



MMIWG2S Memorial Project “Calling Home their Spirits”

Request for Indigenous Artist(s) Design – MMIWG2S Commemoration

Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary

DATE OF ISSUE: January 22, 2020

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: March 20, 2020

Background

"Today, and always, let us remember they were mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins, and aunts. And, at all times, and forever, are loved, honoured, and cherished"

– MMIWG Memorial plaque, Winnipeg, MB

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirited (MMIWG2S)

The murder and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls has been acknowledged as a national crisis. In 2016, the Federal Government established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. In June 2019, the MMIWG inquiry announced their findings. The report laid out 231 individual calls to action to bring the crisis to an end, and stated that the true number of MMIWG may be impossible to establish. The final report *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girl* reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people. MMIWG2S were described as victims of a "Canadian genocide," which it concluded has been the result of "state actions and inactions rooted in colonialism and colonial ideologies." The 2-volume report delivered 231 individual Calls for Justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians.

Art as Commemoration

One of the recommendations outlined in the final report was the establishment of a commemoration fund to help honour the lives and legacies of Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S individuals. Commemoration, art, and education are all essential parts of truth gathering, healing, and reconciliation. Art is a powerful tool for commemoration. It can send a message of hope or loss, resilience or reconciliation. It can be an instrument that shares truth and knowledge with a wide audience. An artist in any medium can create art as a means of healing from traumatic experiences, or as a way to inspire action. Most powerfully, art provides a platform for voices that may not get an opportunity to share their stories elsewhere. Public commemorations, through art, can help bring forward the personal stories that show colonial violence. They bear witness to injustice, recognize the human dignity of victims and survivors, and call Canada to account.

The National Inquiry adopted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's guiding principles on commemoration to develop and implement commemoration initiatives. They were:

- Survivors should be active participants who can advise and make recommendations on projects;
- Projects should strengthen family and community memory and make the history and legacy of residential schools a part of Canada's history; and
- Projects should support Indigenous peoples' healing as they reclaim their identities and revitalize their land-based cultures



Please see Appendix for examples of commemoration projects by Indigenous artists across Canada.

Artist Submission Guidelines

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, in partnership with the AWO TAAN Healing Lodge, is calling all Indigenous artists to create a memorial to remember and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people (MMIWG2S) and survivors. The work will contribute to the healing of family and community and help to increase public awareness.

A total of \$40,000 is available to the artist, or artist-lead team, to cover all costs of the creation, materials, and associated expenses (installation costs will be covered by the AFCC). **The artist(s) must begin work on the project by May 15, 2020 and be completed by December 15, 2020.**

The MMIWG2S memorial will be revealed to the survivors and general public by January 31, 2021.

We invite submissions from:

- Emerging and established Indigenous artists at any stage of their career; there is no age requirement
- Collaborative projects are encouraged and welcomed

We ask that the successful artist(s), or artist-lead team, meet the following criteria:

1. Be of Indigenous ancestry and be recognized by the Indigenous community.
2. Have demonstrated experience working with Indigenous people
3. Possesses a strong knowledge of the MMIWG history and impacts
4. Must be able to articulate how the work respectfully commemorates MMIWG2S and survivors
5. Be able to provide examples of your work (may be in any medium and size). This can include:
 - a. Traditional and/or contemporary work
 - b. Visual, video, song, story, written, etc.
6. Be willing to meet with the Adjudication Panel as part of the selection process (in circle)
7. Be willing to work in collaboration with the AFCC throughout the entire process (design and installation of the memorial)
8. Be able to provide references related to involvement in community.

Project Guidelines

We are looking for projects that meet the following considerations:

1. The work must be semi-permanent and move-able (if necessary)
2. Depending on type of project proposed, it must be Outdoor and resilient to the elements
3. May be of any medium and size
4. Must demonstrate how the memorial is accessible to all (survivors, general public)
5. Must demonstrate how the memorial is able to be an “active space” (eg. a place where survivors and general public are able to come to heal and feel welcome)
6. Provide recommendations and advice on long-term care of the work.

Other Considerations—Final Reporting

- The successful artist(s) will be responsible for submitting a final budget report to the AFCC, outlining the expenditures of the Project and based on the original budget submission. A formal



- agreement of payments will be negotiated prior to project start. Proof of expenditures must be submitted with report.

Adjudication of Submissions

Submissions will be adjudicated by an independent Adjudication Panel using the guidelines and requirements outlined above.

A SHORT-LIST of potential artist(s) will be chosen and given the opportunity to present their ideas IN-PERSON (or via technology) to the Adjudication Panel between April 20-24, 2020 (final date TBD).

- ONLY those Artists who are short-listed will be notified by April 14, 2020 and a date arranged for the interview

Following the interviews, the final successful artist(s) will be notified **by April 30, 2020.**

Submission Information & Deadline

In your submission, please include the following:

- Biography of yourself (and team members, if applicable)
- Examples of previous works completed (work may have been in any medium and size)
- If submitting as an artist-team, CVs for each artist
- Description of the proposed work that includes the information outlined in the “Artist Submission Guidelines” and “Project Guidelines” above
- A loose design of the proposed memorial (visual)
- A proposed budget & proposed payment schedule
- A schedule of completion
- Your full contact information and the best time to contact you

Deadline for submission is **Friday, March 20, 2020**, ALL materials must be received by this date, ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS. Hard copy (paper, USB) and/or electronic submissions will be accepted.

