

The Mobile Art Circus: Arctic Rescue Operation

Presented by Peoples Climate Collective

*A POETIC JOURNEY OF OUR
DIVERSE CULTURES, ROOTED ON
ONE SHIP WITH AN OPEN-ENDED
DESTINATION*

Peoples Climate Collective

The People's Climate Collective (PCC), founded in 2021, is a multidisciplinary group of artists who create immersive, transformative experiences related to global climate change through film, animation, illustration, mural, textile, sculpture and installation. PCC members Kai Reimer-Watts, Abhilasha Dewan, Richard Watts and Ixchel Suarez began this Collective on the foundation of previous individual work and artistic collaborations, and their commitment to addressing anthropocene-era ecology and climate change through creative disciplines. New generation mid-career artists Kai and Abhi are based in Waterloo Region, where Kai is a documentary filmmaker, educator and social activist, and Abhi is a BIPOC freelance animator/illustrator. Ixchel and Richard are based in eastern Ontario and Toronto. Richard is a *land-based earth artist*, recently recipient of the OAC Established Grant, and has been practicing in Canada for 25 years. Ixchel is a BIPOC textile artist, recipient of CCA and OAC Visual Arts Grants, and has been practicing 34 years.

In addition to past multimedia collaborations with Kai & Abhi, Richard and Ixchel have developed their own independent bodies of work, including participating in numerous solo and group shows, with works shown in private and public collections (see www.richardwattssculpture.com; www.ixchelsuarez.com). Richard's sculptures and installations address our relationship to nature in the context of North American history, while his Earth Etchings reinvent the landscape painting tradition for our time, culminating with a 2019 solo survey exhibit at the Tom Thomson Museum. In 2018, Abhi and Kai co-founded the arts-based non-profit The People's Climate Foundation (www.peoplesclimatefoundation.org) to align their community organizing, creative outreach, and climate action initiatives. Individually and together, the four have produced public murals, installations, and participatory art creations for community events, gallery shows, Canadian/international educational institutes, local government events, think tanks and businesses. Their films--including short multimedia pieces hosted on www.bettercreative.ca; feature climate change documentary Beyond Crisis (2017) www.beyondcrisisfilm.com . Public recognition for their work, including multiple awards, reflect their extensive history of art practice and working with communities for social change.

With **PCC**, these four artists build from their artistic history together to form a Collective focusing on integrating sculpture/installation with new media for creative engagement on climate change, creating multidisciplinary, cross-contextual exhibits and experiences for diverse audiences/participants. Their hybrid practices will further assist them in developing and sustaining connections between urban and rural Canada, using Richard's studio--a large converted barn near Havelock, Ontario on 63 acres of woods--as the site for a new Environmental Arts Centre, with workshops and arts-based programming on-site. A major group show at **THEMUSEUM** in Kitchener, Ontario, is being planned for 2024. For this show, **PCC** will create a 6000 sq ft immersive experience centered around processing and action on climate change, working with **THEMUSEUM** to supplement the exhibit environment with community art activities and programming for all ages. The show might travel to other institutions afterwards.



Richard Watts is a 'Land Artist' with his Studio located in Southern Ontario. He was born in New Jersey and raised in the midwestern United States and on a family farm, moving to Toronto, Canada in 1987. He is a Canadian/American artist with work bridging both countries. It has received feature print and television coverage, along with solo exhibitions and commissions.

The Studio is a developing Environmental Art Centre, located on a wooded acreage in a large converted barn on the edge of the Canadian Shield, beside the Crowe River, 40 minutes east of Peterborough and 2 hrs. from Toronto. The Centre combines creation, production, exhibition, and education in an environmental context.

Exhibitions include: **The Ark** sculpture under the Manhattan Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge City Park (2007), **The Three Seasons**, MacLaren Art Centre, Ontario (2012), International Earth Art Exhibition, Royal Botanical Gardens, Ontario, (2014), **Earth Etchings**, Tom Thomson Museum , Ontario (2019). Future exhibitions: Mobile Art Circus: Arctic Rescue Operation, **THEMUSEUM Passages**, 2024-25 (With Peoples Climate Collective). A future exhibition TBD to be at the New Canadian Canoe Museum.

