of painting, which she playfully acknowledges through the irregular frames she creates.

Maltese received her BFA from OCAD University in 2010. She is the National Winner of the 2012 RBC Canadian Painting Competition and has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions across North America. Most recently, she has exhibited at Mickey Gallery, Chicago (2020); Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); The Power Plant, Toronto (2018); the National Gallery Library and Archives, Ottawa (2017); Carl Louie, London ON (2017); Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York (2016); Greenpoint Terminal Gallery, New York (2016); Art Museum of the University of Toronto, Toronto (2016); Cooper Cole, Toronto (2014); and Erin Stump Projects, Toronto (2012). Her monumental public artwork “*subject to change*” can be seen at RBC’s Waterpark Place in downtown Toronto. Maltese currently lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



**Vanessa Maltese**

*Desk no. 1, 2021*

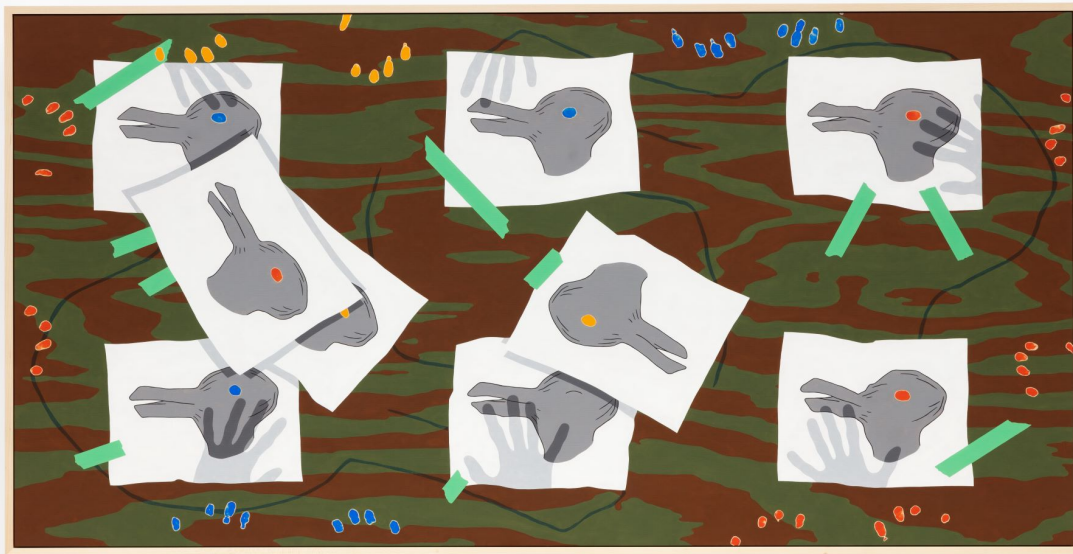
Oil on panel, wood frames

30.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (76.8 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0143







