



# Project Space

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Alison Postma

## **Tender to the Touch**

May 10 - July 5, 2025

To encounter the spaces created by Toronto artist Alison Postma is to slip sideways into a softened near-future, where external reality wanes, and imagination is illuminated. The quality of fascination aroused is akin to visiting a friend's home for the first time—where everyday objects are suddenly plim with speculation and inner tensions between formality and familiarity take over. Though Postma's scope of work is as broad as can be imagined by a photographer, designer, video artist, and classically-trained woodworker, *Tender to the Touch* emerges from a dreamer in one mouthwatering bite on the importance of the abstract.

Postma's craft is grounded in a strong conceptual foundation, shaped as much by open-ended inquiry as by a resistance to fixed conclusions. *Tender to the Touch* invites dreamers into an interior where meaning is felt more than stated—where the textures of ambiguity settle into the body so warmly it becomes its own kind of clarity.

"I think trying to find direct words would lose the point. I intend to spiral towards the point without arriving. I hope the view surrounding the point gives a clear picture."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alison Postma

Each piece and each moment found within reach out to the dreamer and offer us something to lean into, to carry on the skin, by the eyes, in the gut. In this way, they offer an intimate unfolding—not a call for answers, but an invitation to linger, to attend, to dwell in the in-between, where imagination brushes against tactility, and understanding rises slowly, like breath. That spiraling approach pushes back against the way contemporary culture often flattens complexity in favor of quick comprehension.

“The things we make show the world what we are. The furniture of a period is a sure index to the ideals and aspirations of that period – or to the lack of them.”<sup>2</sup>

It is a salve in these times, to visit work that holds space for the power of individual thought—those moments of wandering contemplation that resist easy categorization. By refusing to arrive at “the point,” Postma creates space for the vital act of seeing differently, of loosening fixed meanings in favor of expansive perception. Drifting... questioning... dreaming... are restoration processes for self-knowledge. When we are demanded speed, conformity, and constant reaction, self-knowledge serves as an anchor – internal reference points in a landscape that is lacking stability.

Jocular in some of their forms, it only takes interacting with these pieces to find they are generous with opportunities for constructive contemplation. You’ll find each piece can open independent portals into this inner terrain: the mirror reflecting not just the self, but our choices on what is hidden or revealed; the video suspending a moment in time to be lost in illusion; the chair engaging the body, asking us to feel rather than judge; photographs that sway with familiarity and oddity.

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<sup>2</sup> Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915), teacher, Anarchist, founder of the Roycroft craft community, a meeting site for “radicals, freethinkers, and utopianists”.

How does imaginative work hold a shape?

Conceptual depth does not stand apart from the material world—it can be fostered by it, shaped through process, repetition, skilled hands, hands that are intimate with material.

I attended Sheridan College's Furniture Craft and Design program for some of the same years as Alison: years that felt endless in possibility, but were also a striking immersion into a world of structural and mechanical analysis. It was a pleasure to have watched Alison move through this distinct desire to honour intuition with a foundational knowledge that woodworking and digital media call for many such procedural requirements. It's one thing to dream of *knob chair* on a Sunday, and a completely separate accomplishment to spend Monday through Saturday turning all 250 of *knob chair*'s knobs by hand on a lathe. In this way, the technical and the aesthetic are inseparable. What we are touched by as fellow craftspeople is just that: Alison's bridging the knowledge of the machinist who respects their craft and the direction of the artist who trusts the image that came from a dream.

The spanning nature of Postma's works track with their undulant physicality, offering cues devoted to each part of the body. Here, implementing our humanness, equal weight is given to the act of making, the visual storytelling, and the dialogues that emerge between the work and the brain, the gut, the skin, the bum, and the back.

Surrealist creativity is combined with sculptural sensitivities, offering pieces that are grounded by touch, structure, and in the undeniable sensuality of interaction. And in that grounding lies their generosity. They meet us where we are—then gently nudge us somewhere else.

“The chair is not passive, you sit in it and it touches you back.”<sup>3</sup>

“All that you touch  
you Change.

All that you Change  
Changes you.”<sup>4</sup>

- Flora May

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<sup>3</sup> Alison Postma

<sup>4</sup> Octavia E. Butler (1947-2006) in Parable of the Sower