



The **HeART** of
Women's Health

At the Intersection of Art and Science

The HeART of Women's Health: At the Intersection of Art and Science

Welcome to the opening of **"The HeART of Women's Health: At the Intersection of Art and Science,"** a CIHR-funded Café Scientifique and art exhibition! This event merges artistic expression with cutting-edge science to provide unique education about women's distinct cardiovascular health experiences and challenges throughout their reproductive lifespan.

We'll begin the afternoon with an interactive educational panel presentation featuring dynamic women's cardiovascular scientists who will share insights on key topics in women's cardiovascular health.

Following the panel, we'll explore how novel scientific knowledge related to these complex topics has been translated into visual art. Each featured scientist has partnered with a featured artist to co-create a powerful visual representation that reflects their research in women's cardiovascular health.

This will culminate in the opening of our art exhibition, where you'll have a chance to mingle, view the featured artwork, and speak directly with the artists and women's cardiovascular scientists about their work and collaborative process.

Additionally, take time to explore the broader collection of art, generously donated by community artists, whose creations have drawn inspiration from the complexities of women's cardiovascular health.

Finally, join us in participating in a live-art experience, a collaborative expression of community and care in women's cardiovascular health.

Featured topics include:

- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and cardiovascular health – Dr. Jamie Benham & Dr. Salma Jadavji
- Infertility, fertility treatment, and cardiovascular health – Dr. Sandra Dumanski & Paityn Savoie
- Parity and cardiovascular health – Nabilah Gulamhusein & Michelle Gordillo
- Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and cardiovascular health – Dr. Kara Nerenberg & Ethel Dalida
- Menopause and cardiovascular health – Dr. Cindy Barha & Keely Bays-Egri
- Gender-affirming hormone therapy and cardiovascular health – Dr. Sofia Ahmed & Kat Simmers

The art exhibition will be open to the public at cSPACE until June 2.

Agenda

1:00 PM – Guest Arrival and Seating

Welcome to the space. Settle in and prepare for an inspiring afternoon

1:15 PM – Interactive Panel Presentation

- Opening Welcome and Blessing
- Insights into the science of women's cardiovascular health
- Q&A with leading cardiovascular scientists
- Special feature: Behind-the-scenes video on the art-science collaboration

2:45 PM – Art Exhibition Opening & Live-Art Experience

- Engage with featured artists and scientists
- Explore the gallery of collaborative artwork
- Participate in the creation of a live community art piece

4:00 PM – Closing of the Event

Thank you for being part of this transformative conversation at the intersection of art and women's cardiovascular science!



DR. CHRISTIANE JOB MCINTOSH

Event Facilitator

Christiane brings a unique blend of science, social inquiry, and systems thinking to her work. With a background in kinesiology—the art and science of human movement—she began her career grounded in the belief that meaningful care starts with understanding how people live, move, and engage with their health. Today, as Director of Strategy and Impact at the Nelson PULSE Centre, Christiane works to bridge medicine, research, and health system transformation. She is passionate about making research more accessible to diverse audiences and ensuring that innovation in precision medicine leads to equitable, real-world impact. She believes innovation happens when we listen deeply, connect across disciplines, and co-create solutions that support the best possible care for everyone.

Message From the Organizer



Welcome to The HeART of Women's Health: At the Intersection of Art and Science

We are thrilled to have you join us for this event that brings together two powerful forces—art and science—to illuminate the complexities of women's cardiovascular health across the reproductive lifespan!

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of preventable death for women in Canada—yet the science that guides prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cardiovascular disease has often failed to reflect the full realities of women's lives. From reproductive experiences to gendered disparities in access and care, women's cardiovascular health is shaped by complex and unique factors that deserve greater attention.

The HeART of Women's Health was born from a simple but powerful belief: that when science and art come together, we can tell more complete, more human stories. By translating scientific knowledge into visual expression, we hope to evoke curiosity, ignite dialogue, and encourage action related to women's cardiovascular health and science.