For more extensive coverage please visit: richardwattssculpture.com


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7maCDwo3B7Y&list=PLcBrMNU_15etY88J3dcKvVlj3YXYhn_V&index=1

https://youtu.be/jS0_eFLB0M?si=8zRFu9GC2VZqs-j9

https://youtu.be/YWtDXfUv_Ck?si=xQdmN0onfFzpFTef



Kai Reimer-Watts is a visual artist and Creative Director at Better Creative. He is a graduate of the Masters of Climate Change (MCC) program at the University of Waterloo, and a current PhD student in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University. Kai's work positions itself at the intersection of creative arts, culture, social science and activism, advocating for a more just and sustainable world in response to global climate change.

His feature Film on the major Climate Change marches in NY, and Toronto and our alternative energy future: *Beyond Crisis*, has been presented at numerous Film Festivals  and recently at the Stockholm Environmental Film Festival.

<https://youtu.be/oH6toDcj1CI?si=uuh2EFrs3mev6roc>



Abhilasha Dewan is an Award-Winning graphic and motion design young generation artist with roots in her home-country of India and the majority of her training and experience in Ontario, Canada, where she studied animation at Sheridan College. Her experience includes: Graphic Design and Animation for the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo; Independent projects for the Government of Canada, such as an animation for the *Franklin Expedition*; online animation for the International writer Lawrence Hill's *The Book of the Negro*, among other National and International film and video productions.

Inspired by inventive design as a universal language for sharing stories, Abhi's passion is to experiment with various media and platforms through short films, illustration, web & print design.



Ixchel Suarez has been a textile and fibre artist for almost 40 years. Her practice explores material and concept, particularly in Tapestry, in non-conventional ways. Her integration of Abstract Expressionism with Tapestry has been Internationally recognized on numerous occasions. Her most recent recognition was the 2021 Award of Excellence, *From Lausanne to Beijing*, Fibre Art Biennale. Longtime art instructor in Fine Arts. She is the Director and Founder of the Canadian Tapestry and Texture Centre, as well as Oakville Art Studios.

She brings a wealth of experience in art and community projects. With a focus on equity, inclusion, and local support, Suarez has collaborated extensively with diverse populations including special needs individuals, older adults, and youth. Her innovative approach merges artistic excellence with social impact, fostering community cohesion through collaborative art projects. Suarez's commitment to empowering marginalized groups exemplifies her dedication to creating inclusive spaces where creativity thrives. Through her work, she not only transforms spaces but also enriches lives, demonstrating the transformative power of art in fostering empathy, understanding, and community solidarity.



Captain Barnaba Szluinski RCAF

Cptn. Szluinski is recently retired from a 25 year RCAF career. His work included being a War Photographer in Afghanistan. Prior to this, he was a Graphic Designer. His Officer studies include Philosophy and Political Science Degrees from UofT. Prior to retirement, he studied Metalworking and welding. He wishes to participate in sculpture installation projects with Peoples Climate Collective, as well as project management.

Proposal Overview

▶ *Immersive large-scale installation*

▶ A meaningful and whimsical narrative of contemporary issues - climate change, sustainability and urban infrastructure - related to delivery systems for water and energy. The installation also connects urban culture with nature in the City through pieces made from local trees, especially endangered ones such as Ashes. Also references our Great Lakes environmental issues.

▶ **Interactivity:** visitors participate by responding graphically on one cargo container to environmental murals on the others. This can be expanded with 3 containers.

▶ **The Ark:** a symbol of our shared journey toward the future. A humorous depiction of the origins of aircraft will add a vintage cockpit and propeller. Like our challenges with Climate Change, the Ark is trying to take-off pulling our “consumption levels” behind it.

