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## Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero are the recipients of the 2019 Hart House Centennial Commission at the University of Toronto



Image: Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero. Courtesy of the artists.

Hart House at the University of Toronto is pleased to announce that the artist team **Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero** are the winners of the 2019 Hart House Centennial Commission. The commission is a collaboration between Hart House and the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, of which Hart House is a founding member. The completed work will be unveiled at a special 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on **November 12, 2019**. It commemorates Hart House's 100th anniversary as a student-focused centre at the University of Toronto where it plays a pivotal role as a diverse and inclusive gathering place.

The landmark commission will see a major public sculpture entitled *waabidiziiyan doopwining (to see yourself at the table)* transform the historic Great Hall. This permanent work seeks to acknowledge the history, narratives and people who came before us; to honour the land upon which we live and work today; and to imagine other possible futures for generations to come, from an Indigenous perspective.

*"The form of the mirror will be based on the dimensions of the heavy wooden tables that are used in the Great Hall,"* said **Rebecca Belmore**. *"We feel the room calls for a minimal, subtle artwork that can quietly take its place in this century-old room. Our mirror, in the form of a table, will look back on itself and anyone who enters the room."*

On the announcement of the artists, Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, **Barbara Fischer** said, *"we couldn't be more thrilled with the selection of waabidiziiyan doopwining for this public art commission. Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero are deeply respected members of the art community in Canada and around the world. It is an honour for us to be able to include their work permanently in this historic space. They have shown great commitment and enthusiasm toward the project, one that provokes us to*

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*celebrate Hart House's Centennial with both a sense of self-reflection and consideration of the ways in which we shape the future of all our relations and the land on which we live and work. We are all very much looking forward to working with the artists to realize this important public artwork."*

Following a review process involving Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and key stakeholders of Hart House, the jury was unanimous in choosing **Rebecca Belmore and Osvaldo Yero's** proposal from a short-list of nine, commissioned submissions by contemporary artists and artists' teams from across Canada. The artists were invited to exceed the centenary aspect of commemoration and to re-imagine Hart House as a place where the vestiges of its colonial past are disrupted and as a place where everyone will find welcome and unique ways to connect with each other and with the broader world.

*"This commission is really about transforming and disrupting the Great Hall in a positive way. We believe that it will signal Hart House's sincere and broad commitment to be an ever more inclusive place where all students, staff and faculty are able to see themselves, their narratives and their experiences welcomed and reflected back to them in the physical space,"* remarked Hart House Warden, **John Monahan**.

For more information about the unveiling gala, and other centennial events and initiatives taking place throughout the year, please visit [harthouse100.ca](http://harthouse100.ca).

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#### **About the Artists:**

**Rebecca Belmore** is a multi-disciplinary Anishnaabe artist from Lac Seul First Nation and is currently living in Toronto. She is internationally recognized for her installations, sculpture, photo-based and performance works, which often concentrate on land politics, issues of identity, and systemic violence against Indigenous people. In 2018, Belmore presented her largest solo exhibition to-date, *Facing the Monumental*, at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In 2017, Belmore participated in the prestigious documenta 14 exhibition held concurrently in Kassel, Germany, and Athens, Greece, where she showcased her major sculptural work, *Biinjyaing Onji (From Inside)*. She received the Gershon Iskowitz Prize in 2016 and was the first Anishnaabe artist to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2005. Belmore was recognized for her achievements with an honorary doctorate in 2005 from the Ontario College of Art and Design University, and from Emily Carr University of Art and Design in 2018.

**Osvaldo Yero** immigrated to Canada in 1997 and currently lives in Toronto, where he works in sculpture and installation. Yero's artistic practice is concerned with his experience as part of the growing diaspora of Cuba. Politically and socially charged, his work contends with issues of national identity and plays with the boundaries of kitsch and high art. His solo exhibitions include *Passage* at Access Gallery, Vancouver (2010); *Loop* at galeria 23 y 12, Havana, Cuba (2008); and *Landmark* at the Belkin Satellite, Vancouver (2002). Yero has been included in international group exhibitions, including *Nuit Blanche* in Toronto (2006) and *Contemporary Art From Cuba*:

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*Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island* at Arizona State University (2001). His work is in the permanent collections of Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba; Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff; and Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany.

**About Hart House:**

On November 11, 2019, Hart House will reach a historic milestone with the 100th anniversary of Vincent Massey’s extraordinary gift of the building to the students of the University of Toronto. More than just a physical space, Hart House continues to play a pivotal role as a diverse and inclusive gathering place—one that enhances student experience on all three campuses by providing opportunities to engage in wellness, arts, and dialogue activities and helps prepare students for their role as future citizens of the world.

**About the Art Museum at the University of Toronto:**

The Art Museum is comprised of The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery at Hart House and the University of Toronto Art Centre (University College). Located just a few steps apart, the two galleries were federated in 2014 and began operating under a new visual identity as the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, one of the largest gallery spaces for visual art exhibitions and programming in Toronto. Building on the two galleries’ distinguished histories, the Art Museum originates and organizes an intensive year-round program of exhibitions and events that foster—at a local, regional, and international level—innovative research, interdisciplinary scholarship, and knowledge of art and its histories befitting Canada’s leading university and the country’s largest city.



Media Partner:



Art Museum  
University of Toronto

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Justina M. Barnicke Gallery  
University of Toronto Art Centre

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