

Mobile Arts Curriculum



TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART

TORONTOBIENNIAL.ORG

What is the Toronto Biennial of Art?



Cyanotype Workshop led by Embassy of Imagination and PA System, 2019. Photo: Yuula Benivolski.

Contemporary art biennials are large-scale, citywide events that take place every two years. The first was in 1895 with the inaugural Venice Biennale, a project that presented curated international contemporary art in national pavilions from around the world.

Biennials are sites of experimentation; they offer artists, curators, and visitors an alternative to the traditional museum framework while engaging flexibly with the local arts sector. There are now hundreds of biennials taking place worldwide in cities that include São Paulo, Berlin, and Istanbul, and as of 2019, the city of Toronto.

Toronto is not new to the grand exhibition. Exhibition Place, founded in 1879, has been home to many large-scale events within the city. Presenting cutting-edge technological developments and industrial innovations, Exhibition Place underscored the nation's role in the conquest of land and colonial empire-building; the grand exhibition therefore also lies in the shadows of Canada's darker nation-building history, where shorelines, waterways, and an Indigenous presence of at least 12,000 years has historically been all but blotted out.

The Toronto Biennial of Art (TBA) 2019, titled [*The Shoreline Dilemma*](#), was the first chapter of a two-part biennial, tracing interconnected narratives and ecologies of the ever-changing shoreline of Lake Ontario. These narratives revealed systems of resistance against industrial colonial culture, and the living histories embedded in and around the shoreline.

The second chapter of the Biennial, [*What Water Knows, the Land Remembers*](#), explores above ground and hidden tributaries that channel water into Lake Ontario, as well as the ravine systems that shape the city's geography. Revealing entangled narratives and ecologies across space and time, this Biennial extends the interconnections of those sites, and expands on the central question from 2019, "What does it mean to be in relation?" It envisions expansive forms of kinship – with each other, our ecologies and with our collaborators – and reflects the belief that humans are in deep relation with other living beings.

What is the Mobile Arts Curriculum (MAC)?

The TBA Mobile Arts Curriculum (MAC) is the 2022 addition to our [Tools for Learning Program](#). The MAC is a collection of artist-led, curriculum-supportive guides and activities developed to provide tools for engagement with TBA's artworks and exhibitions.

Designed for the engagement of various age groups, and facilitated by educators or caregivers, the MAC will be accessible as digital and physical toolkits containing (but not limited to) worksheets, notes, recordings, images and select activity materials, for use at home, in the classroom, or within TBA's exhibitions.

Who is the MAC intended for?

MAC tools are for curious visitors who would like to further engage with TBA content; they are intended for an inter-generational age-range of learners including families, arts educators, and caregivers, whether it be in class, in communities, or around Biennial sites. MAC tools are Ontario-curriculum supportive, and provide guided questions and activities for inter-contextual dialogue grounded in ecological justice and the arts.

How are the MAC tools accessed?

You can find all of our MAC tools readily available online on the Toronto Biennial of Art [Mobile Arts Curriculum page](#), complete with printable PDF versions. MAC toolkits will also be available for consultation and engagement (free of charge) at our TBA sites: 72 Perth (Toronto) and the Small Arms Inspection Building (Mississauga) and other affiliate locations.

Why "Tools"?

A tool is a device or implement used to carry out a particular function in building or reparation. The word "tool" has been used in other ways, too. In "Tools for Conviviality" (1973), philosopher Ivan Illich looked into practical and political strategies to find ways people can access information to guide their own learning. We use the idea of "tools" here as implements used to unlearn the past and build stronger futures by making contemporary art accessible to everyone.

“What tools do you need when visiting a biennial? Maybe a tool for making notes, for finding the way, for looking more closely, for resting. Tools can be used to help us make and repair, and sometimes also undo and break. Could a tool become part of making and experience?”

TBA Tools for Learning (2019)



Jumblies Theatre & Arts with Ange Loft, Talking Treaties, 2019, multi-media installation, dimensions variable. Commissioned by the Toronto Biennial of Art.

Photo:
Toni Hafkenscheld.

Where Are We?