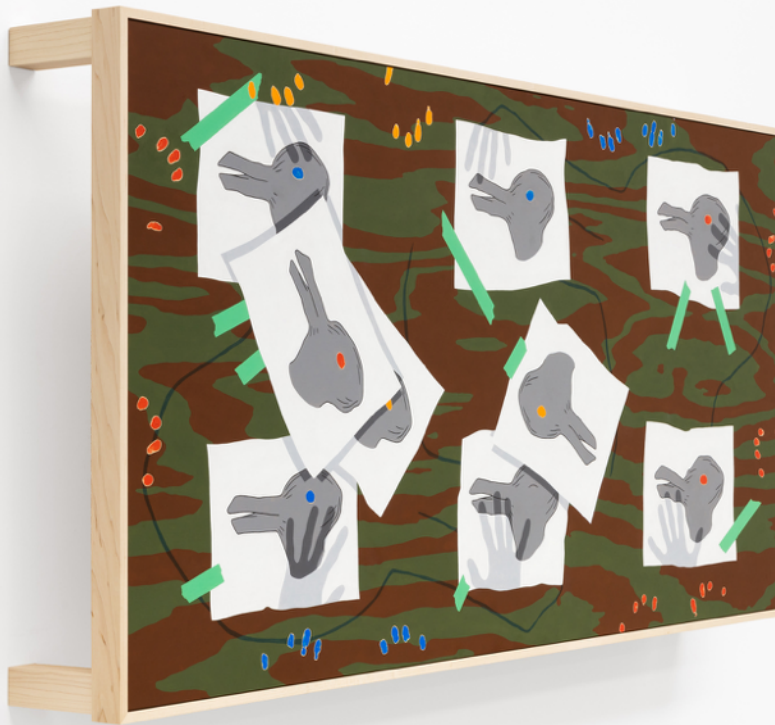
**Vanessa Maltese**

*Desk no. 2, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0144





**Vanessa Maltese**

*Desk no. 3, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0145





**Vanessa Maltese**

*Desk no. 4, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0146









**Vanessa Maltese**

*Desk no. 5, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0147





**Vanessa Maltese**

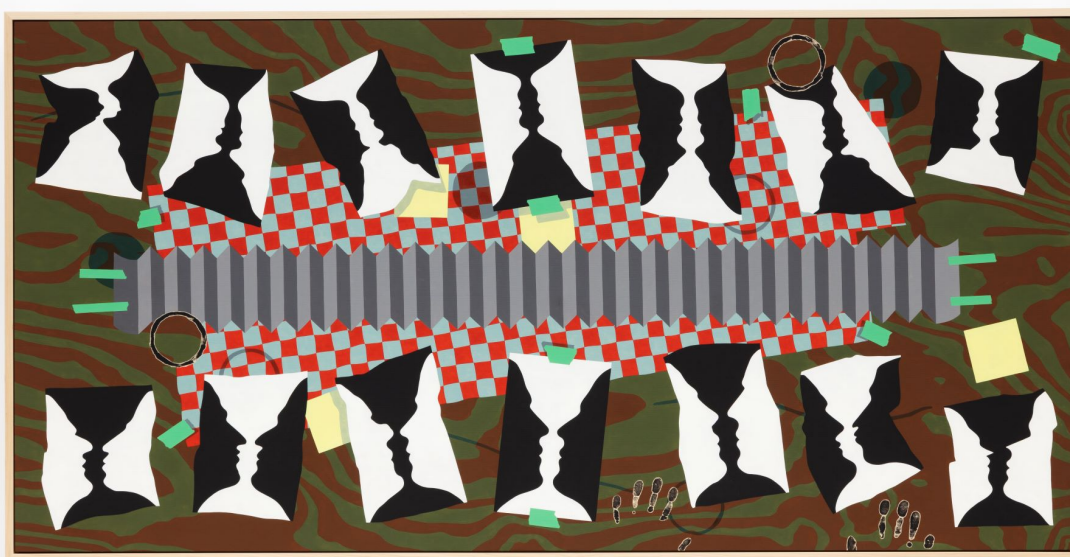
*Desk no. 6, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0148





**Vanessa Maltese**

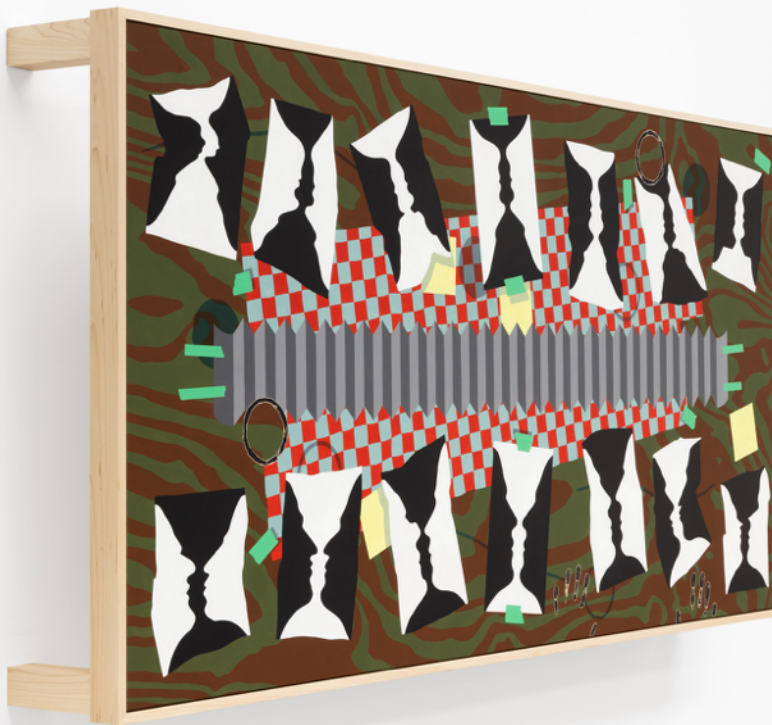
*Desk no. 7, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frames

