The Shoreline Dilemma
Exhibition & Programs

Main Biennial Sites
1  259 Lake Shore Blvd E
2  Small Arms Inspection Building
   1352 Lakeshore Rd E

Biennial Sites
3  55 Unwin Avenue
   (The Port Lands)
4  Art Gallery of York University (AGYU)
   8 Accolade East Building
   4700 Keele St
5  Harbourfront Centre
   235 Queens Quay W
6  Ontario Place
   955 Lake Shore Blvd W
7  Riverdale Park West
   375 Sumach St
8  Ryerson Image Centre
   33 Gould St
9  Toronto Sculpture Garden
   115 King St E
10 Union Station
   65 Front St W

Biennial Partner Sites
11 Art Gallery of Ontario
   317 Dundas St W
12 Art Museum at the University of Toronto
   15 King’s College Cir
13 Museum of Contemporary Art
   Toronto Canada
   158 Sterling Rd
14 The Power Plant
   Contemporary Art Gallery
   231 Queens Quay W

Programs
15 The Bentway
   250 Fort York Blvd
16 HMCS York
   659 Lake Shore Blvd W
17 Humber College Lakeshore Campus
   2 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Dr
18 Ireland Park Foundation
   3 Eireann Quay
19 Marie Curtis Park
   2 Forty Second St
20 Old Mill Station
   Bloor St W & Old Mill Trail
21 SKETCH Working Arts
   180 Shaw St
22 Toronto Waterfront Marathon Pathway
   Starts at University Ave & Queen St W
23 Ward’s Island Beach
   Toronto Island
The Toronto Biennial of Art is a new international contemporary visual arts event as culturally connected and diverse as the city itself. From September 21 to December 1, Toronto and surrounding areas will be transformed by exhibitions, talks, and performances that reflect our local context while engaging with the most pressing issues of our time. In an effort to make contemporary art available to everyone, the Biennial’s free, citywide programs aim to galvanize citizens, bridge communities, and contribute to global conversations from a variety of perspectives.

We acknowledge, first and foremost, that all of these spaces are located on land that has been a site of human activity for more than 12,000 years. This land is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Their stories, beliefs, and concepts about the land and the water continue to guide and inspire us.

We acknowledge the individual histories and knowledge that every participant, colleague, guest, and visitor brings with them to the Biennial. With more than ninety participants from around the world, and potentially tens of thousands of visitors witnessing their work and their words, we are thankful for the teachings and wisdom that each person carries, passed down through generations of ancestors.

We acknowledge our physical surroundings, from the many buildings and outdoor spaces that house our Exhibition and events, to all that lies beneath, including the rocks, soil, and root systems. We recognize the many lost rivers below us that vein across the city, continually moving water south. These rivers connect us all, physically and psychically, to the lake.

We acknowledge the trees that surround the sites as well as the grass, plants, insects, and animals that live beside us, sharing the city and the lake. This expansive constellation of beings, both human and not human, are always in relation, and we thank them all for being here.

Finally, we direct our intentions to the sky. We acknowledge the clouds, moon, sun, and stars whose light, after a fantastic journey across space and time, finds us here.
In 2014, the idea started to become a reality in conversation and collaboration with good friends and art community leaders, Melony Ward and Susannah Rosenstock (Susannah is now the Biennial’s Deputy Director & Director of Exhibitions). Over the next few years, the Biennial went from being a passion project to my full-time job, as countless hours were spent building a Curatorial Advisory, growing the Board, and convincing the City of Toronto, donors, and funders to support initial priority groundwork. Innumerable coffee dates and lunch meetings, lengthy conversations while driving around the city—these stolen moments slowly became the foundation for a pie-in-the-sky project that, despite the odds, we kept willing into being.

An international art biennial for Toronto—YES! The idea had been swirling around in my brain for as long I’d been working in the art world in Toronto and Europe. How do we turn the city into an international destination for art? How do we make Canadian art top of mind both at home and abroad? How do we create a powerful and inclusive moment for Toronto in which creativity and big ideas are supported, shared, celebrated, and elevated?

In 2016, I met Ilana Shamoon who helped take the project to the next level (Ilana is now Deputy Director & Director of Programs). Ilana had recently moved back from Paris where she had been working as a curator. In March 2018, she completed our Curatorial Framework, which helped articulate an exciting biennial model specifically for Toronto. It was indeed this vision that brought us to Candice Hopkins and Tairone Bastien, two thoughtful Canadian curators with international experience whom we are so grateful to have overseeing both the 2019 and 2021 editions.

For our inaugural year, we set our sights on programming across Toronto’s waterfront, which is currently undergoing urban renewal at a faster pace than anywhere else in North America. But this stretch of Lake Ontario was active long before Toronto became a city. It has been populated by Indigenous peoples for at least 12,000 years. We conceived of the Biennial as an opportunity to honour and explore those underrepresented histories while temporarily inhabiting repurposed sites along the lake.

It was Mohawk artist and researcher Ange Loft, Associate Artistic Director of Jumblies Theatre & Arts, who produced one of our most instrumental documents, the “Toronto Indigenous Context Brief,” which helped shape our thinking about the lake and approach to the Exhibition and Programs. One of the Biennial’s objectives is to raise awareness about indigeneity in this region in the context of art and programming that asks us to reconsider how we are in relation with each other, the land, and our environment. Ange’s generosity and insights have been a beacon for this project.

And now, almost five years later, here we are. The Toronto Biennial of Art is happening in a way I could have only dreamed of when it was just an idea Melony, Susannah, and I were talking about in my car. There are so many people to thank—our brilliant and passionate Biennial team; our tirelessly dedicated Board of Directors; our supremely talented artists and participants; and our incomparable advisors and creative partners. We also want to thank our indispensable supporters—from individuals and governments, to corporations and founding visionaries like the Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation—who believed in us and came on board in the most magnanimous way to make this crazy dream a humbling reality.

It has been a long, formidable, and beautiful journey getting here. This project has been and continues to be an incredible gift. Enjoy your Biennial, Toronto! We couldn’t be more thrilled to finally share it with you.

Patrizia Libralato
Executive Director, Toronto Biennial of Art
Paul Bain
Chair of the Board, Toronto Biennial of Art

As Board Chair, it is my privilege to welcome you all to the first-ever Toronto Biennial of Art! I am but one board member among a stellar group of women—Jane, Roma, Susan, Lisa, Cathy, Zahra, Kristyn, and Kerry—whose commitment has been exemplary and unwavering.

We have never done this before, and there have been many moving parts on the path to getting here. It goes without saying that an undertaking of this size and scope would not be possible without the support of so many, and of a visionary few who believed in the project when it was a mere idea. This starts with the Biennial’s indefatigable leader, Patrizia Libralato. Her tenacity and personal passion sparked this event, and brought it all the way home. Patrizia has also assembled a team that accepted every challenge and curve-ball thrown its way. Many took a chance, leaving secure positions to be part of something new. Thank you, Biennial team, for your belief and bravery!

Just as it took a prescient City Council in Venice in 1893 to establish the first (and for now, the most celebrated) biennial of art, our event would not have come to be without the early, stalwart support from the City of Toronto. We are also grateful for ground-level assistance from Castlepoint Numa and TD Bank. And a million thanks go out to the Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation for its game-changing gift. Because of the generosity of so many patrons and donators, we are in a position to offer a free 72-day event that reconnects the city to the lakefront, repurposes previously under-used spaces, and partners with incredible institutions across Toronto and Mississauga.

Of course, we also extend a huge thank you to the Biennial’s brilliant curators, Candice Hopkins and Tairone Bastien, and to the artists who have produced visually engaging works layered with meaning. The Biennial does not shy away from difficult questions, and will, we hope, stimulate conversation about issues that are both timely and timeless.

We hope you explore the Biennial fully and are inspired by what you see!

Pierre Lassonde
Director, Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation

The question at the centre of Toronto’s first art Biennial—“What does it mean to be in relation?”—is a critical one for our times and our city.

Like music, the visual arts is an international language—one to which everyone can relate. The Biennial explores the theme of relations through the eyes of contemporary artists. As a family, it is our hope that millions of Torontonians and visitors will witness the remarkable art exhibited along the waterfront. Through installations and conversations, people can explore what it means to be in relation within their own lives. This unique occasion allows us to celebrate our diversity as well as our unity.

Our family foundation is privileged to serve as the Founding Signature Patron of the Toronto Biennial of Art. It is our sincere hope that this event will make our incredible city an even more incredible place to live and visit.

Immigrants and first-generation Canadians make up over half of the city’s population. What does the event mean to Toronto’s relative newcomers? What does it mean to those who have come to call this city home? How do we relate to one another? How do we all belong in this place together?

This question also resonates for our family because, through the ebbs and flows of life, we have come to Toronto, left the city, and come back again. We’ve gone our separate ways, but we always return. We have a relationship with this city. We belong here. Home is where we have family and friends. So Toronto is home.

Our family foundation is privileged to serve as the Founding Signature Patron of the Toronto Biennial of Art. It is our sincere hope that this event will make our incredible city an even more incredible place to live and visit.

Paul Bain
Chair of the Board
Toronto Biennial of Art

Pierre Lassonde, CM OQ
Director
Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation
Bonnie Crombie
Mayor of Mississauga

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone attending the Toronto Biennial of Art, a new international contemporary visual arts event.

The arts are an integral component of Toronto’s cultural and economic fabric that enrich and enhance the lives of many.

I am proud to have helped champion the Biennial and encouraged its development into what I’m confident will be a wonderful event for our city and region. Arts and culture can be incredible forces for the development of an individual, group, or community, and they promote intercultural connections, including tolerance, understanding, friendship, and social cohesion.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable event and continued success.

Yours truly,

John Tory, O.Ont., Q.C.
Mayor of Toronto

Bonnie Crombie
Mayor of Mississauga

On behalf of the great City of Mississauga and Members of Council, I am pleased to extend a welcome to all those attending the Toronto Biennial of Art at the Small Arms Inspection Building in Mississauga.

