

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
TOUT-MONDE: MARKHAM**

**October 2, 2018**—Elegoa Cultural Productions and the Varley Art Gallery of Markham present the commission of 6 projects to Toronto and GTA filmmakers and visual artists to be presented in an exhibition in the fall of 2019. Deadline for proposals is November 9, 2018.

*“The poetic of the relationship is not a poetic of Magma, of the undifferentiated, or neutral. For there to be relation there, there must be two or more identities or entities that are masters to themselves and that are willing to change by exchanging.”*

—Edouard Glissant

Elegoa Cultural Productions and the Varley Art Gallery of Markham are seeking proposals from GTA based filmmakers and visual artists for their upcoming project **Tout-Monde: Markham**. Presented with a budget of \$5,000, each of the six artists chosen will be commissioned to develop a new film-based work in Markham to be presented as part of an exhibition at the Varley Art Gallery in the fall of 2019.

Inspired by the ideas of Martiniquais poet and philosopher Edouard Glissant (1928-2011), this project seeks to engage with the contemporary debate on the legitimacy of speaking for or representing the other. By investigating an empirical approach to the encounter and the building of relations, we aim to create conditions that will inspire a fair and equal visual expression of our experience of this encounter with/of others.

Glissant conceptualized *le Tout-Monde* (“the whole-world”) in the late 1990s following thorough explorations of the history of slavery and the concepts of *créolisation*, of *chaos-monde* and of intercultural relationships. Edouard Glissant’s oeuvre was primarily influenced by his Caribbean roots in the island of Martinique, colonised by France in 1635 and currently designated as a French overseas department. Although resulting from centuries of colonial history, Glissant extolls what he saw as the chaos of cultures, believing this chaos to be “beautiful, when it conceives elements as equally necessary”<sup>1</sup>. Glissant explains further:

Let us have the imaginary and utopian strength to conceive that this chaos is not the apocalyptic chaos of the ends of the world (...) In the encounter of the world’s cultures we should have the imaginary strength to conceive all cultures as exercising both a unity of action and a liberating diversity.<sup>2</sup>

Glissant’s thinking is grounded in the idea that any relationship—two or more identities or entities that are masters to themselves—relies on “changing by exchanging”. Equally important for him is the assertion of the right to opacity: “I claim the right to opacity for all. I no longer need to “understand” the other, i.e. to reduce him/her to a model of my own transparency, in order to live with this other or build with him/her. The right to opacity would be today the most evident sign of non-barbarism (...)”

With its national record of cultural diversity<sup>3</sup>, Markham offers an interesting Canadian context within which to experiment with Glissant’s principles. While Canada reiterates the mantras of diversity and multiculturalism, the Tout-Monde: Markham project proposes to venture into an alternative path: the practice of the right to opacity and of the poetic of the relationship.

Markham is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, and has a long history of migration and settlement by both Indigenous and settler populations. Located in the Rouge Valley, the area was first inhabited by various Iroquoian-speaking confederacies including the Haudenosaunee, the Huron, the Petun and the Neutral and later the Mississaugas. Since the late 18th century, the town has drawn waves of settlers, starting with British colonisers, German settlers, French Revolutionary Émigrés and United Empire Loyalists. Since WWII, the ongoing economic boom of Markham has attracted exponential waves of immigration from all over the world: Black, Filipino, Latin-American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. According to Statistics Canada, Markham counted close to 330,000 inhabitants in 2016. Of these, 78% self-identify as visible minority, including 45% Chinese, 17.8% South Asian, 2.9% Black, 2.7% Filipino and 2.4% West Asian. Markhamites self-identify their mother tongues as follows: 39% Chinese, 36% English, 11% South Asian and 14% all others. Over 58% of Markham residents are immigrants and 1% non-permanent residents. 77% of all Markham immigrants were born in Asia.

Artists are invited to Markham to engage with community members from cultural backgrounds different from their own, thus stimulating the exploration of various means of perception and interaction with others. Affecting the artist's creative means and processes, this exchange could potentially affect the resulting aesthetic. Ultimately, this project aims to generate a series of personal or collective intercultural encounters between artists and communities, as well as between neighbours, between friends and between strangers. As such, artists, participants, and the public will be inspired to dig alternative paths into the concepts of diversity, multiculturalism and suburban life. Banishing a common language is a proposed, but not mandatory, creative constraint for participating artists. Artists are encouraged to request introductions and networking support.

**Interested artists should submit proposals by date Friday, November 9, 2018, including:**

1. Proposal and Artist Statement (including what draws you to the project and what draws you to Markham in particular). Maximum 2 pages.
2. Curriculum vitae. Maximum 3 pages.
3. Visual support material of past work. Accepted formats: URL links or WeTransfer

**Email applications and/or question to: [tout.monde.markham@elegoa.com](mailto:tout.monde.markham@elegoa.com)**

**Subject Heading:** Tout-Monde: Markham proposal (or question)

**About Elegoa:**

Elegoa Cultural Productions, is a social enterprise for artistic and inter-cultural productions that advances the development of socially-active individuals and communities in Canada and abroad. Elegoa's two main activities consist of commissioning artwork and cultural projects, and service delivery (curating, representation, fundraising, project management, consulting / training).

**About the Varley Art Gallery of Markham:**

The Varley Art Gallery of Markham is a municipal gallery with a vision is to be a cultural hub in the City of Markham. We inspire local and national audiences to engage with art, both historical and contemporary by presenting high quality and well-researched exhibitions and rich, educational and dynamic artistic programs that are relevant to the communities we serve. We also share and celebrate the life and work of F.H. Varley, a founding member of the Group of Seven. We produce and circulate exhibitions that support the work of contemporary artists that are relevant to the communities we serve. Specifically, we support artists from York region and we seek to broaden access to the arts for diverse artists and communities.

### About LIFT

The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) is an artist-run charitable organization dedicated to facilitating excellence in the moving image through media arts education and production resources. LIFT exists to provide support and encouragement for independent filmmakers and artists through affordable access to production, post-production and exhibition equipment; professional and creative development; workshops and courses; commissioning and exhibitions; artist-residencies; and a variety of other services. Founded in 1981 by a small collective, LIFT has since grown to become one of the foremost centres of its kind globally.

**Tout-Monde: Markham** is curated by Catherine Sicot and Anik Glaude for the Varley Art Gallery of Markham with the collaboration of LIFT (Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto). It is part of the multi-layered project *Facing: The Stories of Others* (an exploration of nations from the "outside-in") curated by Catherine Sicot and supported in large part by the New Chapter Program (Canada Council for the Arts). This project is also supported in part through in-kind equipment support from the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto.

<sup>1</sup>. Edouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers (Introduction to a Poetics of the Diverse)* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1996), 71. Quote translated by Zaira Zarza.

<sup>2</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>. Markham is not just composed of a large Chinese minority population; it also includes the highest number of visible minority groups in Canada (78% of the total population). 61.2% of people living in Markham are first generation Immigrants (Census data 2016).

For this project Elegoa Cultural Productions wants to thank Lucile Montigaud for her contribution to research as well as project sponsor and partners: Canada Council for the Arts, Varley Art Gallery of Markham and the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto.



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Art Gallery  
of Markham



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INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS  
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