EXCHANGE

Xpace Cultural Centre

I've been thinking a lot about the movie *HER* recently. Released in 2013 it most notably stars Joaquin Phoenix and Scarlett Johansson's voice. We watch as Joaquin falls in like and then lust and finally love with an operating system that is only able to respond to him and participate in reciprocal dialogue. What this movie brings to light is something that I am choosing to hold dear as we slog through the rise of AI in our everyday lives—an exchange between me and it is critical. It needs me, but for now I do not need it.

The theme of *Exchange* grounds Xpace's second exhibition cycle of our 2026/2027 programming year. The artists on view in the Window Space, Main Space, and Project Space have all responded to this thematic with traces of technology intertwined, solidifying the role of the artist as omnipresent and important in an ever flowing conversation around AI, digital and physical lexicons, technology, and art.

Jamie Lipson's installation in the Window Space, *Eileen Gray on The Beach*, recreates two of Gray's best-known furniture designs. These sculptures present a venue for exchange, toggling between art, craft, design, and engineering. The lenticular facade of Lipson's personal hockey card collection on view embedded in *Screen* and illuminated by *Tube Lamp* encourages an active exploration of the static forms by the viewer, a sustained dialogue between artist, artwork, and viewer.

On view in the Main Space *CURRENTS,* curated by Liana Mortin, presents a response to the former Electric Gallery (1970-76) in Toronto. The six featured artists in the exhibition tease out the aesthetics of technology to reveal obscured frameworks and

thresholds. Rather than focusing on what technology does, they ask us to consider how our exchange with technology affects us.

The Project Space has been transformed into the second iteration of *The Slow and Unreal Research Lab* by Nehir Ay. An unreal institution, the SURL aims to poke at the ways authority, objectivity, and legitimacy are produced and performed. At Xpace, SURL culminates as a working lab where surveillance, greenscreens, performative office furniture, and biological samples stage official inquiry. Harnessing an exchange of illusions, the installation lingers between what is there and what is not, and begins to picture otherwise.

This thematic asks us consider *Exchange* as a site of building through curiosity, critical discourse, and evaluation. The works on display do not provide answers, but open space for us to question - a practice we cannot cease to have.

– Avalon Mott
Artistic Director