



PRESS RELEASE



Toronto's Riverside Celebrates Indigenous Heritage, Art, & Culture with New Mural 'Tkaranto Past/Tkaranto Future'

Toronto, August 10, 2017- The Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA) is proud to announce the public celebration of the new Indigenous mural, *Tkaranto Past/ Tkaranto Future* (Toronto Past/Toronto Future), on Sunday, August 27th from 3-6pm at 650 Queen Street East.

Lead artist Odinamaad, in partnership with Chief Lady Bird and Dave Monday Oguorie, developed the mural concept by collaborating with Traditional Wisdom Keeper, Philip Cote and youth participants from Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre. The mural moves beyond animating the walls of Woodgreen Services' 650 Queen Street East location, by rooting the area's history:

"As a historic and community-oriented district, the Riverside BIA is helping uncover and celebrate Indigenous heritage and culture in Tkaranto. We are honored to have a mural that connects to the Indigenous communities in Toronto," says Riverside BIA Chair, Mitch Korman.

The mural embodies that Tkaranto has always been considered a meeting place: first, for Indigenous nations for travel, trade, hunting and fishing, and in present day, for people who come here from around the globe to gather on the traditional territories of those who first occupied the land.

"Public art that positively represents First Nations histories, contemporary living and imagined futures, is a way for us to smudge positive energy over our communities. This mural integrates traditional practices of this area, such as the use of fish racks, star knowledge and matriarchal family structures. By sharing this imagery with the people of Toronto, we are all able to keep the true history of Canada alive and acknowledge the enduring Indigenous presence on this land," says lead mural artist, Odinamaad.

As a Cultural Hotspot SPARK project in partnership with the City of Toronto, "this stunning mural continues the City's support of vibrant and meaningful public art. It recognizes and celebrates both the past and future contributions of Indigenous artists in the east end of Toronto," says Councillor Paula Fletcher, Ward 30, Toronto-Danforth.

To celebrate the official launch of the mural's completion, the public is invited to join in the outdoor festivities to view and celebrate the new mural on August 27th, including Traditional hand-drum songs by Shandra Spears Bombay, Hoop Dancing by Nimkii Osawamick, a Medicine Pouch craft workshop, along with opening remarks by Traditional Wisdom Keeper Philip Cote, the Mural Artists, and local representatives. There will also be cake and refreshments from Indigenous caterer Suzanne Smoke and Dark Horse Espresso to add to the festivities. RSVPs are encouraged via riverside-to.com

Thanks to the key partners who supported this project: the Government of Canada, City of Toronto, StreetARToronto, the Government of Ontario, and Riverside BIA. Thank you also to Woodgreen Community Services and Sherwin Williams.

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About the Mural Artists

Odinamaad (Isaac Weber)

<https://odinamaad.com/>

Lead mural artist for 'Tkaranto Past/Tkaranto Future', Isaac Weber or Odinamaad (Turning Wind) is a street and fine artist from the Ojibwa Turtle Clan. He has collaborated on several mural projects in Toronto, including Underpass Park, and has previously lived in Toronto's East End. Isaac Weber is of Moorish and Anishinawbe descent and is committed to being a strong role model and representative for his community. He is well known in Toronto, Vancouver, and the Netherlands street art communities. In 2015, he was awarded the senior arts category award at Aboriginal Arts & Stories, a Historica Canada initiative. With over 12 years of painting workshop facilitation and life painting experience, his practice involves working to uplift and support the community's younger generation to collectively bring back the richness carried within spirits, tradition, and craft.

Chief Lady Bird (Nancy King)

www.chiefladybirdart.tumblr.com

Nancy King is a First Nations (Potawatomi and Chippewa) artist from Rama First Nation. Her Anishinaabe name is Ogimaakwebnes, which means Chief Lady Bird. She has completed her BFA in Drawing and Painting with a minor in Indigenous Visual Culture at OCAD University and has been exhibiting her work since she was 14 years old. Through her art practice, she strives to look to the past to help her navigate her Anishinaabe identity whilst living in an urban space as well as advocate for Indigenous representation as an integral aspect of Canada's national identity. She addresses the complexity of identity through the use of contemporary painting techniques; woodlands style imagery, photography, digital manipulation and traditional Indigenous craft materials and often works with at-risk youth to ensure knowledge and skill sharing/development.

About the Riverside BIA

www.riverside-to.com

The Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA), established in 1980, is one of the first BIAs in Canada. The Riverside BIA is a community-oriented not-for-profit association of local business people, organizations and property owners who work in partnership with the City of Toronto to enhance the Riverside business district, located along Toronto's Queen Street East from the DVP to Empire Avenue. The BIA's mandate is to improve, beautify and promote Riverside district through marketing, public programming and streetscape improvements.

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