

CITY OF TORONTO

# ARTwalk

*Toronto's Outdoor  
Art Gallery*



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## Welcome

*to the City of Toronto's Outdoor Art Gallery. The City of Toronto Culture Division has a mandate to foster and promote public art with the assistance of the Art Committee for Public Places. As you move from site to site, you'll discover a wealth of creativity and interpretation in a relatively small area. There are 22 public works of art created by local, national, and international artists, each with its own vision and relationship to its location.*

*The majority of the featured works of art were commissioned through the Private Developer Percent for Public Art Program administered by the City of Toronto Urban Development Services. The art pieces are here for you to view, in some cases touch, ponder and enjoy.*

*The accompanying text was written by David Liss, Curator and Director of the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA).*



# ARTwalk

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Map not to scale



1

## Fair Grounds

Michel Goulet, 2003

*Fair Grounds* is a poetic celebration of the physical and psychological experiences people share. The bright, jubilant colours of the ribbons fastened atop each pole recall the tradition of tying a ribbon around objects – a tree, a cherished item, one's finger – to remind or commemorate the hopes, wishes or fond memories associated with a particular person, place or thing.

The chairs, unique in period and style, are arranged in a variety of pairings expressing the diversity of our relationships and communications. The title and arrangement of the work remind us of the fairness and equality necessary to our shared existence.



2

## Constellation

Albert Paley, 2002

The large, abstract stainless steel sculpture *Constellation*, is intended to convey the sense of dynamism, movement and diversity that the artist associates with the City of Toronto. Its forms impressionistically resemble a series of interconnected charged circuits, shooting stars, a cosmic explosion or perhaps some other celestial debris. The title, *Constellation*, has two definitions according to the dictionary, referring to groupings of stars in the night sky and also to a group of associated persons or ideas.

Positioned above the entrance to the building like a modern-day frieze, the work is static, although it does appear to be pulsing and radiating with crackling energies; a fitting analogy for the downtown district of Canada's largest urban centre. The motif extends to the door handles of the building implicating the charged dynamic of the participatory energies of all those who enter.



3

## Selections from the Synopsis of Categories

Micah Lexier, 1992

New York-based Canadian artist Micah Lexier created this sculptural installation to acknowledge the function of the building in which it is housed. The 26 metal ladders casually arranged and stacked in the lobby of Metro Hall simulate an active work site, a specific reference to the City of Toronto's municipal employees who work here carrying out the administrative tasks and operations essential to the functioning of the city.

Four-hundred different words selected at random from the "Synopsis of Categories" section of a thesaurus were waterjet-cut into the rungs of each ladder.

The integration of words and ladders refers to language and architecture as constructed vocabularies that express and define human identity.



4

## Remembered Sustenance

Cynthia Hurley (Short), 1992

The inspiration for *Remembered Sustenance* is drawn from the location of the sculpture's site. Adjacent to an outdoor daycare playground the work has been created to convey the sense of playfulness and whimsy associated with children's stories and games.

A group of bronze, non-specific-looking cartoon-like animals appear to be migrating in procession across the lawn, towards, then away from a curtain drawn by two birds. Below the curtain, a plate set in the ground holds a negative impression of the shape of a small ballerina that might be found in a child's music box. This element represents the remembered experiences of childhood that the artist suggests can sustain us throughout our lives.

Open and abundant with possibility of meaning, it is the artist's stated intention that the work should most of all be enjoyed by children.



5

## Memoire du futur

Patrick and Anne Poirier, 1992

The interior lobby of the north tower of the MetroCentre off King Street is dominated at its centre by a large, irregularly sectioned stainless steel column. This iconic and compelling form is the focal point of a multi-component installation titled *Memoire du futur*. Other components situated nearby, scattered amidst the foliage of the indoor garden are fragments of lintels from the Canadian Pacific Railway terminals, which previously occupied the site of Roy Thomson Hall, visible across the plaza through the windows of the lobby. A large steel arrow is positioned as if piercing one of the marble fragments.

