

## THE BENTWAY BRINGS WATERFRONT SITES TO LIFE WITH NEW ART PROJECT, *THE ESSENTIALS*

The Bentway commissions three Toronto-based artists for *The Essentials*, a public art project that asks us to examine what is essential for our urban future

September 28, 2020 – [Toronto, ON] - The Bentway travels beyond the Gardiner Expressway this fall with *The Essentials*, a series of art projects along the Waterfront that reflect on what we as a community collectively value as “essential” during this period of change, recovery and rebuilding.

From September to November, three Toronto-based artists will explore that which is essential *now*, reaffirming priorities and commitments for a post-COVID Toronto, told through novel projection-based artworks. *The Essentials* works to imagine and project an urban future that thrives on fundamentals, all the while asserting art’s own essential role in that evolution. Each projection is approximately 10-15 minutes in length and will be looped.

Echoing The Bentway’s relationship with the Gardiner Expressway, the exhibit will be presented across three sites of industry, leisure and infrastructure, with access generously facilitated by the City of Toronto and Canada Post. Here, The Bentway works to re-imagine spaces along the Waterfront, suggesting ways we can further multi-purpose our civic assets and find connection with our surroundings. Passers-by are asked to stop and contemplate (safely) while enjoying the works.

The first projection, featuring local artist **Erika DeFreitas**, will take place **Wednesday, September 30 through to Saturday, October 3** at the **Canada Malting Silos** (next to Billy Bishop Airport). The second, running from **Wednesday, October 21 to Saturday, October 24** will feature artist **Alvin Luong** at the **Donald D. Sommerville Olympic Pool** (at the foot of Woodbine). Finally, from **Wednesday, November 18 through Saturday, November 21**, **Winnie Truong** will present at **Canada Post’s South-Central Letter Processing Plant** (on Eastern just south of Greenwood).

“This year has forever altered the foundations of public life, challenging our understanding and appreciation of routine, mobility, education, and so much more,” says **Ilana Altman, Co-Executive Director** of The Bentway. “All of us are questioning what we deem *essential* – from basic freedoms, to critical labour, to crucial kindness. To explore these questions, we were truly thrilled to commission these new projects and meet Torontonians in their own neighbourhoods.”

*The Essentials* is organized in partnership with the Waterfront BIA and is part of the City of Toronto’s BigArtTO, a city-wide temporary public art initiative that aims to encourage residents to get outside and explore their local neighbourhoods while adhering to COVID-19 health and safety concerns. The BigArtTO event schedule is [available online](#).

“The waterfront itself is one of Toronto’s biggest attractions and we can’t wait to see the size and scale of these digital art projections along the water as part of BigArtTO,” says Tim Kocur, Executive Director of the Waterfront BIA. “During this public health crisis, it’s important we can provide safe and accessible ways to get outdoors and experience the water, and the size of the projections should allow people to keep their distance. We’re proud to be working again with The Bentway and the City of Toronto and can’t wait to see the creativity they bring to our water and the rest of the City with this program.”

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“The Essentials project provides communities with an opportunity to encounter art in a public space,” says DeFreitas. “Despite having to keep our distance from each other, this is one wonderful, safe way for us to engage in a new shared experience.”

For those unable to experience the works in person, all artworks will be made available on The Bentway’s digital channels following their presentation and throughout the duration of BigArtTO.

## **PROJECT DETAILS**

**WHAT:           Projection 1: At the Canada Malting Silos**

*The foot of Bathurst, near Billy Bishop Airport, next to Ireland Park - viewable from west side*

**WHEN:**       Wednesday, September 30 to Saturday, October 3

8 p.m. to 11 p.m. nightly

In her piece, Scarborough artist [Erika DeFreitas](#)’ fingers caringly trace the architectural lines and wounded cracks of the city’s many structures, including the Canada Malting Silos, suggesting a much-needed tenderness and tactility during this period of distancing.

**WHAT:           Projection 2: At the Donald D. Summerville Olympic Pools**

*The foot of Woodbine, at Lake Shore - viewable from south side*

**WHEN:**       Wednesday, October 21 to Saturday, October 24

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. nightly

In [Alvin Luong](#)’s *Life Preserver*, a leisurely walk along the water leads to the discovery of a bundle of food that has been washed ashore. The bundle appears purposeful in its assembly, yet its function is unknown. The artwork is inspired by the essentials of food, shelter, and mobility; and the pursuit of these essentials by people across geographies, histories, and nations.

**WHAT:           Projection 3: At Canada Post’s South-Central Letter Processing Plant**

*969 Eastern Ave, just south of Greenwood - viewable from the north side*

**WHEN:**       Wednesday, November 18 to Saturday, November 21

6 p.m. to 9 p.m. nightly

Further details to be announced.

For more information, visit [www.thebentway.ca/essentials](http://www.thebentway.ca/essentials).

***The Essentials* is presented in partnership with the Waterfront BIA and the City of Toronto, with the generous participation of Canada Post.**

**The Bentway is supported by the City of Toronto, Maxine Granovsky Gluskin & Ira Gluskin, Richard M. Ivey, Frances & Tim Price, Rosamond Ivey, Mazyar Mortazavi & Bitá Doagoo, the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, Balsam Foundation, Howard Sokolowski & Linda Frum, Donald K. Johnson O.C. & Anna McCowan-Johnson, DiamondCorp, and a growing family of friends and supporters.**

BigArtTO is produced by the City of Toronto in association with Founding Sponsor American Express.

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Social Media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) using @TheBentway and [YouTube](#).  
#TheEssentials and #BigArtTO

### **About The Bentway**

The Bentway re-imagines how we build, experience, activate, and value public space together. Its work anchored by a new and growing site located under Toronto's Gardiner Expressway, which is operated, maintained, and programmed by The Bentway Conservancy as a platform for creative practice, public art, and connected urban life. As a new model for public space in Toronto and a forum for social engagement, The Bentway continues to evolve amidst the changing landscape of the city, developing opportunities and partnerships that address the key issues of our time.

### **About the Waterfront BIA**

Representing businesses along the Queens Quay corridor between Bathurst and Yonge, the Waterfront BIA supports the continued growth of the waterfront as a premier destination that is well-connected to the rest of the City and is beautiful, clean and vibrant year-round. The BIA's *Waterfront ReConnect* vision for improvements to north-south connections under the Gardiner drew significant inspiration from The Bentway. Designed by Ken Greenberg and PUBLIC WORK, *Waterfront ReConnect* was released in 2019 with a pilot project at Rees Street underpass. Follow us on Twitter @waterfrontbia and Instagram @TOWaterfront.

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### **For more information, please contact:**

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