The 2019 Toronto Biennial was sited along the Toronto and Mississauga connected shoreline. Over millions of years, the shoreline has retreated to form Lake Ontario's basin and the earliest human inhabitants were forced to adapt to the changing topography of the area. In the colonial era post-contact, surges in industrial production and economic growth radically altered, extended, reshaped and paved over the shoreline. These contexts deeply informed the inaugural Biennial's curatorial and artistic direction.

Exhibition and programming sites for the 2022 Biennial move inland from the shoreline to follow the tributaries, above ground and hidden, which shape this place. Biennial sites are grouped in relation to these seen and unseen waterways and run along Etobicoke Creek, the Laurentian Channel, Garrison Creek, and Taddle Creek. *What Water Knows, the Land Remembers* draws from polyphonic histories sedimented in and around Toronto to reveal various narratives and ecologies from across time and space.

Land Acknowledgement

As the Toronto Biennial of Art team, we are accountable to upholding our responsibility to lands we are privileged to work upon. Stretching from the Small Arms Inspection Building in Mississauga in the West, to the Port Lands in the East, from Sugar Beach in the South, to Arsenal Contemporary Art in the North, our events and activities would not be possible without the care that the stewards of these lands have given for thousands of years.

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. These lands are now home to many Indigenous peoples from across the globe.

We understand the role of settler-colonial privilege and that this land acknowledgment cannot undo immensely violent histories against Indigenous peoples on these lands. As a team and in close collaboration with artists, partners, colleagues, and our board, we continue working to dismantle the legacy of colonial systems that impact all aspects of our practices to the best of our ability. Through our participation in this work and in holding ourselves accountable, we carry forward a commitment to listen, (un)learn, and grow.

Please visit the About section on our website to read our full Land Acknowledgment:

torontobiennial.org/land-acknowledgement.

Our 2022 **Exhibition sites** include:

THE SMALL ARMS
INSPECTION BUILDING

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY
ART TORONTO (MOCA)

72 PERTH AVENUE

ARSENAL
CONTEMPORARY
ART TORONTO

5 LOWER JARVIS STREET

COLBORNE LODGE

FORT YORK NATIONAL
HISTORIC SITE, TORONTO
HISTORY MUSEUMS

MERCER UNION

TEXTILE MUSEUM OF CANADA

Selected Biennial Sites

72 Perth Avenue was formerly the Praise Sanctuary Ministry, Church of the Firstborn Apostolic, a Pentecostal church that has now been relocated to North York. Situated next to the railpath, the passing GO trains are audible inside this former place of worship.

The Small Arms Inspection Building in Mississauga is a reminder of the region's military history and its complex representation in our imaginations today. Did you know that when the Small Arms was in full operation—manufacturing hand-held weapons for the Canadian and Allied forces during the Second World War—ninety percent of its staff were women?

Arsenal Contemporary Art is a private contemporary art and cultural initiative founded by patrons Pierre and Anne-Marie Trahan. It is devoted to the support, promotion, and development of Canadian contemporary art through diverse endeavors. Arsenal Contemporary Art opened in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood in 2013, and is located in a refurbished industrial building.

5 Lower Jarvis is a part of Daniels Waterfront, a mixed-use building housing academic, office, retail and arts spaces, envisioned to accelerate the revitalization of the waterfront. The site was formerly occupied by the Sugar Contemporary art space, named for its proximity to the Redpath Sugar Refinery.



For a full list of TBA sites, please visit:
torontobiennial.org/exhibition-sites/

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Only the landscape is not empty at all. It is traced over with ancient lines, over 2000 years old, demarcating fantastic patterns and shapes: geometric forms begging decryption, and a bestiary of animals, including a guano bird, a spider monkey, a dog, and a hummingbird.

Hélène Frichot
How to make yourself a Feminist Design Power Tool (2016)

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A Walk Across Space and Time led by Jane Wolff and Susan Schwartzberg, 2019. Photo: Yuula Benivolski.

Colophon Mobile Arts Curriculum

Emily Schimp

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[Talking Treaties Collective](#)

[Textiles Museum of Canada](#)

[Toronto Landscape Observatory](#)

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(torontobiennial.org).

“

If you want us to change the world someday, we at least
have to live long enough to grow up! Shouts the child.

Audre Lorde

The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House (1979)

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