The installation resembles an archeological site and the combination of old and new materials connects the past and the present, as does the title of the work. According to certain mythologies, the arrow is symbolic of the indomitable human spirit. Combined, and within the context of this arrangement, these elements form a site that pays tribute to the vision and persistence of the human endeavours that have shaped the structure and identity of the City of Toronto.

6

## The Poet, The Fever Hospital

Bernie Miller, 1992

In *The Poet, The Fever Hospital*, Bernie Miller has constructed a complex sculpture of black granite, galvanized steel and bronze.

Although there is no singular narrative or thematic thread necessary to its reading, inspiration for the piece relates to this site as the seat of Toronto's earliest municipal government. With this open-ended approach, Miller extends the notion of political democracy to the viewing experience by facilitating meaning rather than dictating it. Interpretation is equally open to all. Images and forms, such as a stack of television sets and a satellite dish have been appropriated and abstracted, and are rich in reference to both the current and historical activities of the area.





7

## Campsite Founding

Brad Golden and Lynne Eichenberg, 1994

*Campsite Founding* commemorates the contributions of Governor John Graves Simcoe and Elizabeth Simcoe to the establishment of Upper Canada, now the Province of Ontario, in 1791, and subsequently York, now the City of Toronto.

Located in Simcoe Park, the multi-component installation reads as a visual and text-based historical narrative. The covered portion refers to the canvas house, also depicted and described on a plaque, which served as a base from which the Simcoes embarked upon their forays into the surrounding environs.

The surface of the cast bronze table is inscribed with an early map of Toronto and the pyramid-like cairn and basin evoke the natural landscape of Lake Ontario and the Niagara escarpment. Together these elements contextualize and describe the geography, the circumstances and conditions around the time of the founding of Toronto.



8

## untitled (mountain)

Anish Kapoor, 1995

*untitled (mountain)* is a water-jet cut aluminium sculpture created by internationally renowned British artist Anish Kapoor. He has intended the work to be open and rich with potential metaphoric and symbolic meanings, as an actual mountain might be.

One immediate reading, and consistent with much of this artist's work, is an embedded "dialogue" between nature and human beings. Although the work resembles a natural geographic feature, it has been fabricated from synthetic materials, which were extracted from nature to begin with. While in earlier eras people may have looked upon mountains as symbols of strength and spiritual inspiration, here the mountain is dwarfed by the human achievement of architecture. *untitled (mountain)* was not necessarily created to pose any specific question or to seek a finite resolution to any particular issue. It exists as a potent symbol for pondering notions that may be ephemeral, yet essential in coming to terms with the human condition and our place in the world.



9

## WSIB Simcoe Park Workers Monument

John Scott and Stewart H. Pollock, Derek Lo and Lana Winkler, 2000

The *WSIB Simcoe Park Workers Monument* is a variation of a work originally conceived by John Scott during the 1980s, titled *100 Workers*, that commemorated individuals killed in work-related accidents. For this version 100 small brass plaques have been set into a low wall, each bearing the name and accidental cause of death of a specific individual, one for each year from 1900 to 2000.

Located in the very heart of Toronto, it is a reminder that our cities have been built upon the toil and labour of "ordinary" workers dedicated to their tasks.

Also specific to this version of Scott's work is the inclusion of a life-size and life-like figure titled, *The Anonymity of Prevention*, created by Derek Lo and Lana Winkler, depicted as though he were in the process of constructing the wall of the monument.

10

## GLENN

Ruth Abernethy, 1999

Positioned on the sidewalk at the entranceway to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's headquarters is a striking bronze sculptural portrait of internationally acclaimed pianist, the late Glenn Gould, one of Toronto's most famous citizens. A well-known photograph by Don Hunstein inspired the pose.