Mississauga is a hub of creativity thanks to the tremendous talent embodied by our local artists. I am pleased that the Biennial has chosen Mississauga as a host venue for its event to showcase the creativity and passion of internationally renowned artists in our city.

Art has the ability to address the issues we face in society, providing both an escape and an outlet. It is often a reflection of society and a mirror of our humanity. As Thomas Merton once wrote: “Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.” I am looking forward to visiting the exhibitions at Small Arms and elsewhere across the Greater Toronto Area to experience what I’m sure will be thought-provoking and compelling works.

I am a long-time supporter of the arts and, as Mayor, I have made it a pillar of my platform to build the local arts scene in Mississauga. Through the Toronto Biennial of Art, I know we will take another important step toward realizing this goal.

I wish everyone the best of luck for a successful event. Thank you for choosing Mississauga.

Bonnie Crombie, MBA, ICD.D
Mayor of Mississauga
In response, I drew upon existing research from “Talking Treaties,” a multi-year community project I’ve been leading in my role as Associate Artistic Director at Jumblies Theatre & Arts. I worked with Biennial Deputy Director & Director of Programming Ilana Shamoon, who was writing their first Curatorial Framework at the time, to produce an accompanying document entitled the “Toronto Indigenous Context Brief.”

The “Brief” brought together relevant research, including source texts, original interview excerpts, and oral knowledge that I had been collecting for “Talking Treaties” since 2015. It was drafted to highlight stories of interest and significance for the waterfront region, and is intended to be a living document that we can build on together for future iterations.

In the early winter of 2018, the Biennial approached me to collaborate on a way to better understand the history of the city’s waterfront, from Etobicoke Creek to Ashbridges Bay, where the majority of its Exhibition and Programs take place. They wanted to know about the Indigenous contexts—the deeper narratives and underrepresented histories—that sit beneath Toronto.

Toronto has been a popular place for a while. It is the site of many rivers that have been built over. Partial excavations reveal several older villages and burial places across the city, all of which have been turned over for new developments. These hidden layers tell the story of shifting populations and correspond to several historical layers outlined in the “Brief,” going back to 1000 CE. As I worked with Ilana on how to use my research to tell the story of Toronto’s waterfront, we discussed sharing space and how to make visible these layers of buried narratives.

Every time a condo goes up, they have to dig down. Exploring the changes in our city means we must also examine our foundations. How do the many Nations within our city remain in relation with one another? What agreements and arrangements do these Nations have with respect to sharing resources, space, and differences in worldviews? How do we show mutual respect for autonomy and maintain order?

Our territory has seen two drastically different approaches to these questions: the Dish With One Spoon and the Toronto Purchase.

The Dish With One Spoon outlines an approach to sharing land between Nations. The agreement has brought many regional Indigenous Nations, including the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, into relation under guiding principles of mindfulness. Take only what you need. Keep the dish clean. Make sure there is something left in the dish for the future.

The agreements for this territory were not made quickly. They took time, with representatives returning to their respective communities to discuss further before coming back together for more talk. The idea of returning to agreements is foundational: oral knowledge was maintained by restating, relearning, and carrying forward ideas to the next generations.

But this place became a city fast. In 1787, the British gave the Mississaugas of the Credit what was even then very little money—2,000 gun flints, 24 brass kettles, 120 mirrors, 24 laced hats, a bale of flowered flannel, and 96 gallons of rum—and began to talk about sharing land. This interaction became known as the Toronto Purchase. The lands supposedly ceded to the British were not recorded accurately. A line was drawn by the British from Etobicoke Creek to Ashbridges Bay, and all the way up to Newmarket, outlining a much larger plot of land than what had originally been understood. The city expanded over these unclear boundary lines, encroaching on portions of the land along the rivers that had been reserved for the sole use of the Mississaugas.

As our skyline shifts to make way for taller buildings, we need to develop a keener sense of the historical relationships they are being built upon—the negotiations between Nations on this territory, and the governance mechanisms that have regulated relations on these lands.

The inaugural Biennial is driven by a question: What does it mean to be in relation? Being in relation takes time, energy, and investment to learn what is in between—what holds us up and what keeps us together. Those in-between things are not only roads and buildings, but the foundational understandings that have allowed Toronto to be here.

Ange Loft
Advisory Council, Toronto Biennial of Art
The Toronto Biennial of Art has established two awards for participating artists: the Toronto Biennial of Art Prize, which recognizes an outstanding contribution, and the Toronto Biennial of Art Emerging Artist Prize, which recognizes a promising, early-career artist. Each award carries a value of $20,000. Selected by a distinguished international jury, the winners will be announced on September 19, 2019.

The 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art Jury includes: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (Director, Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea); Mark Godfrey (Senior Curator of International Art, Tate Modern); Brian Jungen (Artist, Vernon, BC); Meg Onli (Assistant Curator, ICA Philadelphia); and Kitty Scott (Carol and Morton Rapp Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario).

The Toronto Biennial of Art Prizes were initiated by patrons Jay Smith and Laura Rapp, and generously supported by David and Carol Appel; Leslie Gales, Keith Ray, Stephanie Ray, and Eric Ray; the Hal Jackman Foundation; and Eleanor and Francis Shen.

Prizes
Information

Akimbo

Explore Toronto’s thriving visual arts community of galleries, dealers, and exhibitions alongside the official Toronto Biennial of Art Exhibition and Programs. Visit our listing partner Akimbo to get the latest information on exhibitions, publications, performances, screenings, lectures, launches, calls for submissions, and jobs relevant to visual culture in Canada at akimbo.ca/TBA2019.

ARt @ LARGE

Experience the Toronto Biennial of Art on your mobile phone with augmented reality (AR) through a co-production between the CFC Media Lab and AR @ LARGE. Discover and learn more about Biennial sites, create AR scenes and messages with selected art objects, and share your experiences with friends throughout the duration of the Biennial.

Powered by Albedo Informatics’ LARGE platform, AR @ LARGE is a Canada-wide project to develop AR initiatives and strategy across the arts, cultural, and civic sectors. AR @ LARGE is made possible through the support of the Canada Council for the Arts. The Toronto Biennial of Art and CFC Media Lab are proud partners of LARGE. To download the app, please visit artatlarge.ca.

Getting Around

Public Transit

All Toronto Biennial of Art sites are accessible by TTC, Toronto’s safe and affordable public transit system. A single adult trip costs $3.25 and day passes are available for $13.00. For schedules and routes, please visit ttc.ca.

Cycling & Walking

Many of the Biennial sites are located on or near Toronto’s waterfront. We invite visitors to travel between Biennial sites along the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

The Biennial has partnered with Bike Share Toronto to provide visitors access to 5,000 bikes and 465 stations across 100 km² of the city, including a rack located at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E. A 10-day pass is available for only $15 with the code TBA2019. For more information, please visit bikesharetoronto.com/tba.

Driving

For site-specific directions and parking locations and fees, please visit torontobiennial.org/travel.

Lyft

Get there with Lyft! Biennial visitors get 20% off two rides from September 18 to December 1 with the code TOBIENNIAL19.

How to Support

As a registered Canadian charity, the Toronto Biennial of Art is made possible with the generous support of donors and sponsors. There are many ways to support the Biennial—as an individual donor, a family foundation, or a corporate sponsor. Every dollar goes toward ground-breaking exhibitions and enriching public programs. Donate today and join the Biennial in transforming Toronto into an international destination for 72 days of free contemporary art.

For more information on how to support, please visit torontobiennial.org/donate.

How to Volunteer

Volunteers are a vital part of the Toronto Biennial of Art. We are always looking for cultural enthusiasts with a range of skills to support our expansive Exhibition and Programs offerings. If you are enthusiastic about contemporary art, passionate about people, and looking for a unique behind-the-scenes experience, join the Biennial as a 2019 Volunteer.

For more information or to volunteer, please visit torontobiennial.org/volunteer.

Wilson Rodríguez, Espiral, 2018, acrylic on paper. Courtesy the artist and Instituto de Visión.
Abbas Akhavan
Maria Thereza Alves
Adrian Blackwell
AA Bronson
Hera Büyükaşçıyan
Judy Chicago
Dana Claxton
Moyra Davey
Shezad Dawood
Embassy of Imagination + PA System
Laurent Grasso
Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh
& Hesam Rahmanian
Isuma
Luis Jacob
Jae Jarrell
Jumblies Theatre & Arts with Ange Loft
Kapwani Kiwanga
Jumana Manna
Qavavau Manumie
Caroline Monnet
New Mineral Collective
The New Red Order (NRO)
Fernando Palma Rodríguez
Napachie Pootoogook
Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa
Elder Duke Redbird
Lisa Reihana
ReMatriate Collective
Abel Rodríguez
Wilson Rodríguez
Arin Rungjang
Curtis Talwst Santiago
Susan Schuppli
Lou Sheppard
Nick Sikkuark
Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak
Adrian Stimson
Althea Thauberger & Kite
Caecilia Tripp
Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca
Hajra Waheed
Syrus Marcus Ware
The Shoreline Dilemma

The implications of the changing shoreline—evidence of an increasingly anthropocentric world—prompted us to ask invited artists: What does it mean to be in relation?

Toronto’s shoreline has changed dramatically over the last 12,000 years, ever since the Laurentide Ice Sheet retreated to form Lake Ontario’s basin. The earliest human habitants—the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit—adapted to the changing topography. In the colonial era, surges in industrial production and economic growth radically altered the shoreline, which has alternately been extended, reshaped, and paved over.

Initially a site of trade and ceremony, and eventually mass settlement and industrialization, the waterfront is host today to relics of heavy industry, dense condominium developments, active and decommissioned military bases, lost rivers, and human-made spits. Recently, it has been subjected to “renaturalization” efforts—attempts to restore the lake’s habitat—that nevertheless seek to refashion nature to suit human convenience.

Shorelines resist conventional mapping. Ever-shifting and fractal, they have no well-defined perimeter and evade attempts at quantification. The shoreline dilemma (also called the “coastline paradox”) implies the breakdown of scientific conventions in the face of nature’s complexities. In Toronto, this dilemma has been amplified by the radical reshaping of the city’s waterfront, which calls into question the rights of land and water in light of accelerated development.

