

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2021 Artist-in-Residence exhibition opens at the Diefenbunker



Ottawa, Ontario, November 2, 2021 — The Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum is pleased to launch its 2021 Artist-in-Residence exhibition, featuring the work of Algonquin artist Mairi Brascoupé. Opening Saturday, November 6, 2021, *Akimazinàzowin | An Image of the Land* invites us to hear compelling stories of the land and witness history through another lens.

This year's Artist-in-Residence exhibition prompts conversation on topics rarely discussed in relation to Canada's Cold War history. Mairi, as a Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg artist, brings an Indigenous lens to maps and our understanding of place. Her work encourages us to look at how values related to the land, ownership, and responsibility differ, specifically for Indigenous peoples.

Mairi engages in traditional Indigenous craft as a means of preserving culture. She explains how beadwork is used "to tell stories and preserve a moment in history." On an almost 12-foot by 5-foot canvas, she has painted a backdrop of the Ottawa area showing its land and water features as we know them today. On top of this, she has carefully beaded waterways, pathways, animals, and plants, using brightly coloured beads to emphasize these important features.

Juxtaposed with Mairi's colourful piece are original Cold War artifacts in the Diefenbunker's care: maps of the region that plot crucial infrastructure and evacuation routes. These existing maps echo the stories we read in history books, but they are missing the stories that the beads tell — stories of intergenerational knowledge-sharing, how place names come into existence, and the importance of waterways as highways. The exhibition brings together Western and Indigenous knowledge, with text panels and labels in English, French, and Algonquin.

Seeing Canada's Cold War history mapped in a new light leads us to confront a colonial past and present and to consider how we can chart our collective future. "Never before have we been able to showcase such a unique perspective on the history that our archival maps tell," says Christine McGuire, Executive Director of the museum. "Through our exhibition at the Diefenbunker, we are humbled to be able to introduce this important perspective into the conversation."

Experience *Akimazinàzowin | An Image of the Land* at the Diefenbunker from November 6, 2021, to January 31, 2022. Admission to the exhibition is included with general admission. Book your visit in advance at diefenbunker.ca.

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Image Caption:

A close-up of the beadwork on Mairi Brascoupe's work, featured in the 2021 Artist-in-Residence exhibition at the Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum. Image courtesy of the Diefenbunker.

Additional images available upon request.

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About the Diefenbunker's Artist-in-Residence Program

Since 2014, the Diefenbunker's Artist-in-Residence Program has fostered connections between the museum, local artists, and the wider Ottawa community through the creation and presentation of art inspired by the history of our national historic site.

About the Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum

The Diefenbunker is a four-storey, 100,000-square-foot underground bunker, built in secret between 1959 and 1961. During the Cold War, government and military officials were to take shelter here in the event of a nuclear war. The bunker was active as Canadian Forces Station Carp until it was decommissioned in 1994. Since 1998, the Diefenbunker has operated as a community museum housed inside a national historic site. It is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to the preservation, interpretation, and display of Canadian history during the Cold War. It boasts award-winning tours, events, and programs that offer a unique perspective of Canada and the Cold War. It draws close to 70,000 visitors from around the world annually.

Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum | Diefenbunker: Musée canadien de la Guerre froide

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