smARTcities: exploring the digital frontier

curatorial statement

sharon gaum-kuchar, art curator, city of vaughan

Ron Wild's creative digital approach to bridging the divide between ART and SCIENCE is manifested in his playful penchant for collaborating with scientists, mathematicians and medical researchers. Self-described as a "*cross-camp runner*, transporting ideas from one silo of expertise to the other; he not only cross-pollinates original ideas, but also illustrates the lateral thinking explorations that spawned them in the first place."

His quirky digital depictions engage viewing audiences by challenging conventional perceptions of what constitutes art. Ron's intuitive belief that "Science isn't just for Scientists and Art isn't just for Artists" generates a refreshing interpretation of ARTmeetsSCIENCE; and through his digital compositions, provides the quintessential conduit for conveying key Smart City messaging. Importantly, these smARTcity maps – some of which incorporate Vaughan-centric imagery – help us envision the transformative role technology and the 'internet of things' can play in Vaughan's digital evolution.

Ron formulates his own symbolic vocabulary – a dynamic juxtaposition of digital iconography – to create pictorial montages and share innovative perspectives about scientific themes. The cleverly orchestrated layers of visual images in these maps, distil into digestible 'bytes', many of the complex technological concepts associated with enabling Smart Cities in the Digital Age. Hence, Ron becomes the paradigmatic interpreter who creates a portal where "Art can take Science to places and audiences that it couldn't otherwise reach; while through and with Art, research organizations can engage a much broader audience and, in so doing, increase the impact of Science."

Filtered through the artist's innovative creative process, these smARTcity maps merge and animate a broad range of intellectual interests and technological jargon. Ron Wild truly brings a whole new digital shade of meaning to the Renaissance Man.

Smart City | Vaughan

Vaughan is in the midst of a historic transformation. As we continue to move forward, it is important to empower the community to think about the future. Working to become a Smart City is a chance to encourage civic engagement, accelerate economic growth and generate efficiencies. It puts Vaughan on the leading edge of innovation to adapt to a growing community that values sustainability and creativity.

With the population expected to surpass 400,000 in the next 10 years, establishing a Smart City Advisory Task Force is vital to find new ways to adapt to change, improve the citizen experience and enhance our quality of life. This important group will work to advance a culture of knowledge and pursue continuous improvement.

*Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, P.C., Mayor
Chair, Smart City Advisory Task Force*

The City of Vaughan is working towards building a reputation as one of the world's leading Smart Cities by adopting and applying new technologies consistent with priorities defined by citizen collaboration.

Vaughan is a city of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable. The City of Vaughan's vision for a Smart City is one that targets prosperity, inclusivity and resiliency to ensure the long term economic vitality of the city.

vaughan.ca/SmartCity

about the artist

ron wild

Digital Art | Science collaborator Ron Wild hails from western Canada and currently works in downtown Toronto. Although most of his artistic projects are solo efforts, he often collaborates with a variety of different scientists, mathematicians and medical researchers. His eclectic background (Engineering degree, M.B.A. and Information Technology experience) provides a unique foundation for his digital smART Map montages.

His flourishing international exposure includes an extensive exhibition history of solo and group shows spanning across North America and Europe (including **The Artist Project** in Toronto and the **TOP 40** at the Los Angeles Centre for Digital Art); a series of high profile public art installations/activations (**Luminato** and **Nuit Blanche** in Toronto) and Artist-in-Residencies (the **Arctic Circle** in Svalbard, Norway); and his distinctively recognizable work is housed in a growing number of private and corporate collections.

Photograph: courtesy of Alisha Sunderji

artist statement

ron wild

My creative process features vibrant mash-ups remixing up to 100 layers of finely detailed mathematical and scientific digital imagery, delivering visual montages that spark many novel ideas and insights. I have a knack for playfully collaging disparate images into a cohesive whole. I call them 'maps' because they reflect the organic results of the pixel by pixel micro-composing attention I pay to them. My smART Maps generally portray my genuine interests in math + science + engineering + technology + innovation + creativity. In addition, I focus on what is special about the here and now of the early 21st century. I find inspiration in blazing new trails in our Digital Age.

The exhibition centerpiece, **SmartCity Map** with Vaughan-specific references, is based on a mind mapping of a dozen different city facets that can benefit from smart technology approaches. It includes details from other smART Map artworks included in this exhibition, i.e. challenging architects and designers to combine art and science in innovative ways, studying the formation of patterns in nature and the geometrical basis of graphics technology used in movie special effects and computer games.

My **SmartHospital Map** celebrates the construction of the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital. It builds on the medical research conducted at other leading Canadian centres like MaRS in Toronto that inspires my interest in and collaboration with the innovative achievements of mathematical physicists and neuroscientists.

Images: SmartHospital Map (detail), Digital print, 2018 | SmartCity Map (detail), Digital print, 2018 | TensegrityMap (detail), Chromogenic original, 2012 | SmartCity Map (detail), Digital print, 2018 | OncoMap (detail), Chromogenic original, 2012

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exhibition | salon | call for artist submissions

smARTcities EXHIBITION

March 15 – July 6, 2018	Monday-Friday
Vaughan City Hall:	8:30am-6pm
on the slate Atrium Gallery	2141 Major Mackenzie Drive

smARTcities SALON March 22, 2018 | 6:30-9:30pm
Vaughan City Hall: Multi Purpose Room
Public Welcome | Details: *bit.ly/smARTcity*

Join us for a casual discussion and open exchange of ideas.

Opening remarks by Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, P.C., Mayor, City of Vaughan (Chair, Smart City Advisory Task Force). **SALON Panel:** Oren Berkovich (CEO of SingularityU Canada Summit), Lilian Radovac (University of Toronto Professor, Urbanist and Cultural Historian) and Frank Di Palma (Chief Information Officer, City of Vaughan).

CALL FOR DIGITAL ART SUBMISSIONS April 2 – August 3, 2018
Inspired by the digital mapping collages of featured artist Ron Wild, artists of all ages from Vaughan and the GTA are invited to submit your digital interpretations of the transformative role of smARTcities for inclusion in the creation of a MEGAsmARTcities digital map collaboration. Details: **vaughan.ca/SmartCity**

VAUGHAN

vaughan.ca/culture

For more information on this exhibition and other visual art initiatives at the City of Vaughan, contact:
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The smARTcities: exploring the digital frontier project was developed by the Economic Development & Culture Department, City of Vaughan.