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For Immediate Release

## **Vivian Chong's "Dancing After TEN" graphic memoir published by Fantagraphics is shortlisted for the Toronto Book Awards**

- After cornea surgery temporarily restored her sight, Vivian Chong raced against time to draw her graphic memoir. When her vision once again faded, she enlisted comics artist Georgia Webber and project manager and image describer Kathleen Rea who worked together to complete this poignant work of graphic medicine.

A year ago, Vivian Chong teamed up with REASON d'etre dance to create a dance-theatre production called "Dancing with the Universe", which would tell Vivian's life story. As part of their research, Chong showed choreographer Kathleen Rea an unpublished graphic memoir created after cornea surgery temporarily restored her sight. These pages told the story of the medical reaction that caused her sight loss. Rea was so moved by the drawings they both decided to find a way to complete Chong's graphic memoir alongside the dance theatre production. They enlisted comic artist Georgia Webber ("*Dumb: Living without a Voice*") who collaborated with Vivian to bring the full story to the page.

Integrating Webber's drawings with Chong's originals was a collaborative process between the co-authors. The drawings created were described to Chong by Rea to ensure that Chong retained creative direction over her book. Chong's revision notes were sent back to Webber and this process was repeated until they reached approval. Chong also created new drawings which evoked the emotions of various scenes. The result is a book like no other that describes how Chong traveled through heartbreak to find her way forward as a multidisciplinary artist.

The ambitious double project of book and dance-theater was to culminate in April 2020 with a book launch/theatre premiere. The plan was to showcase Chong's multi-talented abilities along with the extraordinary circumstances and unique brilliance of her work. A few weeks before premiere, the theatre production and book launch were canceled due to the COVID pandemic.

Kathleen Rea the artistic director of REASON d'etre dance productions states:

"I am so glad *Dancing After TEN* is getting the recognition it deserves despite the effects of the pandemic. In our current COVID pandemic times, the book helps us understand how to adapt to change with grace and tenacity as well what can be achieved when we realize the process self-actualization is collaborative. *Dancing After TEN* expands the disability narrative with a multifaceted and expressive contribution. But these attributes are just a reflection of the book's true heart - the stunning images that evocatively tell Vivian's story."

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