Human and non-human relations can reaffirm connections and generate ecosystems, but they can also breed distrust, anxiety, and alienation. When rational systems fail, other knowledges and relations emerge. At stake is the responsibility to respect multiple subjectivities and diverse conceptions of freedom, dignity, and sovereignty for living creatures, land, and water, as reflected by the rich perspectives and histories in the Exhibition’s artworks.

Toronto’s inaugural Biennial embraces the unquantifiable, fugitive, and unknowable, and like the shoreline, resists the systems that seek to discipline and control.

Curated by Candice Hopkins & Tairone Bastien

The following pages explore the 2019 Biennial sites in relation to the changing shoreline. All site descriptions were generated by the curatorial team, in consultation with our creative partners, to offer lesser-known Toronto facts and histories.

Curtis Talwst Santiago, Olokun in Fancy Dress, 2018, mixed-media diorama in reclaimed jewelry box. Courtesy Rachel Uffner Gallery. On view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E.
Before 1923, the ground beneath this formerly vacant building did not exist. The land in this area of the city was fashioned from infill that covered over marshland between the Don River and Ashbridges Bay. Since the early 1800s, each time Toronto’s economy has surged, the shoreline has been altered, subjugated to the interests of capital.

The life of this nondescript building reveals the area’s economic history. Its first tenant in 1945, the Standard Chemical Company, produced methanol, formaldehyde, and charcoal. A railway line to the south tethered the site to the movement of goods. By 1954, the building was divided into a warehouse and a showroom, a configuration that remained intact over the course of various leaseholders, including oil and electrical supply companies and a series of car dealerships. (The advertising of its most recent tenant, Volvo, is still visible on the façade.) This building’s fate is indeterminate, as real estate development is increasingly filling the voids left by industrial decline.

Those who study civic ecosystems argue that old buildings are needed to incubate new ideas, which is what artists are offering here, if only temporarily. Artworks gathered at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E consider different forms of relations in light of the connections and disconnections that characterize the present. Videos prefigure the catastrophic effects of the Anthropocene; clusters of tin monarch butterflies are programmed to respond to seismic data; intricate drawings document Inuit life before forced assimilation. Directly inside the building’s doors, a massive wooden replica of Toronto’s harbour immediately makes apparent the human-made alterations of the land and waterscape, all in the service of industry.

Exhibiting Artists

Maria Thereza Alves
Born in São Paulo, Brazil; lives in Naples, Italy and Berlin, Germany

Excavated soil from Bickford Park accumulates in this site as part of Alves’s participatory project, enacting a communal unearthing of one of Toronto’s lost rivers: Garrison Creek. The Garrison Creek Ravine was covered over by infill from residential development, but along the southern edge of the park, the parapet of the former Harbord Street Bridge remains visible.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Phantom Pain, a related installation by Alves, is co-commissioned by Evergreen and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and is on view at Riverdale Park West.

Adrian Blackwell
Born and lives in Toronto, Canada

The ancient Greek term isonomia implies political equality. Blackwell’s two site-responsive, non-hierarchical structures at the Biennial are spaces to gather for weekly programs and also to contemplate isonomia in the face of colonial governance structures that have overtaken those of Indigenous peoples. At 259 Lake Shore, Isonomia in Toronto?(harbour) is modelled after Toronto’s changing shoreline, illustrating the effects of encroaching privatization on the land.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.
AA Bronson & Adrian Stimson
Bronson, born in Vancouver, Canada; lives in Berlin, Germany; Stimson, born in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada; lives in Siksika, Canada

Bronson’s A Public Apology to Siksika Nation responds to European genocide, including his great-grandfather’s role as the first missionary at Siksika Nation, while Stimson’s response, generated in close dialogue with residential school survivors and leaders, reveals the layers of colonization and Indigenous resistance in his community.

Commissioned in part by the Toronto Biennial of Art and supported by the Canada Council for the Arts New Chapter program.

Hera Büyüktasçıyan
Born and lives in Istanbul, Turkey

Büyüktasçıyan’s installation reflects the invisible foundations of lost spaces. Industrial carpets embellished with patterns inspired by ethnic motifs, aerial city maps, and urban textures of the Greater Toronto Area allude to histories of migration and retrace lost fragments of social and personal narratives.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Dana Claxton
Hunkpapa Lakota [Sioux] born in Yorkton, Canada; lives in Vancouver, Canada

Claxton’s LED fireboxes are a testament to the beauty and resilience of Indigenous women. Featured in portraits wearing their cultural belongings, sitters’ faces are layered with beaded necklaces, embroidered bags, and other items, implying an identity formed of kinship, relations, and exchange.

Commissioned in part by the Toronto Biennial of Art and made possible with the generous support of Michelle Koerner and Kevin Doyle.

Moyra Davey
Born in Toronto, Canada; lives in New York City, United States

Photographs from Gold Dumps and Ant Hills document two kinds of excavation in South Africa—one human and one insect—while Dark Trees and Hoardings both emphasize a propensity for locating the ecstatic sublime within nature. The latter two series emerged from an exurban region in Norway, drawing on the work of Mary Wollstonecraft and Karl Ove Knausgård.

Shezad Dawood
Born and lives in London, United Kingdom

Episode 5 of Leviathan Cycle, Dawood’s ongoing episodic video series, takes its cues from international trade and the legal structures of maritime law set against the rights of the individual. It is presented within a 1970s Newfoundland cod trap, alongside new textile-based paintings created in collaboration with Fogo Island artisans.

Co-commissioned by Fogo Island Arts, MOCA, A Tale of a Tub (Rotterdam), and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and made possible with the generous support of the British Council.

An exhibition of related work by Dawood is on view at MOCA Sept 19–Nov 3. For more information, please visit museumofcontemporaryart.ca.

Embassy of Imagination + PA System
Alexa Hatanaka, born and lives in Toronto, Canada; Patrick Thompson, born in Chelsea, Canada; lives in Toronto, Canada; with participation of Kinngait youth artists: Iqaluk Ainalik, Kevin Allooloo, Ooloosie Ashevak, Salomonie Ashoona, Parr Josephee, Moe Kelly, Janine Manning, Leah Mersky, Saaki Nuna, Mathew Nuqingaq, David Pudlat, Kunu Pudlat, Taqialu Pudlat, Cie Taqiasuk, Embassy of Imagination 2019 participants, and Oasis Skateboard Factory 2019 Fall Cohort.

Sinaapagiaqtuut/The Long-Cut is a two-part procession that begins in Kinngait | Cape Dorset, Canada, and continues in Toronto, starting at The Bentway and moving to 259 Lake Shore Blvd E, where works by youth artists explore Kinngait-Toronto connections and how these distant places are tethered through waterways, art markets, artistic collaborations, and the night sky.

This Embassy of Imagination project is produced by PA System, commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art, and made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program, Canadian North Airlines, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, British Museum, Ontario Arts Council, The Government of Nunavut, and XYZ STORAGE.

The procession takes place on Sept 21 along the waterfront and is co-commissioned and presented in partnership with The Bentway. For more information, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

Laurent Grasso
Born in Mulhouse, France; lives in Paris, France

The neon sign Visibility is a Trap invokes Michel Foucault’s theory of panopticism, which argues that a state of permanent visibility and threat of surveillance induces self-discipline. For Grasso, the viewer’s interaction with the illuminated text is key—one becomes increasingly visible as they enter the glow of the neon light.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh & Hesam Rahmanian
Ramin Haerizadeh, both born in Tehran, Iran; both live in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Rahmanian, born in Knoxville, United States; lives in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with the participation of: Maryam Abasspour, Niyaz Azadikhah (with the Goharaneh Institution), Zahra Bagheri, Joan Baixas, John Cole, Francesca Fassone, Mehrdokht Jamali, Hoda Keshavarz, Mobina Khanzadeh, Roberto Luttino, Afsane Norouzi, Fardina Norouzi, Mahbube Ramezani, Fariba Tajik, Parastou Tajik, Sara Tousi, Farzaneh Zahrayi, and Azam Zoghi

Lo’bat is a jellyfish-like robot with narratives of fear embroidered across its diaphanous belly. With eyes positioned on the opposite wall, the robot comes alive when people enter the space.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and co-presented by Toronto Union.

Luis Jacob
Born in Lima, Peru; lives in Toronto, Canada

The View from Here is a major two-part installation located at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E and Union Station’s Oak Room. Jacob’s photographs are paired with his extensive collection of books and maps, revealing how Toronto has imagined itself and been perceived by others. At 259 Lake Shore Blvd E, the collection of rare books, published since 1872, and his contemporary photographs elucidate different representations of Toronto—a city where the very question of place is deeply layered, complex, and contested.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and co-presented by Toronto Union.

Jae Jarrell
Born and lives in Cleveland, United States

Disrupting the hierarchy between art and fashion, Jarrell’s wearable artworks merge Black liberation politics and art. After producing her debut collection in 1963, Jarrell went on to co-found the influential art collective AFRICOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists) in 1968. Aesthetic experimentation informs ideas of cultural revolution in this conceptual garment.

A related exhibition of Jarrell’s work at AGYU is co-presented by AGYU and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and curated by Candice Hopkins and Tairone Bastien. For more information, please visit agyu.art.

Qavavau Manumie
Inuit, born in Brandon, Canada; lives in Kinngait | Cape Dorset, Canada

“I enjoy the animals and the land, and I take what I see there to my drawings.” Manumie’s drawings of hybrid forms and entanglements—including sea creatures freeing one another from nets—are his way “of creating completely new places and strange activities that maybe trick the people who look at [them].”

This project is made possible with the generous support of West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative.

