



I Love You. ILY2.



Amanda Ross-Ho, Untitled Figure (THE CENTER OF IT ALL), 2023, at Lloyd Center Mall Ice Rink, August 24, 2023, Performance still. Courtesy the artist and ILY2, Portland. Photograph by Simone Fischer.

By JONATHAN OROZCO March 18, 2025

On her way to the inaugural exhibition at ILY2's project space in the Lloyd Center Mall in Portland, Amanda Ross-Ho got lost. But what she found became integral to "ICE TIME," her 2023 exhibition at the gallery: an ice rink.

"I have this encounter with the skating rink, and I'm like, what the hell is this?" she said. "I'm a former figure skater, so I have this psychic kind of encounter with this thing."

It was serendipitous.

The rink became a stage for Ross-Ho. She put on a pair of ice skates and let childhood muscle memory guide her as she spun circles in front of a crowd, dressing in a skeleton-patterned skin-colored costume.

These kinds of encounters are what ILY2 aims to foster in their programming. Pronounced “I Love You Too”, this organization is a residency, exhibition, and youth center all in one, with three different locations.



Father Fannie, ILY2 TOO, installation view. Courtesy the artist and ILY2, Portland. Photograph by Portland Art Documentation.

A Brief History

ILY2 is intentionally a feminist project. Even glancing at their represented artists - they're all women.

Allie Furlotti founded ILY2 in 2020, hosting residencies and performances in downtown Portland, a particularly challenging time at the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Jeanine Jablonski, who ran her own gallery called Fourteen30 Contemporary (also in Portland), became involved in 2022, consulting with Furlotti on ILY2.

There are three total locations for the project - ILY2, ILY2 Too, and I♥Youth2. They have similar names, but they each perform different functions in the city.

“Allie's vision in beginning ILY2 was to continue her work giving resources directly to artists - space, ideating, funding for a project,” Jablonski said in an email exchange. “ ILY2 Too, our sister space within Lloyd Center Mall, operates in the same manner as the original location - with artist residencies and exhibitions. Lloyd Center is also home to ILYouth Too, the youth program Allie and I had planned for years and which began last summer.”

Director of I♥Youth2 daelyn lambi (who intentionally has their name in all lowercase) aims is to teach with intention.

“A lot of visual art programming for young people is made up of one-size-fits all classes where each kid walks away with a different version of the same project, which goes on the fridge for a week, then is stuffed in a box somewhere and never considered again, and it really bums me out,” lambi said. “[B]ut at ILYouth2 we are less focused on the physical projects they leave the space with, and more interested in fostering critical thinkers, with a full creative toolbox, who care equally for the arts and for their peers. For me it’s really about holding space for inquiry and imagination, and building a program that honors the autonomy and creativity of young people.”



Sara Rahmanian, 2024, installation view, NADA New York. Courtesy the artist and ILY2, Portland. Photograph by Mikhail Mishin.

Eyes Wide Open

Sara Rahmanian found herself in a precarious situation in the mid 2010s as a result of political turmoil. Born in Tehran, Rahmanian was raised in an artistic family. At age three, Rahmanian won a UNESCO prize in painting - and her family took notice and supported her in pursuing art.

After studying at the Art University of Tehran, she decided to apply to graduate programs in the United States. The School Art Institute of Chicago admitted her, but as a result of the 2017 Muslim Ban, she was later rejected as a student.

That didn't stop her, and Rahmanian later gained admission to Yale in 2019 - right at the cusp of Covid. It was a tumultuous and isolating time for her, and that became reflected in her art.

Rahmanian has had two solo-exhibitions at ILY2: one at NADA New York 2024, and her most recent at the start of this year.

Her work blends personal memory and her experiences, literally letting audiences see right through her eyes.

In her NADA show, every single painting is quite literally framed by the artist's eye. In some works, we stand as if we're directly seeing what the artist is seeing through an eye, with eyelids setting the stage. One such painting, titled "Behind My Eyelids" (2024), literally plays with this theme. The artist does not allow us to see anything at all. It's not totally pitch black, it is a warm dark purple with flecks of white, almost like looking at the stars in the night sky. Just close your eyes for a few seconds - that's the painting.

Rahmanian recently moved from the United States and is now living in Canada.



*Melanie Flood and Matt Morris, Designing Women, installation view. Courtesy the artists and ILY2, Portland.
Photograph by Mario Gallucci.*

20,000 and More Bows

Melanie Flood is a Portland photographer with a background in photojournalism.

“I’ve been taking photographs for a really long time, since I was like a kid in elementary school and I didn’t really consider it my art practice,” Flood said. “It was just like something that I did. And then I went to art school and that really changed what I thought about photography.”

Studying at the School of Visual Arts in New York in the 90s, Flood saw an emphasis on fashion and advertising photography, in a program that was heavily male. Never really feeling like she fit in, she created her own path that led back to art-focused photography.

After working for zingmagazine and The New York Observer, Flood ran an artist-run space in her New York apartment, later moving to Portland in 2010.

Flood’s work is strikingly formalist with a strong sense of tactility. Often, her photographs are within lavender frames, and depict sensuous forms.

In early 2024, Flood had a two-person show with Chicago artist Matt Morris, who created poles and a scent specifically for the exhibition.

For their show, Flood, created texturally interesting compositions, in the same vein as Nan Goldin and sculptor Kiah Celeste, with warm colors. It’s proudly feminine.

The exhibition had over 20,000 bows glued to the wall, acting as a backdrop and wallpaper for the two artist’s exhibition.

“It is quite different just having these large, luscious oil paintings, and then having my more cold, flat images,” Flood said. “Matt, within some of his paintings, was using these appliques and little sequined things that I photographed. There was a nice nod to each other’s work in that way. I don’t really know how it came to be, but we landed on pink bows. I think it ended up being like, 22 or 23,000 miniature pink bows in the gallery that we then hung our work on top of and that felt like the linchpin between our practices of just something that felt really feminine but also really grotesque in its obsessiveness.”



Winter Break Camp, I♥Youth2, 2024. Courtesy ILY2, Portland.

Someday Soon

In November 2024, Rosie Motley, the founder of Someday Gallery in New York City, sent out an email announcing its closure after only three years. Though the space only had 18 exhibitions, it showed among the most significant figures in the art world, like Rachel Rossin, Adam Khalil of the New Red Order, Rachele Dang and Carly Mandel.

Motley was announced as ILY2's New York Director on November 27, a day after Someday announced its closure.

Both Motley and Jablonski co-curated "SOFT PINK HARD LINE", a group show featuring artists like Ross-Ho and Bonnie Lucas, who are both ILY2 represented artists, and Catherine Telford Keogh, who was previously in an exhibition at Someday Gallery.

The show runs until April 19. **WM**