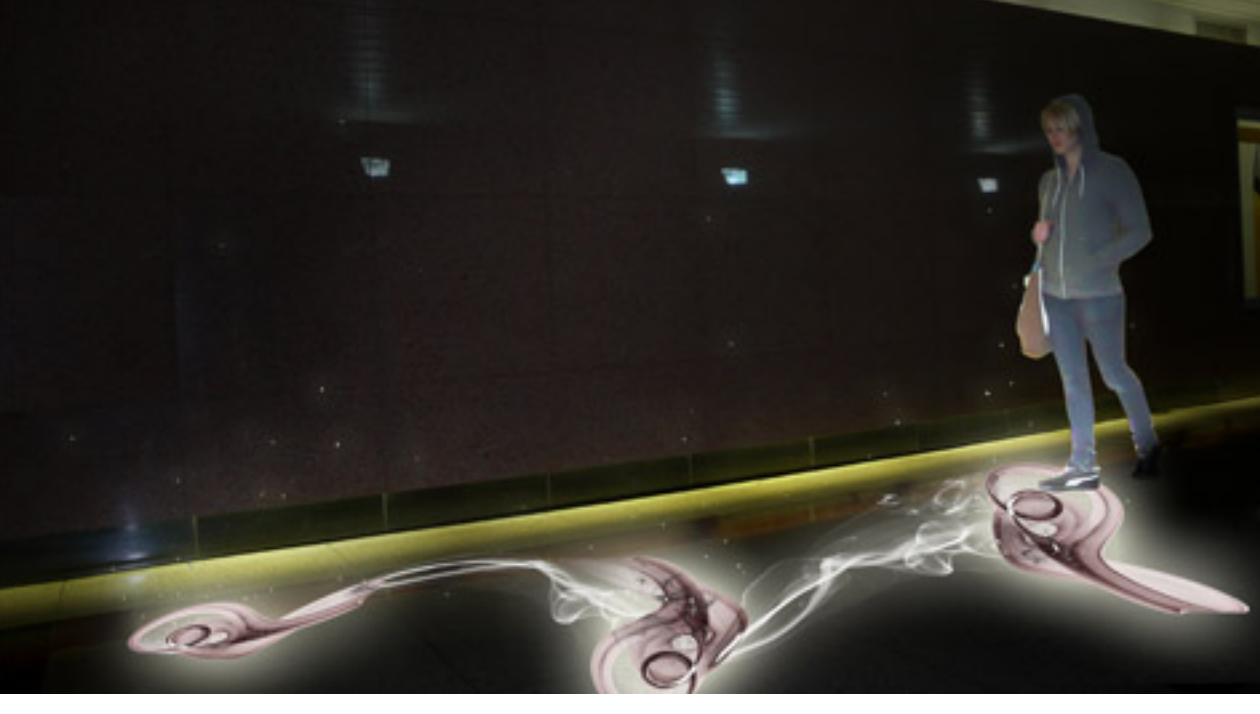


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## A bid to get Torontonians talking to each other

Posted: June 10, 2009, 7:39 PM by Rob Roberts



By Katherine Laidlaw, National Post

A Luminato exhibit opening tomorrow offers the visions of 11 Ontario College of Art and Design students who think they know how to get Torontonians talking to one another.

"We asked students to pick a neighbourhood they felt intimate with and find out what's bothering people," OCAD instructor Job Rutgers said of Icebreakers, a project from a third-year industrial design class and a design consulting firm, Open City Projects.

The group aims to bring the city some playful entertainment and cross communication barriers using music, images and stories:

### Biosphere -- The Path

Using floor tiles that react when stepped on, designer Joshua Sin's idea (pictured above) turns Path destinations into international ones. The ground will emit animal and nature sounds, specific to areas like the Sahara Desert and the Arctic.

### Throw Your Penny -- Financial District

Jenny Soojung proposes a small box encouraging passersby to toss in their spare pennies to save for benches and trees in the Financial District. Once the money is raised, the bench or tree (or garden or sculpture) will appear in the box's place.

### Plong -- Dundas West

Riku Rikala would turn a subway platform into an interactive game of Pong, with beams of light bouncing from one side of the platform to the other as riders jump on the subway platform.

### Timelines -- Trinity Square Park

Aaron Szymanski's project chronicles the lives of the homeless through wall-mounted timeline vines in bright green, orange and purple. The timelines, embedded with audio speakers talking about the people's connections to the park and their lives, also display photographs of their subjects.

### Laundry Exchange -- 222 Elm Place

Mihaela Kandeve unites residents of a culturally and generationally divided condominium by leaving unwanted pieces of clothing on hangars, scrawled with the items' stories, free for the taking.

### Active-eny -- Bayview Village Shopping Centre

By weaving a massive, colourful Persian carpet with floor games like hopscotch, designer Haniyeh Khosravi Fard's project encourages children to play on this shopping-mall centrepiece. Parents would sit nearby on water-filled benches that would certainly encourage strangers to get to know each other better by shifting and swaying into one another as they sit.

### Big Green Heart -- Dundas and St. Patrick

Big Green Heart threatens to give condominium dwellers a green thumb by taking slices of orphaned land around condo buildings and building greenhouses on them. Paul Chang's greenhouse design bears resemblance to the Libeskind-designed ROM Crystal, but the greenhouses would give high-rise residents some much-needed natural surroundings.

### Musical Interlude -- Allan Gardens

Elaine Macaranas would add four instruments, a piano walkway, a fence harp, a set of fountain drums and music bars to Allan Gardens park.

### Becoming Bloorcourt Village

By displaying murals by local students on empty storefront windows and asking pedestrians to discuss their neighbourhood on the accompanying chalkboards, Howard Munroe hopes to collect a wish list of ideas from area residents.

### The Toronto Dragon Project

Mike Cameron spoke to Kensington Market and Chinatown students about what a dragon means to them, as a way to cross cultural boundaries. Art created through workshops would be displayed in public places to get residents chatting about all things dragon.

### Junction Box -- TTC Shelter

Calvin Lee proposes turning a bus shelter into an interactive touchscreen where Bluetooth-bearing residents and riders can access information about local restaurants, events and music, or add their own thoughts, pictures or videos to the screen's database.

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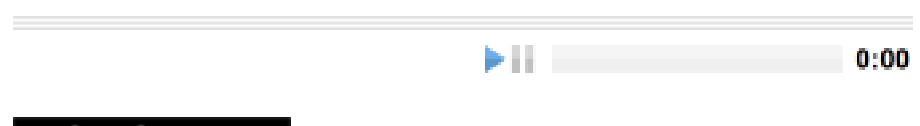
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This week the panelists get an update from city hall about the potential for a strike by indoor/outdoor workers that could leave the city without garbage service as early as the end of next month. They also discuss the impending opening of the new \$5.5 million Simcoe wadedeck bridge on the waterfront, and satiate their desires for TTC conversation with a chat about online services.  
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