



WATERFRONTToronto



Black Speculative Arts Movement Canada Wins Waterfront Artist Residency Program

Toronto-based collective starting 16-month residency

Toronto, ON – September 22, 2020: Black Speculative Arts Movement Canada (BSAM Canada) was selected for the first-ever Waterfront Artist Residency Program. The 16-month residency was created and made possible through a partnership between Waterfront Toronto and The Waterfront BIA.

“We are thrilled that our first Artist in Residence is BSAM Canada,” said George Zegarac, CEO of Waterfront Toronto. “Real inclusivity must go beyond physical access to the waterfront, and we must bridge gaps for racialized communities as we contribute to building Toronto’s future. We look forward to seeing how BSAM Canada animates the waterfront in a way that sheds light on the lived experience of the Black creative community.”

The aim of the residency is to create meaningful, experiential encounters with the community, activate underutilized spaces along the lakefront and draw new audiences to the waterfront. BSAM Canada will contribute towards the ongoing dialogue on public art and civic space while exploring safe, creative and exciting ways to engage with communities during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. This residency will complement ArtworxTO: Toronto’s Year of Public Art 2021 declared by Mayor Tory.

“BSAM Canada has created some exceptional work and this latest partnership with the City and Waterfront Toronto is one we are very proud of,” said Tim Kocur, Executive Director of the Waterfront BIA. “With a spotlight on public art in the upcoming year and following our recent partnership with The Bentway on its public art project, *It’s All Right Now*, we believe this residency couldn’t have come at a better time. We look forward to showcasing even more diverse perspectives.”

The first phase of the residency involves community integration and research, allowing the artists to develop compelling art projects that are relevant to Toronto’s waterfront. Implementation of the waterfront community-inspired art projects will roll out in 2021.

Artists were invited to submit applications to the residency program through an open call issued by the Waterfront BIA and Waterfront Toronto in July 2020. Projects could include workshops, performances, events, urban interventions, and temporary or ephemeral installations. After a jury review of 32 applications, Toronto-based arts collective BSAM Canada was selected. Formed in 2016, the collective works to empower, elevate, and evolve outlets of representation for Black artists that push boundaries of Blackness within arts education and industry using visionary practices.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our collective, which uses the speculative arts to fuel our community advocacy and to re-imagine our relationships to the spaces we frequent, the stories we hear and the images that surround us,” says Nico Taylor, co-leader of the BSAM Canada collective. “We look forward to learning more about the waterfront and the surrounding community so we can effectively use this platform to share our messages and showcase our work. We are excited to get started and we’re already looking ahead to 2021 when we can share our finished art with the public.”

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Media contacts:

Andrew Tumilty
Waterfront Toronto
437-771-9604, atumilty@waterfronttoronto.ca

Katherine Hebb, Marketing Director
The Waterfront BIA
647-268-7588, katherine@waterfrontbia.com

Carolyn Kilbourne
Carlaw Communications
416-399-4767, carolyn@carlawcommunications.com

About Waterfront Toronto: Waterfront Toronto is a corporation created by the governments of Canada, Ontario and the City of Toronto with a mandate to revitalize the lands by Lake Ontario, transforming past industrial sites into thriving neighbourhoods that support economic vitality and enhance quality of life. Its newly launched Temporary Art Program is designed to

broaden the arts culture along the waterfront by providing flexible access to physical spaces and partnerships. Through this initiative it is possible to engage a greater diversity of artistic voices to help reimagine and shift our relationship to and understanding of our shoreline. The rapidly changing landscape of our waterfront creates a backdrop of contrast, transition, and growth for art projects to foster healthy public dialogue on timely issues.

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. Activities of the BIA include representing the area on key policy and advocacy issues, making targeted public realm improvements and highlighting the area's vibrancy with activations and daily promotion online. Follow us on Twitter @waterfrontbia and Instagram @TOWaterfront.