

FACT SHEET – WOLFE AND THE SPARROWS

Wolfe and the Sparrows is a public artwork by artist Brandon Vickerd. It will be installed in May 6-8, 2019 on the southwest corner of 12 Street SE bridge as part of the bridge replacement project.

- *Wolfe and the Sparrows* is traditionally rendered monument that appears intact from a distance. As the viewer moves closer to the sculpture, it will transform into a flock of sparrows scattering into the distance.
- The statue is modelled after the statue of General James Wolfe sculpted by John Massey Rhind in 1898. The original sculpture is currently located in Calgary, in a small public park in Mount Royal.
- General Wolfe is remembered for leading the British to victory in 1759 over the French at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec.
- This piece is about engaging people in thinking about how monuments exist in our current context, and spotlights the importance of thinking critically of the narrative that they present.
- This monument is intended to build an understanding of our past, and help us move forward with a broader understanding of our shared history.
- This piece was a \$220,000 investment which included design, construction and installation. This funding comes from the 12 Street Bridge \$26 million capital budget.
- Wolfe and the Sparrows was fabricated in Calgary by BronzArt Casting Ltd.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The artist engaged with representatives of the Inglewood community to develop the concept for the artwork. Participants indicated they would like to see a piece that was:

- **Historical in nature** – specifically in bronze and reflected the historical architectural quality of community.
- **Represented challenging views** - something that was critical, challenging and funny, something to make people think.
- **Explore the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples** - as well as land rights issues and looking at how we view a sense of history in terms of community.

With this feedback in mind, the artist started researching and discovered that there was an original John Massey Rhind monument of General Wolfe located in the Mount Royal community. The artist saw this as an opportunity to explore the themes identified through the engagement by re-evaluating how we view historical monuments in our city.

This concept was also presented to the Indigenous Guiding Circle, an advisory group that works with The City of Calgary's Public Art program. The Guiding Circle is composed of various members of Treaty 7, and suggested including a Blackfoot translation as part of the informational plaque for this monument. Blackfoot was selected as an appropriate language for the context of this site due to the strong historical ties the Blackfoot people have to the land in this area. The translation was done by local artist and Blackfoot Elder, Sheldon First Rider.



About the artist

Brandon is a Canadian artist and Professor of Sculpture at York University, where he also serves as Chair of the Department of Visual Arts and Art History. Purposely diverse, his studio work straddles the line between high and low culture, acting as a catalyst for critical thought and addressing the failed promise of a modernist future predicated on boundless scientific advancement. Whether through craftsmanship, the creation of spectacle, or humor, the goal of his work is to provoke the viewer into questioning the dominate myth of progress ingrained in Western world views.

Did you know...

- The original General Wolfe monument was donated to The City of Calgary by businessman and Glenbow Museum founder, Eric Harvey, nearly a hundred years after its creation.
- The original monument was created by John Massey Rhind as a private commission. Eric Harvey found it in New York City and purchased it in the 1960's.
- It was installed at the old planetarium in 1967, then moved to a small park in Mount Royal on Wolfe Street and Quebec Avenue SW in 2009. It stands in this location today.
- The Wolfe and the Sparrows statue at the 12 Street SE Bridge will be 16 feet tall.
- Sparrows were first introduced to North America and other parts of the world by European settlers, and were considered to be pests that displaced native North American birds.