

## FOREWORD

This story began only a few short months ago, during the period of social and physical distancing. After weeks of isolation, the only safe places where my wife and I could meet our granddaughter was in parks, like the Brick Works, where she walked her dog with her parents. On one of those walks she found a piece of dry bark and asked me:

"Grandpa, could you make something out of this?"

"Yes." I answered. "What would you like me to make for you?"

"A reindeer."

And so a reindeer was born. Or should I say, re-born. As coincidence would have it, when my daughter was young I invented a bedtime story for her starring a reindeer—and not an ordinary reindeer, a green-haired one.

Here is an excerpt from that story:

"In a country far away (or very close just around the corner) there was a reindeer living in a place where nobody liked him. People chased him away, nobody wanted his company. He wandered, pondering why until one day walking by a lake he noticed his reflection. The reindeer had green hair, hair like nobody else.

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Under the surface of the lake, the reindeer noticed a beautiful underwater town. He dove down to get a better look. The people of the town looked just like him, but also nothing like him. Many had green hair and others hair of various colours. They greeted him with smiles and he felt happy and free.

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Now ahead of them lay a task, to transfer that sense of mutual acceptance to others, above the lake's surface. To explain to them that the right to be different is a basic human right."

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Robin Wall Kimmerer, a distinguished professor of Environmental Botany and Director of the Center for Native People and the Environment writes:

"It was through the action of reciprocity, give and take with the land, that the original immigrant become indigenous.

For all of us, becoming indigenous to the place means living as if your children's future mattered, to take care of the land as our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it."



## PROPOSAL

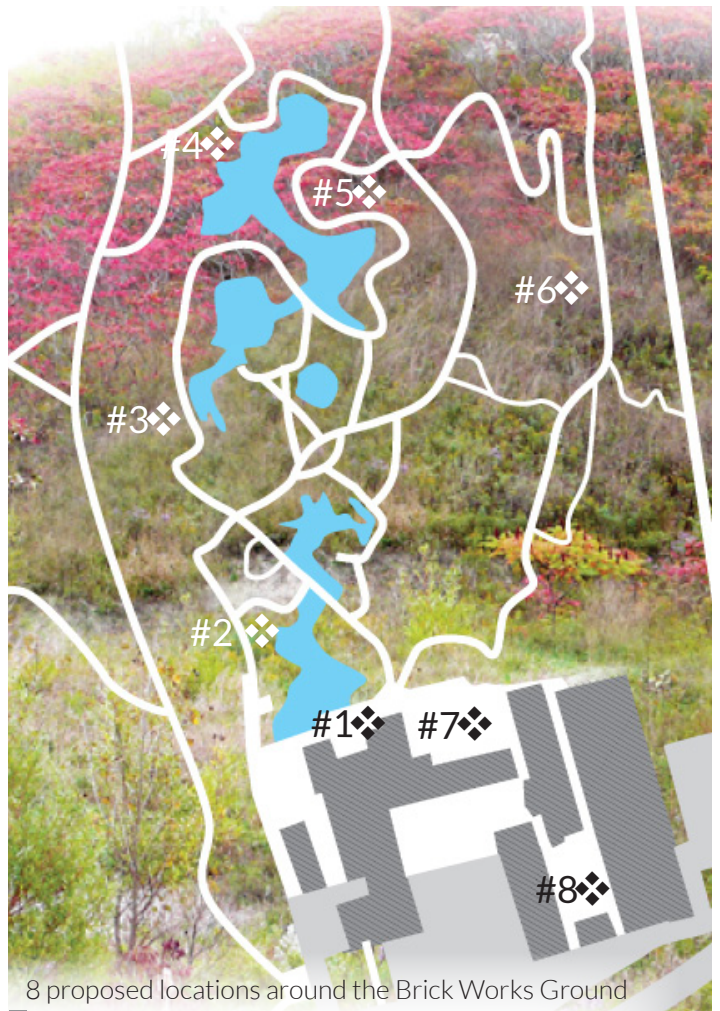
In our physically distant present, interactions with public art and each other require a distance, but I hope that we can bridge these gaps by engaging with nature.

My proposal challenges each site visitor to find a discarded piece of wood, dry bark, branch, etc. and contribute a creature of their own to a growing collection. I would provide several dozen as inspiration and starting point.

Large, dry tree trunks found around the site, instead of being discarded, would securely be positioned adjacent to the Brick Works walking paths. Each would be equipped with a suitable hanging mechanism, hung at various accessible heights where creatures found/created by visitors would be displayed. Basic natural art materials (such as glue, tread and ink) would be supplied next to each site. I would suggest that those who choose to contribute a creation of their own could take another from the tree to keep.

It is my hope that these humble creations would weave a powerful web of interaction between visitors and the natural sanctuary that is the Brick Works complex. Each would carry a singular perspective, equal, reciprocal and interconnected.

Through the use of natural, recycled materials, I hope to create minimal or no waste in the production of this commission and instead honour the potential found in organic materials all around us.





## CONCLUSION

Social and physical distancing, Covid19, Equity in public space, Sustainability, Reciprocity, Resilience, Climate Change, Social Equality, Environmental protection, Participation, Nature, Right to be different, Placemaking, Public Urban Art, Psychogeography, Observation, Perception, Omen Urbis, Genius Loci, Urban Forest, Better Future, Anti-monumental Public Art, Creativity in all of us



## MORE INFO ABOUT MY WORK

<http://urbansquares.com>

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## REFERENCES

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## BIO

**Aleksandar Janicijevic** was born and educated in Beograd, former Yugoslavia and later relocated to Canada. He graduated with a Masters in Architecture and Design from University of Beograd, and continued his education with numerous certified courses, workshops and seminars.

His experience in architecture, art, photography and graphic and multimedia design was recognized by Seneca College, Toronto and he was employed in the Media Production Department. For eight years he worked in the Centre for New Technologies in Teaching and Learning. He collaborated on innovative research projects for the Revitalization Institute at Seneca College, as an urban analyst and in the role of Chief Media Specialist.

In parallel Aleksandar pursued his art practice. He had 4 one man and more than 40 group shows of special objects, installations, drawings, etchings (art prints), paintings and photographs. In 2001 this art practice evolved to the exploration work on the large project "Urban Squares", consisting of urban analyses, virtual reality panoramas, a photo blog, psychogeographical portraits, photographs, public art, articles, public presentations and lectures.

Since May 2012 when he took an early retirement, Aleksandar is active in numerous initiatives around urban revitalization and he participates in conferences and symposiums.

He has continued his private practice in art, illustration, design and photography. In 2015, Aleksandar became a founding member of Resilience 2 to 1, a multi-disciplinary group of educators, researchers and professionals focused on the issue of environmental resilience in Canada.