New Mineral Collective
Tanya Busse, born in Moncton, Canada; Emilija Škarnulytė, born in Vilinus, Lithuania; both live in Tromsø, Norway

New Mineral Collective is the largest and least productive mining company in the world. The company provides counter-prospecting operations and geo-trauma healing therapies at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E and Small Arms. This video installation follows the process of acquiring prospecting licenses for alternative values and takes a critical look at “perforated landscapes”—land altered by extractive industries.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.
The New Red Order (NRO):
Adam Khalil & Zack Khalil, both Ojibway and born in Sault Ste. Marie, United States; both live in New York City, United States; Jackson Polys, Tlingit, born in Ketchikan, United States; lives in New York City, United States

Never Settle is an ambitious, multi-part project that includes a public recruitment campaign and a participatory installation that invites prospective recruits to undergo an initiation. Playing with the notion of headhunting, NRO seeks to enlist candidates in their public secret society, thereby investigating shame and the desire for indigeneity.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and presented in partnership with Gallery TPW. Made possible with the generous support of Autodesk.


Fernando Palma Rodríguez
Nahua, born in San Pedro Atocpan, Mexico; lives in Mexico City, Mexico
A swarm of 104 robotic monarch butterflies are programmed to respond to seismic frequencies. Monarchs, which have suffered rapid decline, are the only species to migrate between Mexico and Canada annually. Palma Rodríguez’s installation questions our unwavering faith in technology and the perception that it will save us from catastrophic climate change.

Napachie Pootoogook
Inuit, born in 1938, Sako Island Camp, Canada; died in 2002 Kinngait | Cape Dorset, Canada
“My experiences in life include times that were frightening, times that were hard to deal with, and happy times.” Two suites of drawings document Inuit life, the intimacy of caring for one’s family, and the experience of difficult events, such as forced marriage and murder. Pootoogook’s drawings are often paired with syllabic narratives explaining their circumstances.

This project is made possible with the generous support of West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative.

Lisa Reihana
Māori-Ngāpuhi; born and lives in Auckland, Aotearoa | New Zealand
Reihana’s two-channel video, Tai Whetuki—House of Death Redux, depicts Māori and Pacific cultural practices surrounding death and mourning as the spirit of a warrior is guided to the underworld. The work was filmed at Karekare, a site of massacre on the West Coast of Aotearoa | New Zealand.

A related exhibition entitled Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus [infected], curated by Julie Nagam, is currently on view at the AGO and presented in partnership with imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. For more information, please visit ago.ca.

ReMatriate Collective
Based in unceded and ancestral territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh Nations, Canada
In 1978, the feminist Service, Office, and Retail Workers’ Union of Canada staged a three-year protest against Muckamuck Restaurant. The dispute allied Indigenous women workers with other labour activists, igniting a new era of accountability. Lifting a message from the strike’s picket signs, ReMatriate’s banner YOURS FOR INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY acknowledges these women’s efforts and asks what sovereignty means thirty years later.

Made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program.

Curtis Talwst Santiago
Born in Edmonton, Canada
This installation brings together forty-eight works from Santiago’s Infinity Series, which consists of miniature dioramas housed in reclaimed jewelry boxes. The small dioramas contained within reflect layered historical references—decontextualized and temporally collapsed—that offer a meditation on diaspora and in-betweenness.

A related installation by Santiago, J’ouvert Temple, is on view at 55 Unwin Ave.

Susan Schuppli
Lives in London, United Kingdom
Learning from Ice is a multi-year project that investigates how different knowledge practices respond to climate change. Drawing on her research into ice core science, Schuppli presents a documentary film that considers how glacial ice acts as a material witness to global warming.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art, and made possible with the generous support of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Office of Contemporary Art Norway, and the British Council.

Nick Sikkuark
Inuit, born in 1943, Garry Lake, Canada; died in 2013 in Kugaaruk, Canada
Nick Sikkuark’s drawings and sculptures illustrate the entanglements between the natural and the supernatural worlds.
Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak
Steele, born in Kansas City, United States; Tomczak, born in Victoria, Canada; both live in Toronto, Canada

... before I wake (2000–12) is a video triptych from Steele and Tomczak comprised of Entranced (2012), Practicing Death (2003), and We’re Getting Younger All the Time (2001). Produced over a twelve-year period, these works are a meditation on the body, aging, relationships, and the nature of the artists’ collaboration as partners in life and art.

Caecilia Tripp
Based in New York, United States and Paris, France

Interstellar Sleep is an immersive installation produced in collaboration with astrophysicists from York University Observatory, cosmologist Renée Hložek, and composer Mani Mazinani. It is comprised of a celestial filmscape, a surround soundscape, and a series of performances taking place during the opening week of the Biennial.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art. Going Space and Other Worlding, a related exhibition of Tripp’s work, is presented at AGYU and curated by Emelie Chhangur. For more information, please visit agyu.art.

Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca
Wagner, born in Brasilia, Brazil; de Burca, born in Munich, Germany; both live in Recife, Brazil

In Wagner and de Burca’s experimental documentary, poets, rappers, and musicians of R.I.S.E. (Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere) perform agitprop edutainment in the Toronto underground. R.I.S.E. is comprised of young Black people, mainly first- and second-generation immigrants from the Caribbean, for whom rhythm and poetry is an act of empowerment and self-expression.

RISE is a film commissioned by AGYU and produced by Emelie Chhangur in partnership with R.I.S.E. Edutainment.

Syrus Marcus Ware
Born in Montreal, Canada; lives in Toronto, Canada

Antarctica is half of a two-part installation at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E and Ryerson Image Centre (RIC) that draws on the shared language of speculative fiction and political activism to create an imagined time portal through which the next generation of racialized activists offers insights into a future radically altered by climate change.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art, presented in partnership with SummerWorks Performance Festival, and made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program. Ancestors, Can You Read Us? (Dispatches from the Future), a related installation by Ware on view at the RIC, is co-commissioned by the RIC and the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Selected Programs & Performances

The Programs & Learning Hub at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E is a place for gathering and sharing. Comprised of modular workshop spaces for school groups and community members, a library, and a listening room, the Hub invites visitors of all ages to engage in conversations, workshops, listening, and activating structures, such as Gendai Mobile Unit. The Hub is free and open to the public during regular Biennial hours.

Performance:
Apology to Siksika Nation

Sat, Sept 21 | 11am–12pm
How does history become personally accountable in a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission era? AA Bronson delivers his Apology to Siksika Nation, an atonement for his ancestors’ role in cultural genocide, while Adrian Stimson responds. Food will be shared following the performance.

Performance & Reading Series:
Isonomia in Toronto

Every Fri | 7–9pm
Adrian Blackwell’s two interrelated structures host weekly performances and readings. Invited guests include poet CAConrad, artists Camilo Godoy and Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Apache violinist Laura Ortman, Sister Co-Resister, and percussionist Marshall Trammell.

Storytelling

Every Fri | 5–7pm
Every Sun | 12–2pm
Storytelling seeks to shift the mediation of contemporary art from more conventional modes of interpreting and informing to narrating and embodying through weekly walks and conversations led by intergenerational and multilingual storytellers. Storytelling is available to community groups, schools, and universities, as well as other members of the public.

Gendai Mobile Unit

Gendai Mobile Unit is a flexible seating, presentation, and storage unit commissioned by Gendai and artist Yam Lau, and designed by artist Alexandre David. Situated at the centre of the Programs & Learning Hub, Gendai Mobile Unit is a platform for investigations into spontaneous and reciprocal methodologies that reimage models of generosity and collective ways of gathering.

259 Lake Shore hosts an extensive program beyond the above selection. For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
After it was acquired by the City of Mississauga in 2017, the Small Arms Inspection Building—originally part of a large munitions plant—was renovated and opened as an arts centre in 2018. Built in 1940, Small Arms Limited manufactured hand-held weapons for the Canadian and Allied forces in WWII. At the height of its operations, and with a workforce dominated by women, it produced thousands of rifles daily as part of Canada’s industrialized war effort, which mobilized large magnitudes of funds, people, and natural resources.

Industry dominated Toronto’s waterfront in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the advent of new technologies for resource extraction, Lake Ontario was good for business, providing a channel for access, material for production, and a convenient repository for industrial runoff. In 1990, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority conducted an environmental audit of the site, revealing the presence of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), volatile organic compounds, and combustible gases across nineteen acres. More than 70,000 tons of contaminated radioactive soil was removed to eventually transform the Arsenal Lands into a park.

These kinds of forward-thinking rehabilitation efforts are few and far between. Industry continues to ravage lands and waters across the country, devastating natural resources in places outside of common view. The artworks within Small Arms examine the narratives of geologists, prospectors, settlers, and agriculturalists, many of whom participate in destructive practices. Contrasting processes of extraction and repair, these works point to the intelligence of the natural world, which eludes, subverts, and bears witness to human ambition and its terrifying impacts.

Exhibiting Artists

Abbas Akhavan
Born in Tehran, Iran; lives in Montreal, Canada

Study for a Garden consists of a stack of sharpened sticks cast in bronze. They might be posts for a garden fence, a faggot (a bundle of wood to fuel a fire), or a collection of crude spears for battle. Praised for its strength and ductility, bronze has long been used to make weapons and monuments. Nearby, Bray for Cello—a series of scores pinned to the wall—comprises a composition of braying sounds to be performed intermittently and unannounced by a cellist.

Adrian Blackwell
Born and lives in Toronto, Canada

Isonomia in Toronto? (creek) hosts weekly performances and readings throughout the Biennial. Visitors are welcome to sit within the infinite curves, folds, and knots of Blackwell’s 300-foot-long cushion. An image of the shoreline of Etobicoke Creek—also known as wadoptikaang in Anishinaabemowin (“the place where the alders grow”)—stretches along its length, connecting land- and human-based pedagogies.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.


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Judy Chicago  
Born in Chicago, United States; lives in Belen, United States.

Chicago first turned to pyrotechnics in the late 1960s in an effort to feminize the atmosphere at a time when the California art scene was male-dominated. The photographs in the Atmospheres series transform and soften their surrounding landscapes, introducing a feminine impulse into the environment and using colour as a metaphor for emotive states.

This project is made possible with the generous support of Smokestack.

Isuma
Founded in 1990; based in Igloolik and Montreal, Canada.

One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk is a dramatized feature film that spans a single day in May 1961 when Piugattuk and his family, while hunting seal on the spring sea ice in Kapuivik, Baffin Island, are met by a government agent who orders them off their land.