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0149









**Vanessa Maltese**

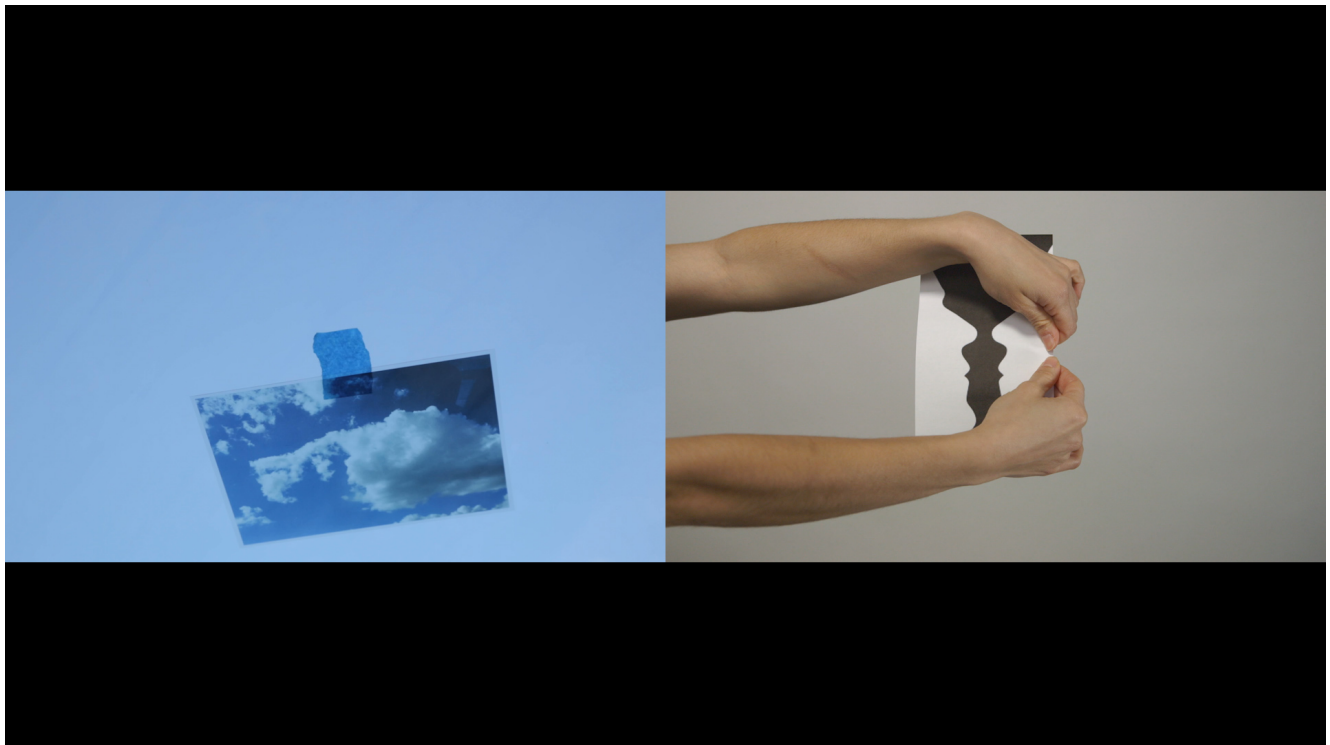
*Desk no. 8, 2021*

Oil on panel, wood frame

31.25 x 60.87 x 7.25 in (79.4 x 154.6 x 18.4 cm)

V.Maltese0150





**Vanessa Maltese**  
*The sky is blue*, 2021  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP  
Single channel video  
5 min. 20 sec.  
V.Maltese0142