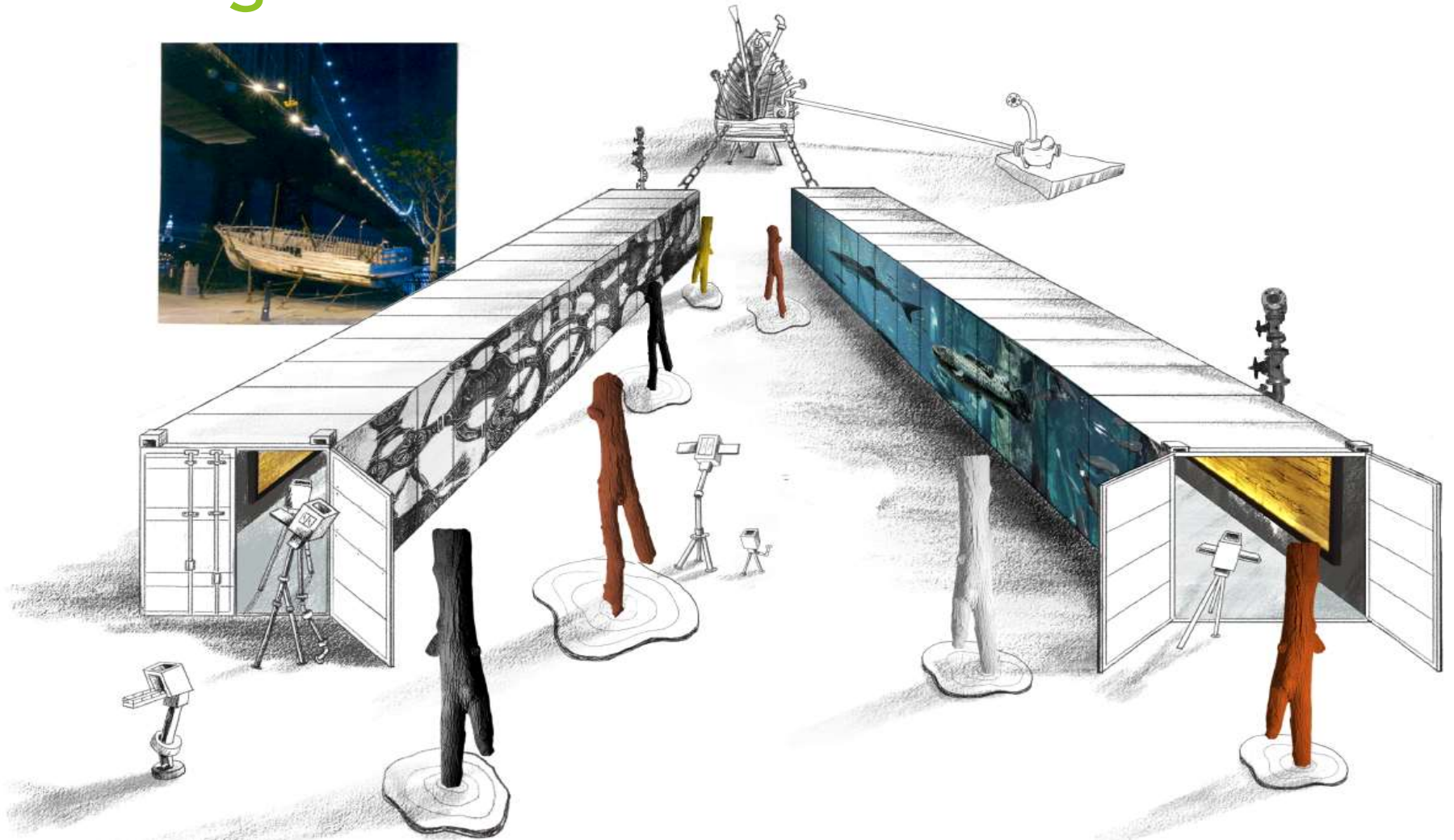
▶ The cargo containers function as an outdoor Museum with the Earth Etchings inside them.

▶ **Films and Videos:** shown in containers or on hangar doors relate to the environment multiculturalism and migration.

▶ **The “The Mobile Art Circus”:** the Installation also creates an open multi-media presentation and performance space envisioned for reflection and dialogue on the many diverse cultures we are situated within: e.g. environmental film screenings, documentaries, talks, dance and poetry performances, etc.

▶ *Mobile* means it can be transported in the cargo containers, to be presented in other locations.

