

**Media Release
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Alex Janvier named as signature artist for Rogers Place public art

Edmonton – Internationally acclaimed artist Alex Janvier is the signature artist for the Rogers Place Winter Garden. The artwork, Tsątsąke K'e (Iron Foot Place), evokes the Edmonton landscape and honours its continuing legacy as a meeting place. Janvier was selected from a prequalified list of Canadian and international artists to create an immense artwork for Edmonton's newest public space. Janvier will translate his painting into a 150 m² tile mosaic to be inset in the Winter Garden floor.

"This spectacular artwork by Alex Janvier will be in Rogers Place, one of the most iconic buildings owned by the City of Edmonton. This is a special way to honour our place on Treaty Six territory and celebrate our rich and shared history," said Mayor Don Iveson. "The Winter Garden is a public space for everyone, and city building is about creating spaces to help people reach their potential, to promote learning and understanding, and to provide healing. This artwork, and Alex's story, is a great example of how Edmonton is making that vision a reality."

Alex Janvier was born in 1935 and is of Dene sųłı́né and Saulteaux descent. He was sent to the Blue Quills Indian Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta at age 8 and said the discovery, and nurturing, of his creative instinct was a consolation at that time. He received formal training and graduated with honours from Calgary's Alberta College of Art in 1960. Mr. Janvier's style is highly distinctive and involves an eloquent blend of abstract and representational images with bright, often symbolic colours. His status, qualifications, unique visual style and deep connections to the Edmonton area made him the perfect fit for Rogers Place.

In describing the inspiration behind this artwork, Mr. Janvier said "the painting pays respect to the land area where Edmonton is located, highlighting the colours of beautiful sky, the stories of the area, and clear waters from far away mountains. All roads lead to the area, Edmonton, as it is a central destiny for all who came before, and who came after".

The total commission is \$700,000 and is one of the largest to date in Edmonton. "The selection of Alex Janvier as the signature artist for Rogers Place highlights the singular importance of the development, and marks an historic step forward," said Paul Moulton, Executive Director of the Edmonton Arts Council. "I believe that Mr. Janvier, a world-renowned, respected Aboriginal artist, captures the spirit of the city, its history, and its people. The richness of his vision in a venue of this scope symbolizes our shared journey, in a voice of hope and reconciliation".

Alex Janvier's mosaic will be one of four major public art commissions in the area, as part of the City of Edmonton's Percent for Art policy, which dedicates one per cent of qualifying construction costs to acquiring public art in City infrastructure. The Edmonton Arts Council manages the selection process, acquisition and conservation of Edmonton's public art.

Artists for the local, national, and international calls will be selected later this spring.

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Media Backgrounder

Tsatsake k'e - "Iron Foot Place" (Translated from Dene sułı́né)

The painting pays respect to the land area where Edmonton is located, highlighting the colours of beautiful sky, the stories of the area, and clear waters from far away mountains. The white areas depict the coverage of the winter snowfalls and also the many days of clear skies. Eventually by spring all the snow will melt away. Then comes spring weather, delightful flowers, and farming begins on new life surrounding the city. When the beautiful blue skies become covered with rainy clouds they bring a refreshing blessing to the earth life of plants, and other living things flying or living on the ground. Stunning river valley scenery adds more beauty to the area. All roads lead to the area, Edmonton, as it is a central destiny for all who came before, and who came after.

Alex Janvier, February 25, 2015.

Alex Janvier - Biography

Alex Janvier was born in 1935 and is of Dene sułı́né and Saulteaux descent. At the age eight, he was sent to the Blue Quills Indian Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta. Janvier speaks of having a creative instinct from as far back as he can remember, and says he was given the tools to create his first paintings at the residential school. Unlike many Aboriginal artists of his time, he received formal training and graduated with honours from Calgary's Alberta College of Art in 1960. Immediately after graduation, he took up a post at the University of Alberta.

Janvier's style is highly distinctive and involves an eloquent blend of abstract and representational images with bright, often symbolic colours. As a First Nations person emerging from a history of oppression and struggle for cultural empowerment, he paints the challenges and celebrations that he has encountered in his lifetime. Janvier credits the beadwork and birch bark basketry of his mother and other relatives as major influences.

His work has been exhibited internationally – most notably as a representative in a Canadian/Chinese Cultural Exchange in 1985. In January 2004, one of Janvier's works was displayed in Paris, France at the Canadian Forum on Cultural Enterprise. Nationally, Janvier has created several acclaimed murals; the 450 m² *Morning Star* at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, is a personal career highlight.

Janvier is one of Canada's most significant, pioneering Aboriginal artists. As a founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporated (PNIAI) – the so-called "Indian Group of Seven" he was key in challenging perceptions of Aboriginal art. His influence continues to be felt by First Nations today. Accolades include three prestigious Lifetime Achievement Awards from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, The Tribal Chiefs Institute, and Cold Lake First Nations, in addition to the Order of Canada and Alberta Order of Excellence. Janvier's passion and natural talent for creative expression remain strong to this day.

Winter Garden in Rogers Place

Janvier's painting will be translated into a 14 meter diameter mosaic set into the floor of Rogers Place public centrepiece the Winter Garden. The Winter Garden will be Edmonton's newest multi-use public gathering space. Spanning over 104 Avenue, it will host numerous events in addition to serving as the primary entrance into Rogers Place. Climate controlled, the venue will provide a safe pedestrian connection to the Edmonton Arena District plaza from the LRT and adjacent businesses and communities to the north. The area below the Winter Garden bridge will be an active, walkable area with views into Rogers Place, including a television production studio.

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