

# Athena Cooper

VISUAL ARTIST | CALGARY, AB

Athena Cooper is an award-winning, self-taught acrylic painter. Her landscape, portraiture and still life work blend depictions of the everyday with the fractured light and intense colour inspired by stained glass. Born with the rare genetic disorder, Osteogenesis Imperfecta (aka 'brittle bone disease'), and a wheelchair user since the age of six, Athena's work seeks to challenge the traditional disabled narrative that focuses on medicalization or inspiration. Instead, she seeks to explore what it means to live an ordinary disabled life.

## EXHIBITION WORK SOLO

**2024**     *The Extraordinary, Ordinary Nature of Interabled Love*, cSPACE Marda Loop, Calgary, AB

**2019**     *Find Your Heart(h)*, cSPACE, Calgary, AB

## GROUP (SELECTED)

**2023**     *Winter Exhibition*, Calgary Chapter of the Federation of Canadian Artists, Calgary, AB

**2022**     *Audacity*, Roaring Artist Gallery, Katy, TX

**2021**     *Ten Squared 2021*, Federation of Canadian Artists, Vancouver, BC

*What Disability?!*, Outsiders & Others, Vancouver, BC

*All the Lights*, treat gallery, New York, NY

**2020**     *Love Letter to Calgary*, The Pumphouse Theatre, Calgary, AB

*MASKED: Self Portraits of a Pandemic*, The Ikouii Creative, Atlanta, GA

*EVERYBODY*, The Pumphouse Theatre, Calgary, AB

**2017**     *Can You See Us Vancouver?*, Kickstart Disability Art & Culture, Vancouver, BC

## CONTACT

### Email

[contact@athenacooper.ca](mailto:contact@athenacooper.ca)

### Website

[www.athenacooper.ca](http://www.athenacooper.ca)

### Instagram

[@athenacreative](https://www.instagram.com/athenacreative)

## EDUCATION

**Canadian International  
Institute of Art Therapy  
Victoria, BC | 2022**  
*Therapeutic Arts Master  
Practitioner Program*

**Emily Carr University of Art &  
Design, Vancouver, BC | 2013**  
*Continuing Studies,  
Illustration for Picture Books*

**Ai the Art Institute of  
Vancouver-Burnaby | 2004**  
*Diploma, Computer  
Animation*

**Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, BC | 1995**  
*BA in Communications  
("media studies")*

## AWARDS

**2023** Won Lee Prize, National accessArts Centre, Toronto, ON

## GRANTS

**2023** Explore and Create Program, Canada Council for the Arts for the concept to realization phase of the art exhibit, *"The Extraordinary, Ordinary Nature of Interabled Love"*

**2022** Explore and Create Program, Canada Council for the Arts for the research phase of *"The Extraordinary, Ordinary Nature of Interabled Love"*

Project Grant Program - Individuals and Collectives, Calgary Arts Development and the City of Calgary for the research phase of *"The Extraordinary, Ordinary Nature of Interabled Love"*

## MEDIA & PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED)

Terri Campbell, Interview, CBC Radio One Calgary "The Homestretch", Calgary, AB, August 7, 2024

Jiaqi Su, ["Finding the ordinary in the extraordinary"](#), Storytelling Project, Calgary Arts Development, July 30, 2024

["Calgary artist wins inaugural Won Lee Prize"](#), Calgary Herald, October 11, 2023.

Lindsay, Aleatha. "Inside Their Studio: Deaf & Disabled Artists Reshaping the Arts", The Ikouii Creative, 2022

Correia, Cory. ["Can You See Us Vancouver? Art exhibition presented for people using wheelchairs"](#), CBC News, 2017

## AFFILIATIONS

**2022-2024** Member, CARFAC Alberta

**2021-2024** Active Status Member, Federation of Canadian Artists

**2017-2024** Member, Kickstart Disability Arts & Culture

**2016-2017** Board Member, Kickstart Disability Arts & Culture