This event is a celebration of scientific progress, collaboration, and creativity—we want it to serve as a space for community connection, reflection, and learning. It is also a call to action to continue pushing boundaries in how we study, communicate, and advocate for women.

Thank you for joining us today! Your presence here is a step toward reshaping the future of women's cardiovascular health—one that encourages listening more closely, collaborating more deeply, and serving more equitably. As the exhibit opens, we invite you to connect—ask questions and explore the intersections of science, art, and creativity.

Warmly,

Dr. Sandra Dumanski

The HeART of Women's Health: At the Intersection of Art and Science

Featured Artists and Scientists



DR. SALMA JADAVJI

Artist

Salma is an incredible role model in the South Asian community, known for her extensive philanthropic work. She has been a radio host for "Salaam Namaste," a weekly South Asian radio show, for the past 15 years.

Salma has brought extensive awareness to her listeners by featuring experts on a range of mental health topics, showcasing local musicians and artists, and recognizing various community events in Calgary. As a woman of colour, she has broken many traditional gender barriers in both the media and arts worlds, paving the way for many females to follow. Through her artwork, Salma has dedicated her craft and proceeds to bettering the South Asian community at large. She connects with the community on many levels, from her Islamic calligraphy, which conveys messages of peace and serenity, to her depictions of the Rockies and picturesque landscapes around the province. In her leadership roles with the Pakistan Canada Friendship Society, including vice-president and president, Salma has tirelessly advocated for and advanced many other women in various leadership positions. She works in different mediums and enjoys painting diverse subjects.



DR. JAMIE BENHAM

Scientist: Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and cardiovascular health

Dr. Jamie Benham, MD PhD, leads the EMBRACE Women's Health Research Lab at the University of Calgary. As an endocrinologist, Dr. Benham provides comprehensive care to women with endocrine conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and diabetes during pregnancy. Her research focuses on exploring reproductive and cardiometabolic health throughout the life course for people affected by reproductive endocrine disorders.

Featured Artists and Scientists



PAITYN SAVOIE / WÂPOSHPYII

Artist

Paityn is a two-spirit, Métis illustrator currently residing in Treaty No. 7, specializing in printmaking and public art. They graduated from the Alberta University of the Arts with a bachelor's degree in illustration design and a minor in printmaking. Paityn's work is deeply influenced by their Indigenous culture, community, and connection to nature. A significant aspect of their artistry is the inclusion of animals, which hold spiritual significance in their daily life. These representations reflect traditional Métis beliefs and embody Paityn's direct connections with Turtle Island. Their work incorporates elements of Cree Woodland art and delicate Métis floral art, resulting in distinctive and conceptual creations. Their pieces are titled in Cree and English, showcasing a unique synthesis of artistic vision. Beyond creative expression, Paityn is dedicated to community, education, and advocacy. Previous clients include MobSquad, The Calgary Public Library and BUMP Festival.



DR. SANDRA DUMANSKI

Scientist: Infertility, fertility treatment, and cardiovascular health

Dr. Dumanski is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Calgary. As a nephrologist (kidney doctor) and scientist, Dr. Dumanski's research program endeavors to understand the complex relationships between female reproductive health and fertility, fertility treatment, and cardiovascular risk. Dr. Dumanski is the Community Outreach and Engagement Lead for the Libin Cardiovascular Institute Women's Cardiovascular Health Initiative, a valued member of the Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance, and the Central Physician Lead for the 'Wear Red Canada,' campaign, celebrated annually on February 13 to raise awareness of women's heart health.

Featured Artists and Scientists



MICHELLE GORDILLO

Artist

There is an essence of who I am in all of my artwork. I love to creatively bring emotions, ideas, and my own experiences together, bringing them to life. Sharing myself in my creations has never been an option for me; my art comes from the heart. Creativity has taken me down many artistic paths, and I very much enjoy the learning process. Since I can remember, I have been creative, but art had always been a luxury to me. Something I did when I had extra time, energy, and resources. Now, it's a necessity, it grounds me, it's where I find retreat. It's time to Art!



