

## Indigenous art tells Edmonton's story

### *Artworks unveiled for Indigenous Art Park*

April 12, 2016

Six artworks symbolizing Edmonton's rich Indigenous history were unveiled with the help of Mayor Don Iveson, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Grand Chief Tony Alexis and Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras.



Canadian Indigenous artists Mary Anne Barkhouse, Marianne Nicholson, Jerry Whitehead, Duane Linklater, Amy Malbeuf, and Tiffany Shaw-Collinge were selected to create artworks for the Indigenous Art Park to be located within Queen Elizabeth Park. The artworks celebrate Edmonton's shared history with Indigenous peoples, and tell the story of this place.

"For centuries, the banks of the North Saskatchewan River have been a place of gathering and commerce," said Mayor Don Iveson. "The Indigenous Art Park is an extension of that gathering place by enabling new relationships and renewing existing ties built around reconciliation and the recognition of our Indigenous community."

The selected artists created their artwork proposals following an in-depth workshop with Elders, Indigenous knowledge holders, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta and other Indigenous residents in Edmonton in 2015. Artists will continue to consult with the community during the creation of their artistic concepts.

"Public art is very much about place-making," says Katherine Kerr, Public Art Director for the Edmonton Arts Council, the organization that provides stewardship of the City of Edmonton's Public Art Collection. "We want the Indigenous Art Park to not only showcase a diversity of exciting art and serve as a community gathering place, but also to ensure the works within are relevant and meaningful to the landscape and to Edmonton."

The Indigenous Art Park is located within upper Queen Elizabeth Park in Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley. It was approved as part of the Queen Elizabeth Park Master Plan in August 2013.

Elders believe that this is a significant location to all Indigenous peoples and holds spiritual power. For generations, First Nations people and traders would meet in this area to rest, share stories and trade goods. The site was also once part of River Lot #11 homesteaded by early Métis homesteader Joseph MacDonald.

"The profound legacy left by our Kôhkominawak (our Grandmothers) and Kîmosôminawak (our Grandfathers) is one of the sacred areas used to cross Kîskîcêwansîpî (Saskatchewan River), where many ceremonies and rituals took place before crossing this majestic sanctuary," says Elder Jerry Saddleback, Steering Committee member. "Our original peoples of this area held sacred knowledge that gave them a close spiritual relationship with our Mother Earth deity. She is called the sacred river, as with all water of the Earth, Her own breast milk, nurturing all of humanity."

The art park is the result of nearly three years of collaboration between the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Indigenous community members, the Edmonton Arts Council, and City of Edmonton. Edmonton's Indigenous Art Park is scheduled to open in fall 2018.

For more information & high resolution photos:

[edmonton.ca/indigenousartpark](http://edmonton.ca/indigenousartpark)  
[edmonton.ca/photos](http://edmonton.ca/photos)

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