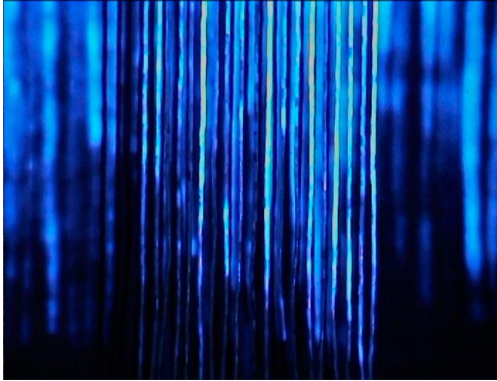


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 13, 2016

## “*transformer*” by Greg Staats installed at Ontario Place, Toronto



OWEN SOUND (ONTARIO) CANADA: **The Tom Thomson Art Gallery** is pleased to announce that its latest Canadian Spirit Public Art Project will be installed on the West Island of **Ontario Place** as a part of **in/FUTURE**: a public art and music festival presented by **Art Spin** in association with **Small World Music Festival**. **in/FUTURE** will open on September 15 and run to September 25, 2016.

Artist Greg Staats, Kanien'kehá:ka (b. Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) will re-animate one of the abandoned silo sites located on the West Island of Ontario Place. This site specific installation entitled ***transformer*** combines video and sound to create an immersive experience for visitors of **in/FUTURE** into the personal processes of reconnecting with traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) restorative aesthetic. Pulsating movements of codified strings of a white wampum used in condolence ceremonies to selected Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) phrases, Staats uses language, mnemonics and the natural world to reconnect us with this cultural history.

The TOM believes that public art has the power to connect people to each other and to the importance of culture and heritage, and the Gallery's Curator of Temporary Exhibitions, Heather McLeese elaborates “Staats installation utilizes the full potential of the silo space to create a brilliantly hypnotic and disorienting experience for viewers.” The TOM hopes that everyone attending **in/FUTURE** enjoys ***transformer*** - created for, and installed in Ontario Place.

**Greg Staats**, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), (b. Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory). Staats' lens-based work, video installation/performance and sculpture, combines language, mnemonics and the natural world as an ongoing process of visualizing a Haudenosaunee restorative aesthetic that defines relational multiplicities with trauma and renewal. Trauma that is felt from an existential displacement from the Kanien'kehá:ka language and subsequent relational worldview, has motivated recent sequencing within a mnemonic continuum. In place of this systemic linguistic deficit, Staats has assembled and created an archive of images and documents, both personal and familial. Installation works combine the performative burdens of condolence, renewal and his continuously re-imagined role as observer and participant, in an effort to elevate the mind and countervail complex trauma, dissociation and loss of self. This archive, an externalization of what is carried within the body, a repository, has enabled Staats to move toward renewal in dialogue with the psychic space where the overwhelming is held. Solo exhibitions include: *articule*, McMaster

Museum of Art, KWAG, Walter Philips Gallery, Banff, Mercer Union, Gallery TPW, Trinity Square Video/Images festival. Group exhibitions include; AGYU, the National Gallery of Canada, MOCNA, Sante Fe, AGSM, Brandon. Staats has lived and worked in Toronto since 1985.

The Artist wishes to acknowledge the generous financial support of The Banff Centre during a thematic residency program, the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario and the Canada Council for the Arts/ Conseil des arts du Canada.

This project is presented by the TOM as part of its **Canadian Spirit** public art projects programme that was started in 2012 and will culminate in 2017, marking the Gallery's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tom Thomson's death and Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. In celebrating this year's theme, **On the Edge of All the Wild Stuff**, the TOM has worked with artists, individuals, organizations and businesses to explore historical events that took place in 1916 and celebrate these events through multi-disciplinary forms of visual, media, performing and literary arts.

For more information, or to request interviews and images, please contact Suzanne Watson, Partnership and Sponsorship Manager at [swatson@tomthomson.org](mailto:swatson@tomthomson.org) or 519-376-1932, ext. 221.

The **Tom Thomson Art Gallery** is a national cultural attraction, dedicated to the innovation and spirit of iconic artist Tom Thomson, strongly identified with the Group of Seven whose images are virtually synonymous with the very idea of 'Canada.' Our national identity is forged and fortified by our awareness and understanding of historical figures like Thomson, whose artwork has been described as being the "visual equivalent of our national anthem."

With over 50,000 visitors each year, the **TOM** is the region's main disseminator of contemporary art and provides a unique experience for its audiences. The TOM celebrates excellence in the visual arts locally, nationally and internationally, through exhibitions of historical and contemporary art, education programs and the enrichment and interpretation of its significant permanent collection. The TOM supports Thomson's legacy through programs such as **Canadian Spirit** involving galleries, organizations and businesses across the country.

Admission to the TOM is free or by donation and more information about the Gallery's hours, collection, programs and events can be found at [www.tomthomson.org](http://www.tomthomson.org).



The TOM's exhibition programming has been made possible in part by our **2016 Exhibition Sponsor**, the **Owen Sound Transportation Company**. The Gallery gratefully acknowledges its major funders, major sponsors, partners, members and donors.



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