One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk is presented in conjunction with Isuma’s exhibition commissioned by the National Gallery of Canada, on view at the Canadian Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale, until November 24, 2019.

Jumblies Theatre & Arts with Ange Loft
Kahnawake Mohawk, born in Kahnawake, Canada; lives in Toronto, Canada.

Talking Treaties is an outdoor pageant, workshop, and now installation that shares knowledge about the Toronto region’s treaty history. In this iteration, videos, textiles, and soft sculptures are activated by programs that invite participants to generate their own principles of treaty-making.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and produced by Jumblies Theatre & Arts. Made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program.

Kapwani Kiwanga
Born in Hamilton, Canada; lives in Paris, France.

Two rippling fabric curtains suggest the meeting of tectonic plates. According to Kiwanga’s research, the African plate is slowly moving toward and above the Eurasian one, which is subducting at a rate of approximately two centimetres per year. A rock cradled in fabric hung on the wall further probes these thematic currents.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program.

Jumana Manna
Born in Princeton, United States; lives in Berlin, Germany.

Manna’s work draws formal inspiration from khabyas, traditional seed storage vessels that were a key feature of rural Levantine architecture, paired with metal structures used in industrial storage systems. Manna’s vessels extend her insightful explorations into the transformation of systems of sustenance and knowledge from practices of survival to centralized economies of capital growth.

Commissioned in part by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Caroline Monnet
Algonquin-French, born in Outaouais, Canada; lives in Montreal, Canada.

The undulating edges of the monumental sculpture The Flow Between Hard Places represent the sound waves created when uttering the word pasapkedjinawong in Anishinaabemowin (“the river that passes between the rocks”), as spoken by Anishaabe Elder Rose Wawatie-Beaudoin.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa
Born and lives in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Silleros were chairs used in colonial Guatemala and neighbouring regions to carry explorers, settlers, and even artists quite literally on the backs of Indigenous people. Calling attention to a stark division of class and labour, Ramírez-Figueroa’s cast aluminum interpretations imply another possible choreography—one that empties the chair of its colonial power.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

New Mineral Collective
Emiliija Škarnulytė, born in Vilinus, Lithuania; Tanya Busse, born in Moncton, Canada; both live in Tromsø, Norway.

New Mineral Collective is the largest and least productive mining company in the world. The company provides counter-prospecting operations and geo-trauma healing therapies at Small Arms as well as 259 Lake Shore Blvd E. A new series of sculptures investigates the shifting boundaries between deep time and the conditions of contemporary resource extraction. The sculptures represent the Earth’s scars and a folding of space and time in which absence becomes presence.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Qaggiq: Gathering Place, a related exhibition of work by Isuma co-curated by asinnajaq and Barbara Fisher, is currently on view at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto. For more information, please visit artmuseum.utoronto.ca.

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Jumblies Theatre & Arts with Ange Loft
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Born in Hamilton, Canada; lives in Paris, France

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Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.
Abel Rodríguez
Nonuya, born in Cahuinarí region, Colombia; lives in Bogotá, Colombia

“I had never drawn before, I barely knew how to write, but I had a whole world in my mind asking me to picture the plants.” Rodríguez, a Nonuya Elder, translates his encyclopedic knowledge of plants and trees of his homeland, the Igara Paraná River region, into highly detailed drawings.

Wilson Rodríguez
Nonuya, born in Cahuinarí region, Colombia; lives in Bogotá, Colombia

Wilson Rodríguez’s work is an extension of his father Abel’s botanical knowledge of the Amazonian jungle. The artist’s practice is distinguished, however, by its embrace of plants as a means of expanding perception and forging connections with the ancestral world.

Althea Thauberger & Kite
Thauberger, born in Saskatoon, Canada; lives in Vancouver, Canada; Kite, Oglála Lakȟóta, born in Sylmar, United States; lives in Montreal, Canada

Thauberger and Kite’s installation Call to Arms features audio and video recordings of their rehearsals with Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) York band in advance of a live performance of Kite’s musical scores during the Biennial’s opening weekend. Boasting the country’s only conch shell sextet, the band will play in the drill hall housed within the Navy’s “stone ship.”

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and presented in partnership with HMCS York. Made possible with the generous support of Partners in Art and Ann and Harry Malcolmson.

Live public performance on Sat, Sept 21, at 5:30pm.
For more details, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

Hajra Waheed
Born in Calgary, Canada; lives in Montreal, Canada

Part of Waheed’s ongoing visual novel Sea Change (2011–), Strata 1–24 captures personal and imagined narratives within the political context of extraction. Untitled (MAP), a classified map of the world’s largest offshore oil field, considers surveillance as a vertical occupation that reaches from satellites in the sky to far below the sea’s surface.

Hold Everything Dear, a related exhibition of work by Waheed, is currently on view at The Power Plant. For more information, please visit thepowerplant.org.

Selected Programs & Performances

Performance & Reading Series: Isonomia in Toronto
Every Sat | 2–4pm
Adrian Blackwell’s two interrelated structures at Small Arms and 259 Lake Shore Blvd E host weekly performances and readings. Invited guests include poet CAConrad, artists Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Camilo Godoy, Apache violinist Laura Ortman, Sister Co-Resister, and percussionist Marshall Trammell.

Diane Borsato:
YOU ARE A GOOD APPLE
Sun, Sept 29 | 1–4pm
Presented in partnership with the City of Mississauga and Culture Days
To inaugurate ORCHARD, a public art project commissioned by the City of Mississauga, artist Borsato brings people together to taste and learn about apples and community orchards. ORCHARD is a living sculpture made up of old and eccentric varietals of apple trees that will be planted by Borsato at Small Arms. The work expands ideas of public art and seeks to foster enduring connectedness to land, plants, food, and one another.

Talk: Anastacia Marx de Salcedo
Sun, Nov 10 | 1–3:30pm

Marx de Salcedo, author of Combat-Ready Kitchen: How the U.S. Military Shapes the Way You Eat (2015), discusses the military’s role in the technological development of processed foods and the distribution, commercialization, and effects of packaged goods within society.

Storytelling
Every Thurs | 4–6pm
Every Sat | 12–2pm

Storytelling seeks to shift the mediation of contemporary art from more conventional modes of interpreting and informing to narrating and embodying through weekly walks and conversations led by intergenerational and multilingual storytellers. Storytelling is available to community groups, schools, and universities, as well as other members of the public.

Small Arms hosts extensive programs beyond the above selection. For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
55 Unwin Avenue sits in the heart of Toronto’s Port Lands, an area that was created for industry by infill projects that disrupted a vital ecosystem—the marshlands of Ashbridges Bay—and its natural filtration system. Earth and rubble covered over important bird habitats and spawning grounds as well as hunting and fishing sites that date back 9,000 years.

Marked by heavy industry, much of the Port Lands is now contaminated by oil, heavy metals, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). Many companies abandoned their leases before they were bound by current environmental protocols. Coal plants lie dormant like hollowed-out sentinels from a former age. Farther east, along a human-made spit made from the rubble and detritus of city-building, shrubs grow between twisted rebar and bricks whose edges have been softened by decades of lapping water. Along the lakeshore, a concrete plant still chugs along, a lone barge tethered to its dock. Dump trucks speed past towering heaps of salt. Soon the remaining low-lying buildings will be razed to capitalize on the condo boom, and the slow deindustrialization of the area, which began in the 1980s, will accelerate to meet the needs of an economy increasingly based on technology and information.

The Port Lands and the mouth of the Don River are currently slated to be “renaturalized.” For some, these efforts to remanufacture nature herald the welcome prospect of parkland and residential development; for others, they signal a continued cycle of civic and colonial initiatives that seek to remake nature as a commodity for consumption.

Exhibiting Artist

**Curtis Talwst Santiago**  
Born in Edmonton, Canada

Built of rubble salvaged from construction sites across the city, Santiago’s *J’ouvert Temple* is a modern-day capriccio—an architectural fantasy informed by the artist’s experience of ancient and modern-day ruins. Viewed through holes in a fence, vignettes emerge from the debris, evoking a similar sense of intimacy (albeit on a larger scale) as the artist’s *Infinity Series* on view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E.

*Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and made possible with the generous support of Canadian Malartic, Agnico Eagle Mines, Yamana Gold, and Giant Containers.*

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
Prior to colonization, York University’s Keele Campus footprint was part of the tableland forests and valley lands between Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Ontario. In her master’s thesis, “Reading the York Landscape,” Liz Forsberg documents the archaeological findings that revealed that land along Black Creek was home to a significant Haudenosaunee village between 1450 and 1500. By the 1600s, it was inhabited by the Anishinaabe. In 1805, the boundary of the 1787 so-called Toronto Purchase was surreptitiously extended north to include what is now York’s campus.

Built in 1962 on 465 acres of parcelled land earmarked for subsidized housing developments by the Government of Canada, York’s campus buried fifteen tributary streams of Black Creek. Four secondary-growth woodlots were preserved during construction; they are still present today. Woodlots and farmhouses point to the presence of Pennsylvanian Dutch farmers, including the Stongs, who settled in the area after the American Revolution. Today, the Stong Farmhouse is home to artist and York professor Lisa Myers’ studio.

York University is situated in the neighbourhood known as Jane and Finch. The Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) features programming that is responsive to its suburban locale through residencies and commissions that support artists who engage with the diverse and nuanced cultural context of the wider Toronto area.

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with AGYU.

Exhibiting Artists

Jae Jarrell
Born and lives in Cleveland, United States

Jarrell began working professionally on Chicago’s South Side in the early 1960s and is a co-founder of AFRICOBRA (African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists). Her works disrupt the boundaries between fashion and sculpture, merging art and design with Black liberation politics. This installation gathers sculptures, garments, and archival material, representing almost fifty years of radical practice.

Jarrell’s work is co-presented by AGYU and the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Additional work by Jarrell is on view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E.

