

Creative Collaborator Workshops Underway for The Encampment

The Encampment runs June 8-24, 2012 at Fort York

**Commissioned by the City of Toronto and Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity,
for the Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812**

Toronto, April 30, 2012 – The installation creation process for **The Encampment** is underway! The Encampment is a unique form of artistic practice by art duo **Thomas+Guinevere** (Thom Sokoloski & Jenny-Anne McCowan) where the metaphor of archaeology turns an historic site into a large-scale ‘temporal village’ and a glowing sculptural grid against the night sky. The 2012 version of The Encampment will focus mostly on the unknown **civilian history of The War of 1812** and premiere as part of the **Luminato Festival** and **City of Toronto Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812**. From **June 8-24**, the final installation of 200 tents will transform the grounds of **Fort York National National Historic Site** into a massive expression of art and history.

A team of over 100 Creative Collaborators are now working together weekly at Fort York. During this 6-week installation creation process, the Creative Collaborators are guided by the artists’ *design journal* that engages them in an interdisciplinary collaboration involving facilitated discussions, imagination exercises, the rendering of their designs, and their final assemblage of materials inside the tents to conjure what might have been the ‘zeitgeist’ during the War of 1812. Each tent will represent a story of an individual from the war, many of which touch on themes of love, loss, survival and patriotism, as well as those of collaboration, deception, greed and betrayal.

Like archaeologists, they commit to “getting their hands dirty” in unearthing these stories of individuals and transposing them into art installations for the public to experience within each tent. The individuals of the stories are fascinating; ranging from the legendary to the lesser known, such as:

AMHERST, ELIZABETH FRANCES (HALE) - Born in 1774 in England, she was a water-colourist and wife of John Hale, deputy paymaster general of the British troops stationed in the Canadas.

RUSSELL, POMPADOUR - Birth date unknown. A free Black man, he worked for Peter Russell (Administrator of Upper Canada), who owned Pompadour’s wife (Peggy) and their three children as slaves. Peter paid Pompadour for his work, but not his family.

WOOD, ALEXANDER – Born in 1772 in Scotland, he came to Upper Canada as a young man and became one of the leading merchants in York leading up to the War of 1812. He belonged to a group of “scotch Pedlars” whose influence was controversial. He was appointed magistrate in 1800 and was swept up in a scandal that put him at the centre of rumours of sexual assault. Charges of fine and imprisonment were dropped on the understanding that Wood would leave Upper Canada and he promptly departed for Scotland in 1810. He returned in 1812 upon the outbreak of war, attempting to restart his business affairs, as well as maintain his position as magistrate.

OHTOWA’KÉHSON, also known as CATHERINE BRANT - Born in 1759 on the Mohawk River (NY), she was of mixed-blood and knew English but refused to speak it. She was the head of the Turtle Clan, a matriarchy, and held strong political power with the women of her nation. She disagreed with her husband’s handling of the Six Nations land and charged her warriors to defend it when John Graves Simcoe refused to grant the Six Nations an unrestricted deed to the Haldimand grant; this dissent almost led to the assassination of her husband, Joseph Brant.

The Creative Collaborators include the likes of architects, firefighters, visual and textile artists, photographers, designers, dancers, actors, puppeteers, history buffs, poets and writers, educators, film and television producers, programmers, civil servants, musicians, museum personnel, etc. For the artists, the diversity, commitment, and passion of everyone involved in this version of The Encampment exemplifies their artistic vision of a truly public and participatory creative experience.

The Encampment - A Thomas+Guinevere Creation

Conceived by Thom Sokoloski – Produced by Sherrie Johnson Productions

June 8-24, every evening from 7:30pm-11:00pm

Fort York National Historic Site, 250 Fort York Blvd. Toronto.

Free

Detailed Information: www.thomasandguinevere.com