NABILAH GULAMHUSEIN

Trainee Scientist: Parity and cardiovascular health

Nabilah Gulamhusein is a 4th year PhD Candidate in the Department of Medicine at the University of Calgary. Her research program focuses on female-specific events across the lifespan, such as pregnancy, and the relationship with cardiovascular health. She is also the Trainee Lead for the 'Wear Red Canada' team in Calgary – a national campaign aimed at enhancing awareness about women's heart health. Nabilah's research, leadership and advocacy have been recognized by multiple awards, including a Top 30 Under 30 Award from the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation.

Featured Artists and Scientists



ETHEL DALIDA

Artist

Ethel Dalida is a multidisciplinary artist living in Calgary, specializing in painting and illustration. She graduated with honours from the University of Calgary's BFA program in 2015, received the 2010 Art-a-thon Merit

Award from Cardel Homes, and has exhibited throughout Calgary, including at cSPACE, the Nickle, and Contemporary Galleries. In 2023, Ethel received a Therapeutic Arts Practitioner certificate from the Canadian International Institute of Art Therapy and has been facilitating and teaching for LOUD Art Society. Her work explores Asian-Canadian heritage, experiences, and belonging in the community. Often drawing inspiration from flora and fauna, animation, and comics, Ethel produces contemporary work with allegorical and deep meanings. Although her main medium is acrylic, she explores other artistic materials like string, lipstick, nail polish, and hang tags.



DR. KARA NERENBERG

Scientist: Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy and cardiovascular health

Dr. Kara Nerenberg is an Associate Professor and Clinician-Scientist at the University of Calgary, specializing in General Internal Medicine and Obstetric Medicine. Her clinical and research interests focus on the prevention of cardiovascular diseases in women following common reproductive events, particularly hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. Her research is supported by CIHR and Heart & Stroke's Women's Heart and Brain Health Mid-Career Research Chair.

Featured Artists and Scientists



KEELY BAYS-EGRI

Artist

Keely Bays-Egri is an emerging artist living in Calgary, Alberta, originally from Victoria, British Columbia. She believes that the arts have a unique ability to transmit new ways of understanding, seeing, and being, and her passion for art has always embraced its ability to communicate. Keely has worked for over 15 years as an illustrator of educational materials and children's books. In the last two years, she has begun exploring acrylic painting in the genre of Transformational Art, a form that seeks to create change within the viewer. Reflecting her passion for psychology, meditation, personal healing, and spiritual growth, her works are created to support well-being, peace, positivity, and personal growth. Her luminous, vibrant pieces use an intuitive process, rhythmic brushstrokes, and embrace the interplay of value and colour gradients.



DR. CINDY BARHA

Scientist: Menopause and cardiovascular health

Dr. Cindy Barha is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of Calgary and a Canada Research Chair in Neuroscience, Brain Health, and Exercise. Her research combines her expertise in behavioural neuroscience, neuroendocrinology, and exercise neuroscience; with a focus on how physical activity can be tailored to enhance brain and cardiovascular health, particularly in women undergoing hormonal transitions such as pregnancy, menopause, and aging. In addition to her research, Dr. Barha is a committed science communicator and advocate for women's health. She co-organizes public events that aim to dispel myths about menopause and elevate awareness of sex- and gender-specific approaches to brain and cardiovascular health.

Featured Artists and Scientists



KAT SIMMERS

Artist

Kat Simmers is a trans woman, artist, author, and muralist working in comic media and street art to create community connections through visual media. Born and raised in a special kind of nowhere – Bashaw, Alberta (pop. 830)– Simmers experienced firsthand the intersection of queer and rural life. Co-Author & illustrator of the graphic novel series “Pass Me By”, her work connects communities to unseen parts of their histories and challenges the public to see beyond the everyday. Her murals and graphic novels engage the public in conversations about queer identity, mental health and what happens to the stories you never tell. As a queer/trans artist living with Bi-polar disorder (type 1) it’s Simmers’ mission to create powerful, knowledgeable interpretations of these and other experiences, which so many go through without representation. Her public works populate the Treaty 6 & 7 region in Mohkinstsis (the city of Calgary), the city of Red Deer, the town of Bashaw, and the walls of the international mural festival BUMP in 2019, 2020 and 2024.



