

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

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Website

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