Caecilia Tripp
Based in New York, United States and Paris, France

Going Space and Other Worlding is the culmination of two years of residencies, research, and experimentation. Through film, performance, and sculptural installation, Tripp uses forms of reenactment and rehearsal to conjure alternative modes of freedom, utopia, and civil disobedience at the crossroads of globalization and cultural hybridity.

This exhibition, curated by Emelie Chhangur, is presented by AGYU. For more information, please visit agyu.art.

Artist Talk: Jae Jarrell
Mon, Sept 23 | 4–6pm

Presented in partnership with AGYU

Jarrell discusses her wearable artworks and sculptures, which embody the future-facing strengths and struggles of Chicago’s vital Black Arts Movement.

Storytelling: Borelson
Wed, Oct 16 | 6–8pm
Wed, Nov 6 | 6–8pm

Storytelling seeks to shift the mediation of contemporary art from more conventional modes of interpreting and informing to narrating and embodying through weekly walks and conversations. Rapper and spoken-word poet Borelson offers a performative response to works by artists Jae Jarrell and Caecilia Tripp installed at AGYU.

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
Developed in the 1950s, the St. Lawrence Seaway connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean and cities like Toronto to global markets. Sitting prominently on Lake Ontario, Harbourfront Centre was once a trucking warehouse that processed goods arriving by rail or ship. In 1972, the federal government expropriated 100 acres of Toronto’s waterfront for revitalization. The port was transformed into a public space, born out of a mandate to bring culture, education, recreation, and ultimately visitors to the lake.

The population around the harbour has since boomed, with the majority made up of first-generation Canadians. Today, with more than half of Toronto’s population born outside of Canada, the city is widely recognized for its cultural pluralism. But immigrant histories run deep in this city. Alongside French and British settler-colonialists, Toronto was also settled by freedom seekers from the southern United States; enslaved peoples fleeing Africa and the Caribbean; and labourers from China, India, and Eastern Europe. These communities and their diverse stories are important cornerstones of the city’s histories, and current and future identities.

Occupying a central place in what is best described as formerly derelict industrial buildings, Harbourfront Centre partners with more than 450 organizations each year. Commencing in 1974, early programming included literary readings, contemporary dance, exhibition spaces, and active public craft studios. In 1991, Harbourfront Centre was established as a platform for artists, and the ten-acre site was transformed into one of the few places in Toronto where multiple forms of production, performance, and international programming coexist.

Arin Rungjang
Born and lives in Bangkok, Thailand

Ravisara is a multi-channel video installation that explores stories and strategies of postcolonial resistance among Thai female immigrants in Germany. Choreographed, performed, and filmed as a means of both translating and protecting individual identities, six women's stories are presented as part of the installation.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art, co-presented with Harbourfront Centre, and made possible with the generous support of DAAD.

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with Harbourfront Centre.
Cinesphere: The Drowned World

During the Biennial, the Cinesphere becomes a world within a world, merging film and sound art with scent and changing atmospheric conditions. From cosmological origin stories, to a future in which civilization is extinct, The Drowned World contrasts deep time with the decline of global ecologies.

The project’s title refers to J.G. Ballard’s 1962 archaeopsychic cli-fi novel in which the ice caps have melted and submerged the world, forcing the migration of a dwindling and devolving human species into the Canadian Arctic.

Prehistoric sounds; the sonification of a dying star; the submarine beats of Detroit’s bubble metropolis; the sacrifice of a muskrat; the love of an octopus. Within this brave new world, the artificial boundaries of modernity’s civilizations have evaporated, and life in all its forms continues to shift.

Guest curated by Charles Stankievech

Exhibiting Artists


With the creative and generous contribution of COMME des GARÇONS and MVS Proseminar, University of Toronto—John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

On May 22, 1971, Ontario Place opened to the public as a theme park devoted to showcasing the province’s cultural and economic vitality. Designed by Eberhard Zeidler, the futuristic campus was built across an artificial archipelago in Lake Ontario, south of Exhibition Place. Following the success of Expo 67 in Montreal, where a group of Canadian experimental filmmakers debuted a new multi-channel film technology, Ontario Place positioned itself as an architectural and technological forerunner by building a geodesic dome to house the world’s first permanent IMAX theatre. Zeidler’s utopian playground—the Cinesphere and its interconnected network of floating exhibition Pods—continues to define the western stretch of Toronto’s waterfront.

After a partial closure of the park in 2012, Ontario Place reopened in 2017 as a public space for recreation, leisure, and cultural programming.

Ontario Place is the site for two different Biennial projects: guest curator Charles Stankievech’s cosmological program, The Drowned World, at the Cinesphere, and Wigwam Chi-Chemung, an art installation and Indigenous interpretive learning centre by artist, poet, and teacher Elder Duke Redbird at the Marina.

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with Ontario Place Corporation.
The Marina at Ontario Place

Wigwam Chi-Chemung (Big House Canoe) is a floating art installation and Indigenous interpretive learning centre by Elder Duke Redbird. Docked at the Marina, Wigwam Chi-Chemung tells the story of Indigenous presence on Toronto’s waterfront. The forty-foot pontoon houseboat has been covered with artwork by Redbird and Philip Cote, a painter and muralist from Moose Deer Point First Nation.

Partners in Wigwam Chi-Chemung include Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Place Corporation, Myseum of Toronto, SummerWorks Performance Festival, and Young People’s Theatre (YPT).

For further information and related events, please visit www.wigwamchichemung.com.

Open Studio: Elder Duke Redbird
Sat, Oct 5 | 2–5pm
Sat, Oct 12 | 2–5pm

Artist and poet Elder Duke Redbird’s Open Studio sessions at the Wigwam Chi-Chemung docked at the Marina offer visitors an opportunity to ask questions, learn from, and engage with the perspectives of Indigenous Elders.

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

Spanning both sides of the Don River, Riverdale Park opened in 1880. Like the river itself, the park has been shaped and reshaped many times over the last two centuries. Prior to being zoned a public space, it was part of settler John Scadding’s holdings. The City of Toronto purchased the land to construct a jail and an industrial farm. This and subsequent developments uncovered Indigenous belongings, homes, and agricultural sites, including 7,000 year-old slate tools, Wendat longhouses, and corn fields dating back to 1300 CE. The City’s current proposal to rename the Lower Don Parklands in Anishinaabemowin represents an opportunity to recognize its deep Indigenous roots.

The Lower Don River itself once flowed right through Riverdale Park before it was radically straightened in the 1880s as a part of the City’s Don Improvement Plan. Due to its natural cycle of flooding and heavily polluted waters—at one time, thirty-seven sewage treatment plants spilled their effluent into the river—the municipality forcibly channelled the Lower Don River to contain its flow, arguing that the tributary was a threat to public health. This urbanized watershed has a long history of ecological degradation, having been contaminated at different turns by high phosphorus levels from fertilizer run-off, E. coli from sewage overflows, and chloride from the dumping of road salt and microplastics. These pollutants have created an environment inhospitable to the native flora and fauna that once thrived in this river valley, which is now host to an incredibly high percentage of invasive species.

Riverdale Park evokes Toronto’s history of altered, buried, and polluted rivers and begs the question: What are the rights of bodies of water in the face of development?

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with Evergreen and the City of Toronto.
Ryerson Image Centre

Accessible entrance, washrooms, ramps, elevators, and parking

AODA-compliant building

TTC: Dundas Station
Bike Share: Gould St / Yonge St (Ryerson University); 111 Bond St (North of Dundas St E); and 38 Dundas St E

Parking: Paid

33 Gould St
Toronto, ON M5B 1W1

Tues | 11–6pm
Wed | 11–8pm
Thurs–Fri | 11–6pm
Sat–Sun | 12–5pm
Mon | closed

Free entry

Ryerson University is on the grounds of the original Toronto Normal School, the first teachers college in Ontario, founded by Egerton Ryerson in 1847. A colonial institution, it was developed out of the need for education in Upper Canada. Before it evolved to become the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), the Normal School gave rise to many institutions, including museums, societies, and laboratories that eventually became the Royal Ontario Museum, the Ontario School of Art (now OCAD University), and the Ontario Agricultural College.

During World War II, the Normal School was forced to relocate from its St. James Square facilities so they could be converted into a training centre for the Royal Canadian Air Force. Through a federal-provincial partnership after the war, the St. James Square property was given over to become the Toronto Training and Re-Establishment Institute, which had a post-war mandate to train former service people and fill a demand for skilled workers, before it became the Ryerson Institute of Technology in 1948. The newly-founded trade school offered training in multiple fields, such as architectural drafting, costume design, interior design, and photography.

In 1993, Ryerson became a university and has since expanded considerably. The Ryerson Image Centre (RIC) was founded in 2012 and includes three public gallery spaces, an extensive archive, and a research centre. Focused on research as well as the teaching and exhibition of photography and related media, the RIC has built an expansive collection and catalogue of more than 375,000 objects, including the Black Star Collection of press photography and several individual artist archives.

Exhibiting Artist

Syrus Marcus Ware
born in Montreal, Canada;
lives in Toronto, Canada

Ancestors Can You Read Us? (Dispatches from the Future) is half of a two-part installation at the RIC and 259 Lake Shore Blvd E that draws on the shared language of speculative fiction and political activism. Ware transforms the Salah J. Bachir New Media Wall into an imagined time portal through which the next generation of racialized activists offers insights into a future radically altered by climate change.

Ancestors Can You Read Us? (Dispatches from the Future) is co-commissioned by the RIC and the Toronto Biennial of Art. Antarctica, a related installation by Ware, is on view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E.

Artist Talk:
Syrus Marcus Ware

Wed, Nov 27 | 7pm

Presented by the RIC

Artist, activist, and scholar Ware speaks to the role of his intersectional practice in challenging oppressive systems as part of the Howard and Carole Tanenbaum Lecture Series.

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
In 1981, a very small City of Toronto park (80 by 100 feet) was created off King Street for temporary public art. It was initiated by benefactors the Louis L. Odette Family in collaboration with the city (now the sole operator) and curated by Rina Greer until 2014. Despite its diminutive size, the Toronto Sculpture Garden has hosted installations by more than 80 artists, from a full-sized log trappers’ cabin, to a disco bunker with bright pink blast doors muffling the music inside.

