

TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART

October 28, 2018

TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART ANNOUNCES PRELIMINARY LIST OF ARTISTS, PARTNERS, AND SPONSORS



Shezad Dawood
Photo: Sue Parkhill



Embassy of Imagination



PA System



Luis Jacob



Ange Loft
Photo: Liam Cao



Caroline Monnet

Toronto, Ontario, Canada... **The Toronto Biennial of Art (the Biennial)** today announced an initial selection of Canadian and international artists for the inaugural, city-wide event opening September 21, 2019 and running through December 2019. Commissioned artists and artist collectives creating site-specific projects include **Shezad Dawood, Embassy of Imagination and PA System, Luis Jacob, Ange Loft, Caroline Monnet, New Mineral Collective, Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa, Arin Rungjang, Susan Schuppli, Althea Thauberger, and Syrus Marcus Ware.** The Biennial is curated by Candice Hopkins and Tairone Bastien. Additional artists, partners, and sponsors will be announced in the coming months.

The Biennial commissions will take place in new and unexpected venues on Lake Ontario. The event's trajectory along the waterfront traces the original shoreline boundaries of the so-called Toronto Purchase (1805), which stretched from the eastern Ashbridges Bay to the western Etobicoke Creek. "For Indigenous peoples, who have maintained a presence here for over 15,000 years, this is a site of spiritual healing, trade, treaty, and gathering. In more recent centuries, Toronto's waterfront has been shaped by settler, slave, and immigrant narratives and has been physically transformed by military, industrial, and civilian use," said Hopkins and Bastien.

As they develop their conceptual framework the curators ask: How can we be *in relation*? By considering humankind's essential interconnectedness with one another as well as with all other animate and inanimate things, the 2019 edition of the Biennial and its programming will explore new ways of understanding ecosystems, alternative histories, sacred belief systems, and ways of knowing. "Our

approach aims to recalibrate the compass with which we explore the past and direct our consideration of alternative futures: Indigenous futurisms, Black futurisms, migrant futurisms, and animal futurisms,” added Hopkins and Bastien.

Toronto Biennial of Art Founder and Executive Director Patrizia Libralato says, “We are beyond thrilled to share Candice and Tairone’s first thoughts around the Biennial’s thematic direction, as well as our exciting lineup of initial participating artists. We look forward to working with the artists as they create site-specific works that respond to our unique waterfront venues and the city’s complex cultural context. The Biennial team is also honoured to welcome the founding partners and sponsors supporting our bold vision for Toronto’s inaugural biennial.”

2019 Biennial artists and collectives



New Mineral Collective:
Emilija Škamulyte & Tanya Busse
Photo: Michael Miller



Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa



Arin Rungiang



Susan Schuppil



Althea Thauberger



Syrus Marcus Warr
Photo: Jalani Morgi

Shezad Dawood (born and based in London, UK) works across disciplines including film, painting, neon, sculpture, and more recently, virtual reality, to deconstruct systems of image, language, place, and narrative. Through a fascination with the esoteric, otherness and science-fiction, Dawood interweaves histories, realities, and symbolism to create richly layered artworks.

Embassy of Imagination and **PA System** Embassy of Imagination (EOI) is a socially engaged art practice comprising youth from Kinngait (Cape Dorset, Nunavut) and PA System, including artists Alexa Hatanaka (born and based in Toronto) and Patrick Thompson (born in Chelsea, Quebec and based in Toronto). EOI and PA System create collaborative art projects, including public murals, performances, and exhibitions, within Kinngait, across Canada and internationally.

Luis Jacob (born in Lima, Peru and based in Toronto) is an artist, writer, curator, and educator whose artistic practice invites a collision of meanings. His recent work adopts collecting and archiving strategies that engage social relationships and narratives of place, and destabilize conventions of viewing.

Ange Loft (born in Kahnawake, Quebec and based in Toronto) is a multi-disciplinary artist, musician, and theatre creator from Kahnawake, Mohawk Territory. She facilitates interdisciplinary creation, arts based research, oral history, outdoor performance, community art design, and wearable sculpture. She is a Juno- and Polaris-nominated vocalist with Yamantaka // Sonic Titan.

Caroline Monnet (born in Outaouais, Quebec, and based in Montreal) uses cinema, sculpture, and installation to communicate complex ideas around Indigenous identity and bicultural living through the examination of cultural histories. Combining the vocabulary of popular and traditional visual culture with the tropes of modernist abstraction she speaks to the intricate realities of Indigenous peoples today.

