

Joint Curatorial Statement

19 January 2016

LandMarks2017: Art + Places + Perspectives / Repères2017: Art + lieux + perspectives

Landmarks are meeting places. They can be features of the landscape—a tree, a mountain, a waterway, a boulder—or part of the built environment. The land is marked by time, by the elements, by the habits of animals and peoples. Landmarks define boundaries and echo multiple histories, stories and beliefs. They give shape to our collective memories. A landmark is a turning point for change and a legacy for future generations. Landmarks help us find our way. To mark is to act.

LandMarks2017/Repères2017 is a network of collaborative, contemporary art projects across Canada's national parks on the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017. This anniversary marks an occasion to reflect on a land much older than 150 years, and to address the legacies of colonialism, the complex relationship between nationhood and cultural identity, as well as our relationship to nature in the face of present day environmental and climatic crises. Using art as a catalyst for discourse and social change, *LandMarks2017* looks forward, and provides an opportunity to imagine, to speculate, and to invent our futures through the eyes of artists, art students, communities, and through the spirit of the land.

We acknowledge our unique situation globally— an incredibly culturally diverse population spread over an immense landmass, with over 200 languages spoken across nearly 10 million square kilometers.

LandMarks2017 speaks from multiple positions, using difference, rather than unified national identity, as a starting point. We recognize Indigenous Nations and relationships to land as foundational. Our shared stories are, at their heart, about land, belonging, languages, and cultures that stem from our interconnectedness with the earth.

LandMarks2017 creates a forum for collaboration, knowledge sharing, negotiation of differing perspectives, Indigenous methodologies, and the creation of new frameworks of understanding through a coordinated art curriculum in universities across the country. At the hub of *LandMarks2017* is an interactive digital platform for the circulation of ideas, activated by artists and art students, to form a web of discourses addressing concepts of place, environment, and the construction of identities.

LandMarks2017 engages people and activates communities, situating contemporary art practice outside of gallery walls, in natural sites and through digital networks.

LandMarks2017/Repères2017 is Curatorial Team: Atlantic Canada Team: David Diviney, Ariella Pahlke & Melinda Spooner, Natalia Lebedinskaia, Véronique Leblanc, Kathleen Ritter and Tania Willard.