Sitting directly opposite St. James Cathedral, and formerly between two Georgian-style buildings that have since been demolished, the park falls within the ten-block grid of what was the Old Town of York, founded in 1793. The site is the previous home of Oak Hall, a four-story commercial building unique for its wide glass windows and cast iron Edwardian front; it was razed to create a parking lot in 1938. Like much early colonial planning in Canada, the grid denaturalized the land, cutting through and covering over natural boundaries, including many waterways that emptied into Lake Ontario. One of these lost rivers ran less than fifty feet west of the Garden.

Unlike a civic monument, which can calcify history, the Toronto Sculpture Garden is consequential because of its transience, offering temporary programming in the face of a development history that consistently raises the spectre of demolition.

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with the City of Toronto.

Exhibiting Artist

Lou Sheppard
Born in unceded Mi'kmaq territory, Canada; lives in K’jipuktuk I Halifax, Canada

Sheppard’s audio work *Dawn Chorus/Evensong* interrupts the denaturalized landscape with music created through the transposition of spectrograms of birdsong on the shores of Lake Ontario. The composition is played outdoors over multiple speakers, harmonizing with the streetcars, cathedral bells, cars, birds, and other melodies of Toronto’s urban soundscape.

Co-commissioned and co-presented by the City of Toronto and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and is made possible with the generous support of the RBC Emerging Canadian Artist Program.

Selected Programs & Performances

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
From an architectural standpoint, Union Station has had many lives. The first wooden structure was erected in 1858 and rebuilt twice before it was destroyed by the Great Fire of Toronto of 1904. The landmark Beaux-Arts building we know today opened in 1927. Every architectural iteration tells a rich and complex story of how the city and surrounding areas were transformed by the expansion of railway lines that propagated trade as well as commercial, industrial, and financial interests.

At the time of its public opening in 1927, Union Station was situated near Toronto’s natural shoreline, which has been extended south by almost a kilometer over the last century. The Toronto Harbour Commission Building, located a block from the station, is a present-day marker for what was the shoreline at the time of human settlement. Earlier still, before the Laurentide Ice Sheet melted, the shoreline traced the edge of what is now Davenport Road.

Today, Union Station is the most trafficked transit hub in the country, with over 300,000 people moving through it each day. Over the past decade, the City of Toronto has been leading a revitalization project to preserve the building’s heritage elements, improve transportation, and implement free multidisciplinary programming for the public. Ultimately, the station tells the complex story of how geological changes and urban infrastructure have come together to constitute the place we now call Toronto: a bustling city relatively divorced from its shoreline, sitting atop long-since buried waterways that served as our earliest routes of trade, transportation, and connection.

This Biennial site was made possible through a partnership with Toronto Union.

Exhibiting Artist

Luis Jacob
Born in Lima, Peru; lives in Toronto, Canada

The View from Here is a two-part installation located in Union Station’s Oak Room and 259 Lake Shore Blvd E. At Union, Jacob’s contemporary photographs are paired with the artist’s collection of rare maps and street views, representing different yet overlapping narratives of the same places. The tension between these views invites a reconsideration of Toronto’s identity and presumed cohesion as a city.

Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art and co-presented by Toronto Union.
The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) operates on land that is the territory of the Anishinaabe (Mississauga) Nation and was also the territory of the Wendat and Haudenosaunee. The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant is an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Toronto, which has always been a trading centre for First Nations, is also governed by a treaty between the Government of Canada and the Mississaugas of the New Credit (Anishinaabe Nation).

The AGO’s original home was The Grange, built in 1817. The property was once owned by Harriet Boulton Smith who, after joining a community of artists and business people that advocated for an art gallery in the city, gifted the estate and the building in 1902. The Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT) was established in 1913.

New immigrants to Toronto settled nearby in “The Ward” between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. It became home to Jews, Italians, Africans, Irish refugees, and later Chinese communities. By the time the AGT became the AGO in 1966, the area was a thriving, densely populated, and culturally rich neighbourhood.

In October 2017, the AGO established the Indigenous + Canadian Art department to better reflect the Nation-to-Nation relationship that underlines the treaty that allowed Canada to come into existence, acknowledging the historical and contemporary position of Indigenous art as existing prior to and extending beyond Canada’s borders.


Exhibiting Artist

Lisa Reihana
Māori-Ngāpuhi; born and lives in Auckland, Aotearoa | New Zealand

In Pursuit of Venus [infected] was conceived as a response to the 1800s wallpaper Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique (1804–05) by Jean-Gabriel Charvet. It is a monumental installation that brings to life Māori and Pacific Indigenous peoples’ relationships with their cultural knowledge and spaces.

Lisa Reihana: In Pursuit of Venus [infected] is curated by Julie Nagam and presented by the AGO in partnership with imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. For more information, please visit ago.ca.

Tai Whetuki—House of Death Redux, a related work by Reihana, is currently on view at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E. For more information, please visit torontobiennial.org.

Artist Talk:
Lisa Reihana

Fri, Oct 25 | 6–7pm

Presented by the AGO and imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival

In conversation with curator Julie Nagam, Reihana discusses her installation, In Pursuit of Venus [infected], on view at the AGO, and its sister project, Tai Whetuki—House of Death Redux, featured at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E.

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
The Art Museum at the University of Toronto is comprised of the University of Toronto Art Centre at University College (a Biennial site) and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery at Hart House. Just a few steps apart, the two galleries were federated in 2014, working as one entity to produce a year-round schedule of exhibitions and programming focused on contemporary art.

The University of Toronto Art Centre was opened in 1996 and is housed in the Laidlaw Wing, a 1964 addition to the mid-nineteenth-century buildings of University College, which opened as a non-denominational institution of higher learning to men in 1859 and to women in 1884. In the nineteenth century, cows grazed in pastures behind the college. The building is designated as a national historic site; it was also home to the oldest LGBTQ student organization in Canada, the University of Toronto Homophile Association, which was founded in 1969.

The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery was opened in 1983; it manages the Hart House Permanent Art Collection, initiated in 1922, which focuses on acquiring works by living artists in Canada. Hart House occupies a heritage building that sits at the former site of McCaul’s Pond, which was created in the early 1860s by damming Taddle Creek, once a breeding ground for salmon. Hart House and University College are part of the University of Toronto, which was originally founded in 1827 as King’s College, one of the first institutions of its kind in Canada. The university is built on lands that, for thousands of years, have been the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and continue to be home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island.

This exhibition is a partnership between the Art Museum and the Toronto Biennial of Art.
The Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto Canada (MOCA) has been active for more than twenty-five years. It spans five floors of the Tower Automotive Building at 158 Sterling Rd in the Lower Junction neighbourhood, having moved from a refurbished textile factory on Queen Street W, which has since become a commercial office building. Currently undergoing substantive residential and commercial redevelopment, the Junction has a history similar to that of the Port Lands, as both were principal centres of manufacturing and railway transit in the city.

When it was built in 1919, the Tower Automotive Building was the tallest building in Toronto. It operated as a factory until 2006, first producing aluminium products during World War II, and later making items such as kitchen tools, bottle caps, and car parts. Its distinctive, concrete flat-slab architecture—considered innovative at the time of its opening a century ago—has been retained throughout recent renovations that have seen the site become a new cultural hub. Today the building is home to artists’ studios as well as art and ideas in the form of exhibitions and programming. Like many of Toronto’s cultural centres, it is a site rich with stories that pertain to centuries of industry.

Exhibiting Artist

Shezad Dawood
Born and lives in London, United Kingdom

Episodes 1 and 5 of Leviathan Cycle, Dawood’s expanding video series, are on view at MOCA. Against the backdrop of a cataclysm, the videos traverse territories and themes, interrogating colonial and Indigenous politics. Alongside them, Part 1 of the Leviathan Legacy VR trilogy delves into a future 150 years ahead that is irreversibly altered by climate change.

Episode 5 of Leviathan Cycle is co-commissioned by Fogo Island Arts, MOCA, A Tale of a Tub (Rotterdam), and the Toronto Biennial of Art, and made possible with the generous support of the British Council. It is on view Sept 19–Nov 3. For more information, please visit museumcontemporaryart.ca.

This exhibition is a partnership between MOCA and the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Shezad Dawood, Leviathan Legacy Pt 1, 2018, VR environment. Courtesy the artist.

Selected Programs & Performances

Conversation:
Shezad Dawood & Alice Xia Zhu
Mon, Sept 23 | 7–9pm

Presented in partnership with MOCA

Dawood is joined by researcher Xia Zhu for a conversation addressing the fate of microplastics in aquatic contexts, from San Francisco Bay to the Arctic.

For up-to-date information and a full list of related programs, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.
The land where The Power Plant now sits was once under water. At the outset of the twentieth century, Toronto’s central waterfront was a mix of boggy marshes and small-scale wharves animated by steamship traffic. In 1912, the Toronto Harbour Commission set out to transform the waterfront into a major port for larger vessels expected from the future expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The city expanded south, burying the original wharves under 10 metres of dirt dredged up from the bottom of the lake. The original coal-burning powerhouse was built in 1926 to supply energy to the Toronto Terminal Warehouse (now Queen’s Quay Terminal), all of which was built atop 10,000 wooden pilings driven into the lakebed. The area bustled for decades, but by the 1970s, with the decline of industry, the central lakefront fell into disuse. The warehouse closed and the powerhouse was decommissioned.

In 1972, the federal government acquired 100 acres of Toronto lakefront and created a Crown corporation mandated to revitalize the waterfront and use culture, education, and recreation to attract local and international visitors. After the Harbourfront Corporation was founded in 1976, the Art Gallery at Harbourfront was established and became a centrepiece of their development plan.

The Art Gallery was given the opportunity to renovate the powerhouse in 1980, and The Power Plant officially opened in its current location in 1987. It has since become Canada’s leading, non-collecting public gallery dedicated to contemporary art, attracting diverse audiences and anchoring a creative community at the edge of a once-again bustling waterfront.

