

Couzyn van Heuvelen

UNTITLED

I am proposing a multi-faceted installation, consisting of concrete formwork, metal cutouts and custom bollards. The Glen Road pedestrian bridge and underpass provide a way of moving through the city in an area that would otherwise be very difficult to traverse. They are a part of peoples daily commute and the space is functionally about travelling. These places have a relationship to the routes migrating animals follow, whether it is worn paths through hills and brush, airways, or waterways. Using this as a jumping off point, I have approached this space with migration and travel in mind. These are important parts of traditional and contemporary Inuit life, and common themes within the canon of Inuit art. Toronto has played a major role in the Inuit art market over the past several decades, and has a large Inuit population. However, this population is not always visible or represented, so it is very important to me that I try to make an Indigenous presence visible through my practice. Drawing from my own experiences and culture, I hope to bring Inuit art into the Toronto landscape in a significant and innovative way.

The work I am proposing would give the space a strong visual identity, and create a unique space within the city. The work references Inuit stonecut printmaking and pays homage to some of my greatest influences, like Kenojuak Ashevak, Qavavau Manumie, and Jessie Oonark. These will be my own images, but will reference the bold, graphic, colourful style that has come to define Inuit printmaking.

The walls inside the underpass will feature panels resembling the carved stone slabs used in Inuit stonecut printmaking. While most of us are familiar with these images, the process is less widely appreciated. Once an edition is printed the stones are resurfaced in preparation for the next print, and so these stones are seldom seen outside of co-ops in the arctic. Last year I had a residency in Qamanit'tuaq (Baker Lake, Nunavut) and I had the opportunity to see and feel some of these carved stones. The texture and materiality of the stone is not immediately apparent in the final prints, but is integral to this unique form of printmaking. The walls of the tunnel will feature floor to ceiling concrete formwork that resemble these carved stone slabs, blown up to a massive scale. The tool marks and cut and chipped stone will be represented, so the formwork will have the texture and carved relief of the stones they are based on. The images of carved animals of migration will be painted bright, solid colours (as if they were inked and ready to be printed).

The ceiling of the tunnel will feature stainless steel wave-like strips, so that the ceiling will resemble a body of water. This is a reminder of the buried stream where Rosedale Valley now runs, and also serves to create a sense of movement through the tunnel. Lights will be mounted between the fins, ensuring the tunnel is well lit.

The walls around both tunnel openings will feature large metal bird cutouts, a different way to reference Inuit printmaking.

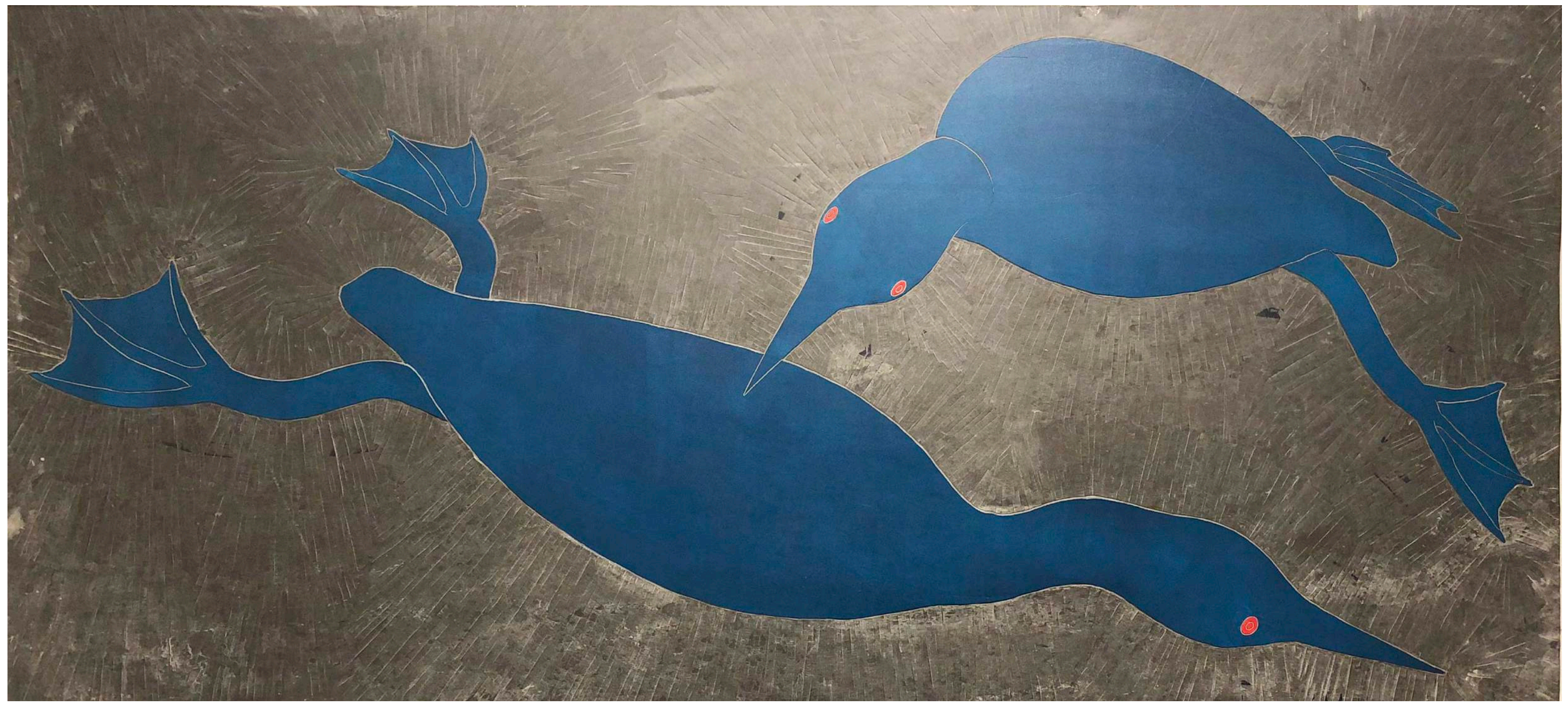


View of south plaza retaining wall and tunnel entrance (above); proposal for bollard sculpture (below)

The cutouts will be mostly flat, with some engraved lines for small details. Birds are frequent subjects in Inuit stonecut printmaking, play an important role in my personal narrative, and are a common sight in the area surrounding the pedestrian bridge.

Custom cast-concrete bollards will serve to bring the artwork off of the walls and into the space. They will be located throughout the area, including the entrances to the pedestrian tunnel, each end of the bridge, in the pedestrian plaza, and in the gardens. These will serve a functional purpose, clearly designating pedestrian areas, keeping people safe from vehicles, and slowing down bicycle traffic.





Above and above right: Carved stone slabs. Part of permanent installation at OCAD(2018);
Right: Carved stone slab for stonecut print edition (2018)