Drawing of installation



Note: This original concept was conceived for a larger budget and includes sculptures such as tree castings like Ents walking, and a series of sculptures called "Condo People" made from the components that provide energy and water to our buildings. The original murals of an imaginary water system under the city over architects and engineering drawings (PLAN), and the underwater Great Lakes eco-system were to be painted but can be done on vinyl graphics. The sculptures might be limited depending on budget, particularly the Tree castings. However, it is likely to receive the CCA and OAC funding if selected given that we received maximum funding for our exhibition at THEMuseum in Fall 2025. Also perhaps other contributors might participate.



Condo-people



“FAMILY” OF CONDO PEOPLE SCULPTURES,
6 pieces small “child”, “adolescent” and “adult” on anthropomorphic structures made with
Winterstone and resin, gas pipe, and other elements. 3 - 8Ft high



KO

Wnsview

Floor mural painted by community based on PLAN Drawing



Container wall depicting sky in contrast with underwater wall



Pipeline sculptures





bronze

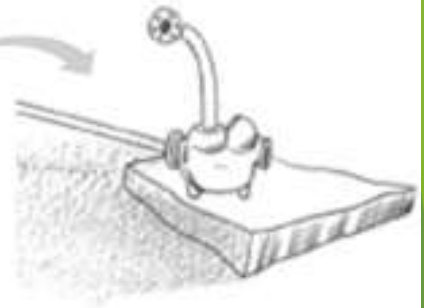


Winterstone and resin pigmented representing diversity
Or
Bronze patina

Forest shells/spirits



closeup



VINTAGE CAST IRON WATER VALVE “ANIMAL” SCULPTURE .From the Toronto underground pipe-line system, on a poured concrete “ice floe” ...anchored...connected to Ark

Project background

- ▶ Ark first showed 2005, De Leon White Gallery, TO.
- ▶ Ark then showed 2007 in DUMBO (Down Under Manhattan Bridge), Brooklyn Bridge City Park. It received a Star feature and French TV coverage. Jeanne-Claude (Christo and...) helped facilitate location.
- ▶ Abbreviated version submitted *to Artworx TO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021*. See support letter. *No funding available.*
- ▶ Runner-up, *Waterfront Toronto Temporary Floating Art competition, 2020 & 2022*. *Timeline too short, budget too low.*
- ▶ Large *Earth Etchings* exhibited at the Tom Thomson Museum, 2019. Future THEMuseum Fall, 2025

Artworx Support Letter

▶ **From:** ArtworxTO ArtworxTO@toronto.ca

▶ **Subject:** ArtworxTO Partnership Application

▶ **Date:** October 6, 2020, at 11:17 AM

▶ **To:** richard@rawart2.com

▶ Dear Richard,

▶ Thank you for your partnership application for ArtworxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021. The decision-making process was a difficult one, with many worthwhile Toronto-based artists and organizations applying for a limited amount of funding. We received a tremendous response from the arts community, receiving approximately 250 applications. In terms of funding, the program was oversubscribed by 512%.

▶ Unfortunately, your project, Mobile Art Circus: Arctic Rescue Operation, was not selected by our Peer Review Panel for funding. That said, we would love to support this project at all other tiers of partnership. This could include letters of support for other funders, site matching, assistance obtaining permits, and inclusion in our extensive promotion and marketing campaign and digital platforms.

▶ Please let us know if you would be interested in any of the aforementioned services.

▶ Please note a list of all funded projects will be available shortly on the ArtworxTO website. Should you like feedback on your proposal, please email ArtworxTO@toronto.ca with the subject line "Partnership Feedback".

▶ Thank you for taking the time to prepare an application and for your interest in cultural offerings in the City of Toronto. In the end, there simply were not sufficient resources from which to fund all worthy requests.

▶ Kind regards,

▶ ArtworxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021

▶ ArtworxTO@toronto.ca

Budget



Other sources of funding

Subject to approval

- ▶ Canada Council of the Arts
- ▶ Partners in Art
- ▶ Ontario Arts Council
- ▶ City of Toronto
- ▶ Other private funders*

