

PROJECT SPACE



In my end is my beginning

Andria Keen

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In my end is my beginning is a dynamic meditation on movement, meaning-making and becoming: a slow curving turn that carries the viewer back to where they started, but altered, displaced, and made newly aware of their own participation in the act of seeing. In this interactive installation in the Project Space at Xspace Cultural Centre, Andria Keen asks us to inhabit time and space not as a defined and constrained set of parameters, but as a fold, a loop, and a re-turn; as an invitation to encounter ourselves, matter, and the dynamic passage of time and the meanings we give to our collective becomings as entangled rather than separate.

At the heart of the exhibition are the hand-made oloid sculptures in various scales, with their delicate attendant imperfections and irregularities signalling their human and material origins. These non-orientable forms are akin to a Möbius strip – a mathematically paradoxical surface created by giving a band a half-twist and joining its ends, producing a shape that has only one side, one continuous edge, and no stable inside or outside. Oloids are distinct in their rolling, continuous motion, inviting curiosity and play through their tactility. They have no fixed top or bottom, no clear beginning or end. When touched, pushed, or turned, they seem to carry the viewer

along with them, dissolving the boundary between object and observer. The oloid refuses stability; instead, it performs perpetual transformation. Each rotation offers a slightly different face, a shifted perspective, a new relation between surface, depth, and orientation. Through this dynamism, Keen's work becomes a quiet pedagogy of perception, movement and temporality. As one interacts with the oloid shapes, one learns through touch and movement, that what we know is always partial, situated, and incomplete.

My first encounter with these oloid shapes did not occur in a gallery but in a Parkdale coffee shop, where Keen brought them as a way of opening a conversation between our distinct but interconnected realms of work. Amid the familiar rhythms of urban life, their presence felt both strangely out of place and uncannily at home. Solid and potentially animate, they seemed to slow time itself as one engaged deeper with their forms and their textures. In that moment I was unexpectedly reminded of dinosaur eggs: rounded, weighty, and charged with dormant life, tethered to an almost unfathomable deep history. In contending with their stillness, I was also reminded of the famed pitch drop experiment: a material that looks solid to the human eye but, across decades, drips and flows. This too embodies a quiet demonstration that what we call permanence is often only movement slowed beyond our perception.

These associations are not incidental. The sculptures appear to carry within them a memory of deep time, sedimented eras, extinct worlds, and the slow planetary processes that precede and outlast human presence. Like fossilized eggs, the oloid shapes hold both stillness and potential, evoking geological epochs that humble the human scale while situating us within a far broader, more-than-human continuum. They feel at once prehistoric and futuristic, as if they belong equally to the age of dinosaurs and to some as-yet-unimagined world to come.

This experiential indeterminacy resonates with Karen Barad's notion of "re-turning,"¹ where turning is not mere repetition but a process of becoming-with the world, which has been influential to Keen's framing of her practice. To re-turn is to move differently because the world has moved with you. Keen's oloid sculptures materialize this idea, as each roll subtly reshapes both object and observer. Accordingly, the gallery space can become more than a container for art and more a field of relations in motion, where thoughts and perception take on weight, texture, and momentum.

The exhibition's title, *In my end is my beginning*, drawn from T.S. Eliot,² amplifies this sensibility and suggests that endings are not closures but thresholds. They are sites where transformation germinates. Keen extends this insight beyond the human, inviting us to consider how matter itself cycles through change: with object becoming relation, and viewer becoming participant. Time here is neither linear nor finite but recursive, pulsing, and alive.

The oloid might be imagined as a cosmic dancer rolling through space, but it is also unmistakably terrestrial. Shaped by human hands, marked by earthly gravity, the oloid urges us to consider the cosmic history of the mundane. It embodies a paradox: we are tiny within the universe and yet deeply implicated in its unfolding. Our gestures, whether they include turning, nudging, attending, matter.

Keen's broader inquiry, developed as part of her MFA project at York University, *How the Light Gets In: The Atom and the Organism*,³ moves fluidly between quantum physics, existential philosophy, and embodied experience. She navigates scales from the cosmic to the microscopic, asking what it means to be a sensing organism in a

¹ Karen Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart," *Parallax* 20, no. 3 (2014): 168–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927623>.

² T.S. Eliot, "Four Quartets - Extract," *Poetry Archive*, n.d., accessed January 16, 2026, <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/four-quartets-extract/>.

³ Andria Dianne Keen, "How the Light Gets in: The Atom and the Organism, Artistic Reflections on the Complementarity of Being" (MFA Thesis, York University, Canada, 2025), <https://hdl.handle.net/10315/43025>.

universe that is vast, indifferent, and yet strangely intimate. Rather than providing answers, she stages conditions for wonder, curiosity, and play. Here, artist Robert Morris's ideas about scale⁴ become crucial. For Morris, scale was not simply size; it was a relational experience shaped by the body in space. Keen's stone oloid sculptures activate this insight. Their heft recalls geological durations that dwarf human life, yet their smooth surfaces invite touch, proximity, and care. We are suspended between awe at deep time and the tenderness of tactile encounter.

Crucially, *In my end is my beginning* refuses hierarchical divisions between human and nonhuman worlds. The sculptures do not sit passively before a viewing subject. Instead, they invite mutual responsiveness. The viewer acts upon the oloid, and the oloid, in turn, acts upon the viewer, thereby shifting balance, provoking reflection, and unsettling certainty. Agency circulates rather than belonging to the human alone. This relational ethic feels especially urgent in a time of ecological crisis. As planetary systems destabilize, Keen's work suggests that survival depends not on domination but on attentiveness, humility, and reciprocity with more-than-human worlds. The oloid becomes a metaphor for ecological interdependence: movement ripples outward; nothing exists in isolation.

Yet the exhibition is not meant to be solemn or didactic. There is place for humor, pleasure, and delight here. Watching the oloid forms roll is quietly hypnotic; their motion is both gentle and insistently strange. Children and adults alike may be drawn into their rhythm. In this way, Keen aligns with artists who treat play as a serious mode of inquiry that functions as a way of knowing that bypasses rigid rationality and opens the senses.

Ultimately, *In my end is my beginning* asks a deceptively simple question: What would

⁴ Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture," *Artforum*, New York, NY, United States, 1967 1966, <https://www.artforum.com/features/notes-on-sculpture-211706/>.

it feel like to live as if we were always already in relation, to each other, to matter, to time, to the cosmos? Keen does not prescribe an answer. Instead, she offers a practice: turn, re-turn, touch, listen, and notice how your perspective shifts. The oloid's endless motion reminds us that existence is a process, not a destination. Beginnings and endings blur; we find ourselves suspended in a living present. To engage with Keen's work is to learn, gently, that being is not something we possess. It is something we do, together with the world. And in that doing, we may discover that our end, indeed, is our beginning.

– Dr. Aadita Chaudhury