

Long-form Artist Bio for Carrie Matisse

Carrie Matisse is the fictional heroine at the heart of a concept narrative created by singer-songwriter and poet Caroline Colantonio. Inspired by the literature she loves and the bold, colourful artistry of Henri Matisse, Colantonio created Carrie as a vessel for exploring resilience, wonder, and creative courage. The result is a richly imagined world where poetry, music, theatre, and visual art converge.

A seasoned performer, Colantonio has appeared on Toronto stages with Mirvish's *Les Misérables* and in productions with SOLT, Toronto City Opera, and The Royal Conservatory. Her love of storytelling extends beyond the stage; she first fell in love with poetry while studying Opera at Western University before earning an MA in Creative Writing at the University of Toronto. Balancing academia with songwriting, Colantonio led two indie bands and even penned a pop-opera album that earned her radio play across Canada and a top 100 placement in CBC's Searchlight competition.

The persona of Carrie Matisse emerged from a period of artistic uncertainty. During the pandemic, deep heartbreak nearly led Colantonio toward a PhD in English until a chance encounter with a poetry book at the Toronto Reference Library reignited her devotion to music. Kate Daniels' poem "Sorrow Figure" became the inspiration for "Baby Robotic," the opening chapter of Carrie's story. What began as a single song grew into a larger conceptual project, exploring existential questions through the eyes of a fictional woman searching for meaning.

Since Carrie's inception in 2025, Matisse has released two singles, two poetry-reading versions, and two cinematic music videos. Her second single, "The End of the World," draws from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Written on the night she found out about her mother's cancer diagnosis, the song reflects on Matisse's strong belief that those who shape our lives will be waiting for us when we pass away.

Now, with her third single, "High Trees," Matisse enters a more dissociative and ethereal chapter. Set against the isolation of a remote cottage, the song captures Carrie's inner dialogue as she moves between obsessive ideation and the grounding pain of betrayal. Inspired in part by a WWII-era legal decision of the same name, "High Trees" explores the weight of promises and what happens when we give our word to someone we love.

Carrie Matisse launched her new era with a sold-out show at Burdock Music Hall, followed by performances at Toronto's Horseshoe Tavern, the Biltmore Theatre in Oshawa, and Handlebar. She returns to the stage this fall for a headline performance at Monarch Tavern on October 1 to celebrate the release of "High Trees" and its accompanying cinematic video.

With "High Trees," Carrie Matisse continues to blur the boundaries between song, poetry, theatre, and narrative, inviting audiences further into her world of never-endings.