**Vanessa Maltese**  
*Trompe l'oeil device*, 2021  
Edition of 28 + 2 AP  
Oxidized silver, enamel  
.7 x .8 x .9 in (1.7 x 2.2 x 2.3 cm)  
V.Maltese0141



**Vanessa Maltese**  
*Bird rock*, 1994-1996  
Paint on rock  
2.5 x 5.5 x 3 in (6.4 x 14 x 7.6 cm)  
V.Maltese0138



















































## **Vanessa Maltese**

Born 1988, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

## **Education**

2010            BFA, OCAD University, Toronto, Canada

## **Solo and Two Person Exhibitions**

2021            *Vanessa Maltese*, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada (*forthcoming*)  
 2020            *A View Without a Room: Michelle Grabner and Vanessa Maltese*,  
 MICKEY Gallery, Chicago, USA  
 2018            *How long is a piece of string?* Night Gallery, Los Angeles, USA  
                  *Same corner, same juys, same line of work*, Canon Project Wall –  
                  Hamilton Artists Inc, Hamilton, Canada  
 2016            *company*, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, USA  
                  *Birds flew down to peck at the painted grapes*, COOPER COLE,  
                  Toronto, Canada  
                  *An edge between appears to be a boundary for some*, Halsey  
                  McKay, East Hampton, USA  
 2015            *Jonathan Gardner and Vanessa Maltese*, Nicelle Beauchene  
                  Gallery, New York, USA  
 2014            *The Compleat Gamester*, COOPER COLE, Toronto, Canada  
 2012            *Two-fold Tally*, Erin Stump Projects, Toronto, Canada

## **Selected Group Exhibits**

2019            *Small Paintings*, Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago, USA  
                  *Heads*, curated by Sky Glabush, McIntosh Gallery, London,  
                  Canada  
                  *self-publishing - Publizieren als Kunst*, curated by Jurgen O. Olbrich,  
                  Kunsttempel, Kassel, Germany  
 2018            *THE ANNOTATED READER*, touring exhibition and publication by  
                  Jonathan P. Watts & Ryan Gander (contributor)  
                  *The Other Side*, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada  
 2017            *THE THING Quarterly and a few other things*, National Gallery Li-  
                  brary and  
                  Archives, curated by Peter Trepanier, Ottawa, Canada  
                  *extra-cultural surprise*, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, USA  
                  *Homestead*, Carl Louie, London, Canada

- 2016 *UAB Project - Uncovering Artists' Books*, Grimsby public Art Gallery, Grimsby, Canada  
*All Right Already*, Artport Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Canada  
 XYZ, Greenpoint Terminal Gallery, New York, USA  
*Showroom*, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Canada
- 2015 *The Great Outdoors*, Garden Avenue, Toronto, Canada
- 2014 *paravent*, 535 First Street, London, Canada
- 2013 *Endless Vacation*, COOPER COLE, Toronto, Canada  
*More Than Two (Let It Make Itself)*, curated by Micah Lexier, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada  
*No Dull Affairs*, Onsite [at] OCAD U, Toronto, Canada
- 2012 *RBC Canadian Painting Competition*, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada

### Art Fairs

- 2017 NADA, Cooper Cole, New York, USA
- 2016 Art Toronto, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada
- 2014 NADA, Miami Beach, USA  
 Material Art Fair, Cooper Cole, Mexico City, Mexico

### Public Art

- 2021 *a bird in the hand*, Eglinton Crosstown LRT: Forest Hill Station, Toronto, ON (*forthcoming*)
- 2015 *subject to change*, RBC Water Park Place, Toronto, ON

### Multiples and Projects

- 2019 *Matching sticks*, Paul + Wendy Projects, Toronto, Canada  
*Pet rock*, The Gattuso Edition published by C Magazine, Toronto, Canada
- 2018 *CLUES*, self-published book multiple with the support of the Glenfiddich AiR Program, Scotland/Canada
- 2017 *ruler - 2 inches / ruler - 7 centimeters / ruler - 3 inches*, Paul + Wendy Projects, Toronto, Canada
- 2016 *86400-00468-86400-00468*, Casey House - Gallery of Patrons Limited Edition, Toronto, Canada