New Mineral Collective (NMC) is a platform based in Tromsø, Norway, created by Emilija Škarnulytė (born in Vilnius, Lithuania) and Tanya Busse (born in Moncton, New Brunswick) that looks at the landscape of contemporary politics to better understand the nature and extent of human interaction with Earth's surface. NMC infiltrates the extractive industry with alternative forces, such as desire, body mining, and acts of counter prospecting.

Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa (born in Guatemala City and based between Guatemala City and Berlin) is an artist who works in drawing, performance, sculpture, and video to explore the nexus of history and form through the lens of his own displacement during and following Guatemala's civil war of 1960–96. Through the languages of folklore, science fiction, and theatre, he reframes historical events and protagonists.

Arin Rungjang (born and based in Bangkok) is known for deftly revising historical material, overlapping major and minor narratives across multiple times, places, and languages. He often works with video and site-specific installations to explore everyday issues and experiences such as memory, living space, history of family and individuals, and migration.

Susan Schuppli (born in Canada and based in London, UK) is an artist, researcher, and writer. Her current work explores the ways in which toxic ecologies – from nuclear accidents and oil spills to the dark snow of the Arctic – are producing an “extreme image” archive of material wrongs. She is an affiliated artist-researcher as well as board chair of Forensic Architecture.

Althea Thauberger (born in Saskatoon and based in Vancouver) is an artist and filmmaker whose practice is primarily concerned with the use of performative and collaborative processes in the production of new forms of social documents. Her projects often involve extended engagements with communities associated with production sites in order to trace broader social and ideological histories.

Syrus Marcus Ware (born in Montreal and based in Toronto) is a visual artist, activist, curator, and educator. He works in painting, installation, and performance to explore social justice frameworks and black activist culture. His work often aims to challenge systemic oppression and explore the spaces between and around identity.

Partners and venues

Building creative partnerships through collaborative installations, exhibitions, and programming across Toronto is an integral part of the Biennial's core activities. The Biennial will work with innovative art spaces, established art institutions, artist-run centers, community organizations, and educational institutions, including **Art Gallery of Ontario, Art Museum at the University of Toronto, Art Toronto, Artscape Toronto Inc., BAND, The Bentway, Evergreen, Fogo Island Arts, The Gladstone Hotel, Harbourfront Centre, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, MOCA Toronto, National Gallery of Canada, Nuit Blanche Toronto, OCAD University, Ontario Place Corporation, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Ryerson Image Centre, Small Arms Inspection Building, A Tale of a Tub (Rotterdam), Toronto Union, and Waterfront Toronto.**

Additional partners and venues will be announced in the coming months.

Sponsors and supporters

The Biennial is pleased to announce that the 2019 inaugural event is generously supported by **City of Toronto, City of Mississauga, Government of Ontario, TD Bank Group, St. Joseph Communications, Dickinson Wright, CIBC, Castlepoint Numa, The Gas Company, Menkes Developments, Canadian Art, Stratus Vineyards, ONEX, and The Gerald Schwartz & Heather Reisman Foundation.** More sponsors will be announced in the coming months. The Biennial also recognizes the significant private donations of its Founding Visionaries, Contemporaries, and Patrons.

About the Toronto Biennial of Art

The Toronto Biennial of Art, launching September 21, 2019, will be Canada's newest biennial of contemporary art. Taking place along the city's waterfront in unexpected venues and public spaces and in collaboration with not-for-profit galleries, museums, community organizations, and educational institutions across the city, the Biennial will present Canadian and international art within the complex creative, cultural, social, and political context of Toronto.

On view for three months, the Toronto Biennial of Art will position the city as an emerging, inclusive visual arts centre, providing an ambitious platform on which artists and arts professionals at various stages in their careers will exchange ideas and collaborate. By seamlessly linking year-round educational and curatorial programming, the Biennial will connect Toronto communities through partnerships with existing arts initiatives. It will create opportunities for residents and visitors alike to discover and reimagine the city through provocative visual art experiences. <http://torontobiennial.org>

###

Media Contacts

For additional information, Libby Mark or Heather Meltzer at Bow Bridge Communications, LLC, New York City; +1 347-460-5566; info@bow-bridge.com.

All photography courtesy of the artists unless indicated otherwise.