DR. SOFIA AHMED

Scientist: Gender-affirming hormone therapy and cardiovascular health

Dr. Sofia Ahmed is a Professor and clinician-scientist in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and the Academic Lead – Women’s Health Research for the Women and Children’s Health Research Institute at the University of Alberta. She holds the University of Alberta Chair in Sex and Gender and her research focuses on how sex and gender affect kidney and cardiovascular health. Dr. Ahmed chairs several boards and councils, including the CIHR Institute of Gender and Health Advisory Board, and serves as the President of the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences. As the recipient of the 2022 Hypertension Canada Senior Investigator Award, the 2021 Canadian Medical Association May Cohen Award for Women Mentors and a 2020 American Society of Nephrology Distinguished Mentor Award, Dr. Ahmed is strong proponent of the importance of mentorship and fostering excellence in the next generation of researchers.



Thank you!

With sincere appreciation, we would like to acknowledge the individuals and organizations, whose expertise, support, and collaboration helped bring “The HeART of Women’s Health: At the Intersection of Art and Science” to life!

- Our featured artists: Dr Salma Javavji, Paityn Savoie, Michelle Gordillo, Ethel Dalida, Keely Bays-Egri, and Kat Simmers
- Our featured scientists: Dr. Jamie Benham, Dr. Sandra Dumanski, Nabilah Gulamhusein, Dr. Kara Nerenberg, Dr. Cindy Barha, Dr. Sofia Ahmed
- Our live-art artist facilitators: Fiona Couillard, Glenn Cameron, Jane Evans, and Natalie Vasil
- Our incredible event facilitator: Dr. Christiane Job McIntosh
- Our Traditional Knowledge Keeper: Elder Eva Manyhorses, Tsuut’ina Nation
- Our community artists: Cristina Wang, Kira Fowell, Asiya Iskander, Candice Payne, Jasman Kaur, Tara Vahab, Day Pajarillo, and many more
- The core planning and organizing committee: Dr. Sandra Dumanski, Neha Rao, Jenna Borrelli, Dr. Christiane Job McIntosh, Fiona Couillard, Dr. Sofia Ahmed, Dr. Kara Nerenberg, Dr. Jamie Benham, Dr. Cindy Barha, Nabilah Gulamhusein, Elaha Niazi, Jacqui Esler, Heidi Okada, Danaka Porter, Dr. Lauren Drogos, and Dr. Anmol Shahid
- The Libin Women’s Cardiovascular Health Initiative and key contributors: Christina Faulkner, Dawn Smith, and Stacey Brown
- The Nephrology Research Group and key contributors: Patti Wiebe, Sarah Gil, and Janice MacKay
- Sarah Blayney, Jean Parker, Erica Welsh, Mackenzie Gutierrez, Nadia Hussein and the Women’s Center of Calgary, including the incredible women who participated in our art creation class and exhibition: Reznin, Tizita, Olena, Erica, Ambur, Rayne, and many more
- Our event volunteers: CreeAnn Phillips, Seonaid Phillips, Khaleeya Gulamhusein, and many more
- The ARTS Society and STEM Art Hub at the University of Calgary
- Erin, Iris, Kate and the entire cSPACE Event staff
- Britton Ledingham and iEvolve Media
- Simply Elegant Catering
- Jeannine Turnbull and the Campbell Cardiac Translational Laboratory
- Stacey Dumanski and the incredible team at Global Water Futures and the Virtual Water Gallery (virtualwatergallery.ca), whose incredible commitment to the translation of science through art served as an inspiration for this event!

And many, many others who supported this event through their time, expertise, and dedication.



Sponsors