Exhibiting Artist

Hajra Waheed
Born in Calgary, Canada; lives in Montreal, Canada

Hold Everything Dear takes a single visual form—the spiral—as a poetic starting point to reflect on the processes of upheaval in human experience. For Waheed, the spiral visualizes ascent and descent, growth and decay, evoking both vital forms in nature as well as notions of flux inherent in forced displacement and political turmoil.

Hold Everything Dear is presented by The Power Plant and on view Sept 21–Jan 5. A related installation by Waheed is on view at Small Arms. For more information, please visit torontobiennial.org.

Contribution Artist

Photograph of artist gathering miracle fruit, River Machuca, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica. Courtesy the artist.
How do we learn and listen with the lake?
Taking up experiential and artist-led approaches, Programs explores issues, practices, and methodologies related to The Shoreline Dilemma.

Co-Relations
The Co-Relations program explores critical issues—livability, access, interconnectivity—that intersect with and extend ideas addressed in The Shoreline Dilemma.

Co-Relations demonstrates a deep commitment to placemaking in a series of performances, conversations, and gatherings. All participants are invited into shifting and expanding dialogues that reveal the often invisible, intangible, or overlooked connections to each other and the environment: mycelial fungi workshops investigate networked growth beneath our feet; apple tastings and orchard plantings reclaim and revive rare historic apple varietals; and responses to a dispatch from a dystopian future initiate action in the present day. These unseen or unnoticed connections provide insights into how to better sustain symbiotic relationships over time.

Co-Relations builds on methodologies of care, empathy, and understanding in an attempt to repair what has been lost or forgotten. Drawing from relational practices and social processes, these events respond to emerging conversations during the inaugural Biennial and extend them to explore their complexities in locations and with communities across Toronto.

Co-Relations is made possible with the generous support of the TD Bank Group through its corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment.
The Toronto Biennial of Art Residency is an experimental platform for artists whose socially engaged practices challenge disciplinary and aesthetic conventions in order to expand notions of community and enact social change.

For its inaugural residency, the Biennial is proud to present the collective Life of a Craphead, whose work spans performance art, film, and curation. For more information on all related Residency activities, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

The 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art Residency is presented in partnership with Ireland Park Foundation and Trinity Square Video, and made possible with the generous support of TD Bank Group through its corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment.


Currents

Currents is a platform for artist-led programming that invites visitors to engage directly with the creative and critical processes at work in the Exhibition. This stream consists of talks, performances, symphonies, star-gazing, and ceremonies that trace ideas circulating within and beyond the Biennial’s main sites and connect with other Exhibition locations. Be it through acts of restitution, revolutionary wearables, ways of knowing with the water, or the ethics of making, Currents asks participants to reconsider what it means to be in and out of relation in the context of artworks featured in this year’s Exhibition.

Storytelling

Storytelling seeks to shift the mediation of contemporary art away from conventional modes of interpreting and informing to narrating and embodying through weekly walks and conversations. An intergenerational and multilingual group of storytellers share personal insights and experiences of the city as they guide visitors through the Exhibition’s installations, research, and political perspectives. Taking us along hidden river routes, through archives, and into speculative futures, storytellers bring submerged narratives related to Toronto’s shifting shoreline to the surface.

Tools for Learning

Tools for Learning, generated with Biennial participants and collaborators, comprises group exercises, performative scores, proposals for collaborative thinking and making, artist interviews, and audio tours. Tools can be instruments to make and repair, but also strategies to undo and refuse. Whether in the Biennial, the classroom, or at home, our multimedia toolbox can be put to use by educators, students, and other community members in connecting their own experiences and curricula with process-based, playful approaches to contemporary artistic practices. Practically and conceptually, Tools for Learning offers materials and methods for reimagining relations with land, water, and each other.

Tools for Learning is made possible with founding support from the Lang Family Foundation and a generous contribution from the Rossy Family Foundation.

The 2019 Toronto Biennial of Art Residency is presented in partnership with Ireland Park Foundation and Trinity Square Video, and made possible with the generous support of TD Bank Group through its corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment.

Site-Specific Programs


Moving beyond Exhibition venues, the following site-specific programs take place at locations across Toronto and Mississauga. For a selection of events occurring at Exhibition venues, please refer to the programming highlights under each Exhibition site.

For locations, wayfinding, accessibility, and up-to-date information, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

Procession:
Sinaaqpagiaqtuut/The Long-Cut (Embassy of Imagination)
Sat, Sept 21 | 4–7:30pm
Starts at The Bentway (250 Fort York Blvd) and moves along the waterfront to 259 Lake Shore Blvd E
Accessible washrooms and parking
Presented in conjunction with a related installation at 259 Lake Shore Blvd E, Sinaaqpagiaqtuut/The Long-Cut is a procession that begins in Kinngait, NU and continues in Toronto. Moving from The Bentway to 259 Lake Shore Blvd E, the procession features works by Kinngait youth from Peter Pitseolak High School made in collaboration with the Oasis Skateboard Factory School in Toronto. Members of the public are invited to respectfully follow the procession.

Co-commissioned and presented in partnership with The Bentway, and produced by PA System.

Conversation & Stargazing: Decolonizing Astrophysics with Elder Duke Redbird and Dr. Renée Hložek
Sun, Sept 22 | 7–9pm
Marie Curtis Park
2 Forty Second St, Etobicoke
Artist and poet Elder Duke Redbird and astrophysicist Dr. Hložek discuss the human relationship to the cosmos from a multiplicity of perspectives, considering their intersections as a potential path toward indigenizing astronomy curricula.

Presented in partnership with AGYU.

Screening & Workshop: Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital Project
Tour & Screening:
Thurs, Oct 3 | 6–8pm
Humber College Lakeshore Campus, G Building
17 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Dr
Workshop:
Sat, Nov 30 | 1–4pm
Humber Art Commons
3253 Lake Shore Blvd W
Accessible washrooms and parking

From 1890 to 1979, the Humber College Lakeshore Campus was a psychiatric hospital. The Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital Cemetery is two kilometres north of the campus, where 1,511 patients are buried in mostly unmarked graves.

Humber College students and members from the Among Friends Community Mental Health program invite community groups to gather and remember patients’ names through talks and community art projects that engage with people’s lived experiences of the mental health-care system.

Presented in partnership with Humber College, Among Friends Community Mental Health Organization, and Workman Arts.

Walk & Workshop: Mushroom Foray with Outdoor School and Alan Gan
Sun, Oct 13 | 10am–1pm
Walk begins at Old Mill Station
In the spirit of John Cage and Fluxus artists searching for fungi in the forest, artist Diane Borsato and Amish Morrel of Outdoor School, with Gan of the Mycological Society of Toronto, invite visitors to a community mycological foray—an informal, family-friendly event that offers participants the opportunity to collect fungi and learn about the culture of mushrooming.
Screening & Performance:
BUSH Gallery: Beach(fire) Blanket Bingo Biennial with Lisa Myers

Sat, Oct 19 | 6–10pm
Ward’s Island Beach, Toronto Island

BUSH Gallery, with guest artist Myers, invites the public to gather around a beach fire and engage in the methodologies of exchange embedded in gift economies and philosophies. The participatory work examines the circulation of materials within and outside of the art system and Indigenous communities. BUSH Gallery is an Indigenous-led, land-based, experimental, and conceptual gallery that creates a radically inclusive space of art and action.

Presented in partnership with imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival.

Performance:
single use salmon plogging by Ayumi Goto

Sun, Oct 20 | 9am–3:30pm
Toronto Waterfront Marathon route

Goto runs the Toronto Waterfront Marathon as the half-human/half-salmon geisha gyrl in a performance addressing labour, responsibility, and the impact of environmental disaster. The work is dedicated to the late Anishinaabe grandmother and Water Walker Josephine Mandamin, who circumnavigated the Great Lakes to raise awareness about water pollution, and David S. Buckel, a lawyer, environmental activist, and runner, who self-immolated to protest humanity’s addiction to fossil fuels.

Co-commissioned and curated by FADO Performance Art Centre.

Talk & Performance:
Patrisse Cullors, Emory Douglas & Syrus Marcus Ware

Sat, Nov 9 | 1:30pm–5pm
Main Hall, 1 Spadina Cir

This event explores the intersections of art, activism, and futurity in relation to decades of Black liberation movements. Cullors (co-founder of Black Lives Matter), Douglas (Minister of Culture and Illustrator for the Black Panther Party from 1967–1980s), and Ware (member of Black Lives Matter Toronto and Biennial exhibiting artist), come together in an afternoon of exchange and performance.

Presented in partnership with MVS Proseminar, University of Toronto—John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

TELLINGS

Workshop:
Sat, Nov 16 | 10:30am–1pm

Performance:
Sat, Nov 16 | 3–7pm

Curated in collaboration with Maiko Tanaka

TELLINGS is a post-human vocal concert that seeks to challenge traditional conceptions of voice. Artists working experimentally with sound—live electronics, deep listening, sound art—perform compositions that explore new modes of vocal production. TELLINGS includes performances by Jeneen Frei Njootli, Erin Gee, Tšëmnâ Igharas, Stephanie Loveless, and Miya Masaoka. For up-to-date information and locations, please visit torontobiennial.org/programs.

Presented in partnership with Trinity Square Video.

The Toronto Biennial of Art would not be possible without the generous support and civic leadership of its patrons, corporate communities, and government funders. Their foundational investments have been instrumental in helping us realize an ambitious new project that elevates Toronto as an international destination for contemporary art. We are deeply grateful to our inaugural supporters as well as our team members and creative partners for their benevolence, commitment, and confidence.
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The Toronto Biennial of Art’s inaugural creative partnerships with local, national, and international organizations lay the foundation for long-term, meaningful exchanges that will continue past its first edition. We place shared visions at the core of our Exhibition and Programs, and thank our partners for their trust and inspiration.

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SKETCH Working Arts
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SummerWorks
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Tangled Art + Disability
Toronto Sculpture Garden
Toronto Union
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University of Toronto
WalkingLab
Waterfront Toronto
West Baffin Eskimo Co-Operative
Workman Arts
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