By email: Melissa Roy, Operations Manager
mroy@afccalgary.org

By mail: Attn: Melissa Roy, Operations Manager
Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary
316 – 7 Avenue S.E.
Calgary, AB
T2G 0J2

Please Note: Submissions sent in by hard copy (mail) will NOT be returned to artist(s). If you would like your submission returned, please include a self-addressed envelope with postage.

Only those artist(s) who are short-listed and the final successful artist(s) will be contacted.



Questions?

Please contact Melissa Roy by email: mroy@afccalgary.org or phone 403-428-3361.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) is provided to Applicants on the terms and conditions set out in this RFP. The purpose of this RFP is to provide interested parties with information that may be useful to them in the formulation of their Proposals pursuant to this RFP. It is the responsibility of each Applicant to contact the AFCC for further information. This RFP does not constitute an agreement or offer by the AFCC to the prospective Applicant(s) or any other person(s).

The AFCC accepts no liability of any nature re: submissions or process related to this RFP. The AFCC may, in its absolute discretion, but without being under any obligation to do so, update, amend, or supplement the information, assessment, or assumption contained in this RFP. Any amendment(s) or change(s) to the terms of this RFP will be posted publicly on the AFCC website.

The AFCC reserves the right to not assign a successful Applicant, as determined by Adjudication Panel.

The Applicant(s) shall bear all its costs associated with or relating to the preparation and submission of its Proposal, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the selection process.

APPENDIX

Examples – Indigenous Artists Artistic Responses to MMIWG2S

Multiple creative responses to MMIWG2S have emerged in recent years.

1. The REDress Project started by Métis artist Jaime Black in 2000. It is a public art commemoration of MMIWG2S and consists of red dresses hanging or laying flat in public spaces. Black chose red as “that was the only colour spirits could see... so (red) is really a calling back of the spirits of these women and allowing them a chance to be among us and have their voices heard through their family members and community.” New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults & Families in Winnipeg launched their Red Dress Project June 20-24, 2019, by hanging 350 red dresses in the windows of their building at 717 Portage Avenue.



2. The Grandmother Earth Dress is a traditional red jingle dress, created by the Ontario Native Women’s Association and inspired by the REDress Project. She honours and acknowledges MMIWG2S. She also serves as a sacred item of healing for families, as well as communities to commemorate their loved ones. She is meant for families to visualize their loved ones in beautiful traditional regalia. 365 jingles on the dress represent a year-round call for justice and safety for MMIWG2S. "... this dress was never to be worn in this realm. She's a spirit dress, and she was constructed with the intent to let women in our community know we still care about them, that we miss them and that we love them."



3. Walking with Our Sisters began in 2012 and is a community-based art installation, featuring nearly 2000 pairs of beaded moccasin vamps, each one connected to a known missing or murdered woman. The full installation has more than 1,763 pairs of adult vamps and 108 pairs for children. When the art work is being displayed, the vamps are laid out on the floor of a public space where, row by row, they represent the unfinished lives of the missing or murdered women. The installation came to an end in August 2019, after a final closing event in Batoche, Saskatchewan.



4. A monument honouring Manitoba’s missing and murdered women and girls was unveiled in August 2014 at The Forks in Winnipeg, the historic junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers that served as a meeting place for Indigenous peoples for centuries. The two-metre-high granite statue provides relatives a place to grieve loved ones who were killed or have disappeared. The first of its kind in Canada, the monument was a joint project between the province and the Ka Ni Kanichihk Aboriginal Cultural Centre.



5. *The Hours That Remain* is a play that was first produced in 2012 and was the debut for playwright Keith Barker, an Algonquin Métis from northwestern Ontario who is also the artistic director at Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto. He was inspired to write it in 2009—the first time he was introduced to the story behind the Highway of Tears, the infamous stretch of Highway 16 in British Columbia where many women, mostly Indigenous, have gone missing or been found dead since the 1970s. *The Hours That Remain* follows an Indigenous woman haunted by her sister’s disappearance.



6. “Still Dancing” by Jonathan Labillois
This painting was donated by the artist to the Montreal Native Women’s Shelter to help raise awareness of MMIWG2S in Canada, in the hopes that it would bring this issue to minds of many and that no sisters,

mothers, grandmothers, aunts, or daughters will ever be forgotten. “Dancers dance for those who cannot, the sick, the elders, and those who are gone. It’s like all those women are still dancing through her.”



7. Unveiled in May 2017, a slightly larger-than-life bronze sculpture now stands outside the Saskatoon Police Headquarters, created by Lionel Peyachew. While in Calgary, his roommate went missing. Her body was discovered years later, but the memories still persist to this day. The artist read stories of many Indigenous women before finding one which stood out to him. A mother was describing her missing daughter’s traditional fancy dancing and how it reminded her of an eagle in flight, dancing on a cloud. That image led him to design a dancer in movement above a cloud surrounded by stone pillars bearing the stories of missing and murdered women. Peyachew said he wants to encourage happier thoughts of the women’s lives and who they were in hopes of creating a better future.



"We see what happens when people come together in ceremony, around monuments... when they are able to share the stories of their loved ones and advocate for why this national tragedy needs to stop."

– Maryam Monsef, Women & Gender Equality Minister