



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada



## Canada Makes History at 16th Venice Architecture Biennale with Unprecedented Indigenous-Led Exhibition

Venice, Italy, May 24 2018 – Today, Canada proudly unveils its official entry at the world’s most prestigious international architecture competition, the Venice Biennale in Architecture. Commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts, and presented by internationally renowned architect Douglas Cardinal and curators Gerald McMaster and David Fortin the exhibition, *UNCEDED: Voices of the Land* is the first ever Indigenous-led entry to be presented by Canada at the Venice Architecture Biennale.

The exhibition showcases with intention the works of 18 Indigenous architects and designers from across Turtle Island (Canada and the United States) through an immersive audio-visual experience that tackles the difficult truths of colonialism while explaining and celebrating the strength of Indigenous resilience.

“The Canada Council for the Arts is deeply committed to supporting the renewal of the relationship between Indigenous artists, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, and enhancing dialogues that promote a society that is more just, more inclusive, more innovative. *UNCEDED* is not only a brilliant and convincing celebration of Indigenous architecture and design, it is a promise of a way forward towards a shared future,” said CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts Simon Brault.

“I firmly believe that the Indigenous worldview, which has always sought this balance between nature, culture and technology, is the path that humanity must rediscover and adopt for our future. The teachings of the Elders are not the teachings of the past. They are the teachings of the future” said presenter Douglas Cardinal.

Curator Gerald McMaster explained that “*UNCEDED* exemplifies a new critical dialogue emerging among Indigenous artists and architects such as the value of traditional knowledge in

the face of hyper-capitalism, solidarity between Indigenous peoples, and a search for strategies of decolonization.”

“I believe that *UNCEDDED* is an essential step forward for understanding how design integrates within a sociopolitical context with meaningful outcomes for our communities. It is my hope that this exhibition will encourage future generations of Indigenous architects to stay grounded in the land and teaching of their Elders, and inspire them to design a world that better reflects their values, their community’s values, their grandparents’ values, their grandchildren’s values—all at the same time,” said curator David Fortin.

Key dates:

- Press Conference: May 24, 3h30 PM at the Arsenale, Isolotto
- VIP Inauguration: May 24, 5h00 PM at the Arsenale, Isolotto
- On view to the public starting May 26 and runs until November 26, 2018.

Download images of the exhibition, biographies of the 18 architects and designers and the exhibition publication at [www.unceded.ca/press](http://www.unceded.ca/press)

Owing to the unavailability of the Canada Pavilion during its restoration, *UNCEDDED: Voices of the Land* will be presented in the Venice Arsenale, while in the Canada Pavilion, the National Gallery presents: *Canada Builds/Rebuilds a Pavilion in Venice* from May 26-November 25, 2018.

#### **About UNCEDED: Voices of the Land**

UNCEDDED: Voices of the Land was selected through a national juried competition convened by the Canada Council for the Arts. It is presented by Douglas Cardinal and curated by David Fortin and Gerald McMaster. The project is made possible by the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Government of Canada, as well as its institutional partners: [The Canadian Museum of History](#), [Laurentian University](#), [OCAD University](#) and [The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada](#).

For more information: [unceded.ca](http://unceded.ca)

#### **About the Commissioner: The Canada Council for the Arts**

[The Canada Council for the Arts](#) is Canada’s national public arts funder. We champion and invest in artistic excellence so that Canadians may enjoy and participate in a rich cultural life. In 2015-16 we allocated \$157.4 million dollars towards artistic creation and innovation through our grants, prizes and payments. We also conduct research, convene activities and work with

partners to advance the sector and help embed the arts more deeply in communities across the country. We are responsible for the [Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#) which promotes the values and programs of UNESCO to contribute to a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future for Canadians. [The Canada Council Art Bank](#) operates art rental programs and helps further public engagement with contemporary arts.

We have proudly supported Canada's representation at the Venice Biennale for many years, but this year we have doubled our investment to \$500,000. This increased financial support is part of our strategic commitment to enhance the international profile of Canadian art and artists.

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