- JAM ON TOAST - Conversations with Katie Lyle and Vanessa Maltese, David Hucal, Hanna Hur and Jennifer Carvalho*, book multiple with Slow Editions, Toronto, Canada
- 2015 *cold read*, artist edition with Paul + Wendy Projects, Toronto, Canada
- Several Observations*, book edition with Slow Editions, Toronto, Canada
- 2014 *Ornament Swatch*, edition with Nothing Else Press, Toronto, Canada

## Bibliography

- 2021 Hudson, Suzanne, *Contemporary Painting - World of Art Series*, Thames & Hudson (*forthcoming*)
- 2019 Hudson, Suzanne. Review - *Vanessa Maltese, Night Gallery*, Artforum, March
- 2016 Syme, Alison. Review - *Vanessa Maltese, COOPER COLE Gallery*, Artforum, October
- Tomic, Milena. *Vanessa Maltese & Nathalie Du Pasquier*, Frieze, October
- James, Leah. *Vanessa Maltese*, Artforum Critic's Pick(online), July
- 2015 Pagliacolo, Elizabeth. *Loud, over-the-top and colourful: Memphis, the Italian post-modernist design movement is back*, the Globe and Mail, July
- Jonathan Gardner and Vanessa Maltese*, Art in America (online), June
- 2014 Vanessa Maltese - Interview by Micah Lexier, Bad Day Magazine, Issue 18
- Clarke, Bill. *Vanessa Maltese, The Compleat Gamester*, Magenta Magazine, Spring
- 2013 Soi, Lucas. *Material Matters: A Roundtable Discussion with Five Promising Toronto Artists*, Magenta Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer
- Clarke, Bill. *Vanessa Maltese: Two-Fold Tally, Erin Stump Projects* - Review, C Magazine, Issue 117, "Translation", Spring

## Awards/Grants

- 2020 Travel grant, Canada Council for the Arts, Canada
- The TOArtist Covid Response, Fund, ON
- 2019 Visual Artist Grant, Toronto Art Council, ON
- 2018 Mid Career Artist Grant, Ontario Arts Council, ON
- 2016 Visual Artist Grant, Toronto Arts Council, Toronto, ON



- 2015 Emerging Artist Grant, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto, ON
- 2015 Merit-based grant, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, USA
- 2014 Visual Artist Project Grant, Canada Council for the Arts, Canada
- Emerging Artist Grant, Ontario Arts Council, ON
- 2012 Emerging Visual Artists Grant, Toronto Arts Council, Toronto, ON
- RBC - National prize, 14th Annual RBC Painting Competition, Toronto, ON
- 2010 OCAD U – Drawing & Painting Medalist Award, Toronto, Canada
- OCAD U – Nora E. Vaughan Award, Toronto, Canada
- OCAD U - Tony Caldwell Scholarship, Toronto, Canada
- OCAD U – Owen W. Wilson Memorial Award, Toronto, Canada
- 2009 OCAD U - Catherine Daigle Award, Toronto, Canada
- OCAD U - Marsh Urquhart Memorial Scholarship, Toronto, Canada

### Artist Talks/Panels

- 2013 *Conversations from the Toronto Art World*, Panel Discussion with Georgia Dickie and Lili Huston-Herterich, mediated by Shari Orenstein, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
- Artist Talk for No Dull Affairs*, Onsite [at] OCAD U, Toronto, Canada
- In Studio: Jeremy Laing & Vanessa Maltese*, initiated by Mercer Union, Toronto, Canada
- Painting Today, Beyond The Canvas*, Panel Discussion with Nicole Collins and Francine Savard, mediated by John Kissick, Varley Art Gallery, Markham, Canada

### Residencies

- 2018 Glenfiddich Artist-in-Residence program, Dufftown, Scotland
- 2015 Vermont Studio Center (merit based-grant), Johnson, USA, January
- 2013 Soi Fischer Thematic Residency with Artie Vierkant, Artscape Gibraltar Point, Toronto, ON

### Collections

National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Library Collection, New York, USA  
Bank of Montreal  
Royal Bank of Canada  
TD Canada Trust  
Private Collections