Executed in a realistic, yet non-heroic style, the figure is seated casually, in rumpled clothes, hunkered down low in the bench, reflecting Mr. Gould's notorious reticence towards publicity, fame and pretension. Regardless, his extraordinary, prodigious talent earned him widespread admiration and deep respect amongst music lovers within Toronto and beyond. As further testimony, the main studio inside the CBC building is named in his honour.



11

## Éloges de Fontenelle

Royden Rabinowitch, 1984

The abstract and complex works of Royden Rabinowitch often refer to the ambiguous and uncertain principles underlying our existence. In the case of *Éloges de Fontenelle*, there exists in the two components a contrast of concave and convex forms - positive and negative elements - that defy the linear grid of the urban design, interrupting the expected flow of the streetscape, literally and metaphorically. Located on a very busy sidewalk at the north entrance to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, physical negotiation of the work is a task that not each person will necessarily approach in the same manner. Represented here are a multiplicity of viewpoints and perspectives that challenge notions of absolute direction, purpose or truth.

The title of the work refers to the 17th century French poet and philosopher Bernard Le Bouvier de Fontenelle whose writings addressed notions of truth and ambiguity in the emerging scientific knowledge of his time.

12

## Marlin

Andrew Posa, 1987

Andrew Posa's abstract sculpture *Marlin* was specifically selected for this site as an organic and lyrical counterpoint to this tight, angular corner. Aside from spatial concerns, the twisting, looping, fin-like shapes read as either abstract form inspired by this majestic fish or, perhaps, as the arc it traces during one of its famously spectacular leaps through the air. The glossy, gold surface finish calls attention to the opulent ornamental characteristics of the work, which can be appreciated purely for its aesthetic merits.



13

## The Audience

Michael Snow, 1989

The highly animated figures in *The Audience* stand in balanced contrast to the primary geometric forms of the SkyDome. This audience, however, looks outward into the city, effectively turning the everyday activities and lives of its occupants into a spectacle.

The diverse range of physical gestures and facial expressions of the figures, all looking in different directions, apparently reacting to different activities, implies the notion that each person may perceive and experience similar events and occurrences in highly individuated and personal ways.



14

## Spiral Fountain

Judith Schwarz, 1990

The intense dynamism of *Spiral Fountain* is intended to echo the drive-around entrance of the SkyDome Hotel. Set in a garden, the strong vertical thrust of the central figure-like form originates from a spiral shell shape set in the ground at a slight angle. This configuration can be read as a metaphorical description of the unifying energies and forces that connect the earth and sky.

Moving around the driveway by car, bicycle or foot, the sculpture reveals itself gradually in a manner similar to certain classical sculptures that were created for viewing "in the round."



15

## Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railway Workers in Canada

Eldon Garnet, 1989

*Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railway Workers in Canada* is an unusual monument in that it was created not for the regular purpose of acknowledging some heroic or popular individual but to honour a group of labourers. These are the Chinese workers who toiled hard to build the Canadian Pacific Railroad through the Rocky Mountains of western Canada during the 19th century. Between 1880 and 1885 over 4,000 of these workers were killed in the process of construction. The massive trestle is an impressive presence, appropriately located near Toronto's main rail line. Two muscular figures in typical work clothes and perched precariously, are depicted as if they are maneuvering a huge beam into place, effectively demonstrating the dangerous and challenging nature of the risky and raw physical labour they were expected to perform.

The stately looking boulders standing like sentinels near the base were directly extracted from the Rocky Mountains, near Crowsnest Pass, one of the most geographically inaccessible areas that had to be built upon for the railroad to link and unite eastern and western Canada.

16

## 18 Niches

Jackie Ferrara, 2003

A series of eight images conceived by Jackie Ferrara have been set into the long brick wall in the landscaped courtyard west of the SkyDome. The theme is extended with 10 more images around the back of the wall into the outdoor parking area behind the apartment tower at 81 Navy Wharf Court. Fabricated from various coloured bricks to the artist's specifications by a team of master masons, these deceptively simple images create a vibrant rhythmic pattern that punctuates the otherwise monotonous mass of the wall.

