

BONAVISTA BIENNALE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2023 BONAVISTA BIENNALE 'HOST' THEME RESONATES

Art and Audience Merge: Bonavista Biennale 2023 Closes with Record Engagement

Bonavista Peninsula, Newfoundland and Labrador, Sept 19, 2023 – On Sunday September 17, 2023 Bonavista Biennale closed after a month-long event featuring 23 artist projects, plus a full slate of workshops, talks, performances, and other programs, all free and open to all.

This year's Biennale, titled with the curatorial theme 'Host', invited visitors to explore meeting points and relationships between people, perspectives, life forms, and locations. The Biennale's strong representation of artists from Newfoundland and Labrador grounded the exhibition while creating thoughtful dialogue with artists from across Canada, Indigenous nations, and beyond. *Host* was curated by Biennale Artistic Director Rose Bouthillier and Co-Curator Ryan Rice, with support from a Curatorial Advisory composed of representatives from throughout the province: Bethany MacKenzie, Jenelle Duval, Bushra Junaid and Ossie Michelin.

This year's Biennale welcomed artists from across Canada and visitors from around the globe. Early attendance figures show over 15,000 visitors attended this year's Biennale, tripling numbers from 2021, many of whom spent multiple days on the Peninsula touring the 165 km coastal loop that Biennale sites were placed along. The Biennale has a significant economic impact throughout the Peninsula through both visitor spending and job creation.

Programming Highlights

For the first time this year, the Biennale partnered with several other organizations, increasing the resources and capacity to commission new works. This included an opening weekend performance by Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde, *Sturgeon Woman Rising*, co-commissioned by Bonavista Biennale and MOMENTA Biennale de l'image (Montreal), where the performance also took place on September 8, 2023. A new mural

by Jessica Winters was jointly commissioned by Bonavista Biennale, the Inuit Art Foundation, Inuit Futures in Arts Leadership: The Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq Project, and Onsite Gallery at OCAD University, where it will also be presented in winter 2024.

The Biennale's other commissions included a playful outdoor installation of large-scale fishing lures by Inuk sculptor Couzyn van Heuvelen, a site responsive architectural structure echoing a traditional fish flake by K. Jake Chakasim, and a sculpture carved from a massive fin whale skull bone by Inuk artist, activist, and environmentalist Billy Gauthier.

In the final week of the Biennale, movement artist Sarah Prosper was invited into a land-based residency where she created a new, site-responsive performance piece for the Biennale's closing day.

Through interest and exposure generated during the Biennale, several of this year's commissions and projects are now set for upcoming exhibitions within the province and nationally. Further announcements to follow.

About the Bonavista Biennale

The Bonavista Biennale is an innovative, rural-based, public art event occurring every two years on Newfoundland and Labrador's Bonavista Peninsula. It provides a unique platform for artists and audiences to explore, exchange and challenge different ideas and perspectives. Biennale visitors experience artworks alongside the complex and compelling histories, economies, geological features and environments that shape the Bonavista Peninsula.

For more information and updates, visit the Biennale's [website](#), sign up for the [e-newsletter](#) and follow on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

High resolution press-ready images of 2023 Bonavista Biennale sites and events, as well as accompanying credits, are available here: <https://bit.ly/45WalTp>

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Bonavista Biennale gratefully acknowledges that the land on which we gather is Ktaqmkuk, traditional unceded Mi'kmaw territory. We further acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit of this province, and the ongoing connections with the past, present and future in our relationships with Indigenous and other peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador.