

MEDIA RELEASE

Sculpture Commemorates the Heritage of Indigenous People and Racialized Minorities in Kingston



A new artwork which commemorates the heritage of Indigenous and racialized minority peoples in Kingston is being constructed along the waterfront adjacent to The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

The stainless-steel sculpture, *Consonance*, by distinguished Canadian artist Hooman Mehdi-zadeh-jafari, was chosen to honour and imagine the way forward for Kingston's untold cultural heritage stories. Five proposals were shortlisted, with models on display at The Isabel's lobby for public input in April and May. The sculpture is expected to be completed and installed in December 2026.

The sculpture consists of a dynamic formation of diverse human figures rising and supporting one another towards a shared apex. Unlike sculptures that celebrate colonial power or military achievement, Mehdi-zadeh-jafari says the artwork will represent "the collective strength and unity that emerges when diverse voices come together," providing a "living symbol of inclusion."

The art installation is the culmination of a research project, "Toppling Monuments: Colonial Trauma, Justice, Heritage and Restorative Healing," which investigates the impact of Kingston's dominant cultural heritage narratives on the wellbeing of Indigenous and racialized minorities. The project is led by a multidisciplinary research team of political and legal theorists and health researchers, with guidance provided by an advisory circle of Indigenous and racialized minority community leaders. Funding has been provided by the New Frontiers fund of the Canadian Tri-Council, as well as the Wicked Ideas fund at Queen's.

"We learned that Kingston's heritage narratives – think of Sir John A Macdonald or the United Empire Loyalists – have had a complicated effect on underrepresented groups," says Professor Christine Sypnowich, the project's principal investigator. The project's research indicated that, while some people admire Kingston's limestone buildings or welcome a holiday to mark Canada Day, others find the cultural heritage stories told about Kingston to be exclusive and hurtful.

'The prospect of a new art installation that will honour the untold stories of Kingston's heritage is so exciting,' says Carol Ann Budd, an Indigenous alumnus of Queen's Engineering and a member of the project's advisory circle. 'The sculpture promises to be a key Kingston landmark for generations to come.'

For further information: Christine Sypnowich christine.sypnowich@queensu.ca