The images themselves are characteristic of Ferrara's usual work and articulately evoke basic architectural structures such as pyramids, hearths and towers, animating a harmonious visual dialogue with the surroundings.





17

## Salmon Run

Susan Schelle, 1991

*Salmon Run* was created to acknowledge the natural heritage of the Toronto lakeshore and inspire hope for the ecological well-being of an area now dominated by human traffic.

The elevated sectional fountain and foliage mimic the habitat and life-cycle of spawning salmon swimming upstream, and effectively create an oasis amidst the concrete plaza. The design can also be considered an innovative and contemporary variation of a classical European fountain.

The processional direction of the fountain concludes with a medallion depicting the Great Lakes set into the plaza at the base of the CN Tower.



18

## Woodpecker Column

Fastwürms, 1997

Dominating the south entrance to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre is *Woodpecker Column* by artists Dai Skuse and Kim Kozzi working collaboratively under the name Fastwürms.

This 30-metre tall column rises from the concrete in unexpectedly stark but delightful contrast to the geometric regularity of the building, appearing to be pecked by a pileated woodpecker and yellow-bellied sapsucker. References to nature frequently occur in the art of Fastwürms and in this case it is specific to the site's history as a swamp where waterlogged and decaying trees would have attracted indigenous woodpeckers.



19

## Snowm'n

Fastwürms, 1997

Nature is referenced with the two sculptural objects, titled *Snowm'n* that stand like guardians at the entrance to the semi-circular driveway of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. These benevolent gatekeepers conjure associations with one of the earliest forms of sculpture undertaken by many children in Canada. Themes of wider cultural inclusiveness are hinted at through the corn cob noses, (a food staple of North America's indigenous people), the dark colour of the figures, and the gender-neutrality of the title.



20

## Turtle Pond

Fastwürms, 1997

Inside the foyer of the south entrance to the Convention Hall of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre is a terrazzo floor titled *Turtle Pond*. Light bands of colour form concentric circles like ripples in water. Images of turtles and other water-dependant creatures that would have lived in the waters of the Lake Ontario basin are depicted as if swimming in a pond. The piece can be considered a contemporary, lyrical form of natural history illustration. It is worth noting that the floor was crafted and installed by master terrazzo mechanics and builders.



21

## Search Light, Star Light, Spot Light

John McEwen, 1999

The three-column steel sculpture *Search Light, Star Light, Spot Light*, is inspired by a quote from author Louis Untermeyer, (1885-1977): "God, if you wish for our love, Fling us a handful of stars."

The surface of each column has been extensively perforated with holes in the shape of five-pointed stars that glow when lit from within like celestial search beacons in the night. The effect is most immediately associated with the search beams that call attention to entertainment spectacles such as those that take place in the adjacent Air Canada Centre. Further, the telescopic shape of the columns and the starry lights suggest a connection between the earth and sky; between the infinite cosmos and the depth of the human imagination.

22

## Wins/Losses/Ties

Micah Lexier, 1999

*Wins/Losses/Ties* is specifically linked to its site at the Air Canada Centre, home of the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey club, and is a tribute to their previous home, Maple Leaf Gardens, as well as their enduring legacy.

The work consists of a group of 201 hanging stainless steel columns and seven inlaid granite sidewalk panels. In keeping with the spirit of this artist's usual approach, the formal characteristics of these elements are determined by statistical information. In this case three steel columns depicting their record of wins, losses and ties represent the 67 seasons played at Maple Leaf Gardens. The columns are grouped by decade and extend downward for a length proportional to the related statistic, which is noted on the bottom of each column. The sidewalk panels record additional information such as the years that the Leafs won the Stanley Cup.

Aside from being a tribute to an institution that is deeply embedded in Canadian heritage and our national consciousness, *Wins/Losses/Ties* is a visually tangible manifestation of a mathematical system that usually only exists within the conceptual realm.



[www.toronto.ca/culture/artwalk.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/culture/artwalk.htm)

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