CALL FOR ARTISTS: TOM THOMSON 150: CANOE LAKE MURAL

Submission Deadline: Friday, December 18, 2026

PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITY

A public artwork for a place shaped by art, landscape and legacy

Tom Thomson Art Gallery + Algonquin Outfitters
Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park, Ontario

The Tom Thomson Art Gallery (TOM), in partnership with Algonquin Outfitters, invites professional visual artists and muralists residing in Canada to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for an original outdoor public art mural at the Algonquin Outfitters Canoe Lake store in Algonquin Park, Ontario.

Deeply connected to Tom Thomson's life, artistic practice and enduring legacy, Canoe Lake offers a meaningful setting for this public artwork. As part of the 2027 commemoration marking 150 years since Thomson's birth, the project will celebrate the relationship between art, landscape and place, creating a lasting visual landmark in one of Ontario's most iconic natural environments.

The project partners seek an artist with a distinctive artistic voice who can create an ambitious, site-responsive mural that honours Thomson's legacy while offering an original interpretation of the landscape and ideas that continue to inspire artists today.

PROJECT OVERVIEW + REQUIREMENTS

The mural will be installed on the exterior of the Algonquin Outfitters Canoe Lake store, in a landscape deeply connected to Thomson's life, art and legacy.

The artwork should establish a meaningful connection to Thomson while reflecting the artist's own creative practice and visual approach.

Artists are invited to consider:

- How can the mural meaningfully reflect Tom Thomson, his art and his enduring legacy?
- How might an artist respond to Canoe Lake and the Algonquin landscape that was central to Thomson's practice?
- What aspects of Thomson's relationship with landscape, nature, colour, place and artistic exploration might inspire an original interpretation?

- How can the artwork connect Thomson's legacy with the ways we understand and experience the landscape today?
- How might the mural invite visitors to see Canoe Lake and its surroundings in a new way?
- How can the artwork engage the local community, visitors and future generations with Thomson's continuing influence on Canadian art?

The mural must be original and site-responsive. Reproductions or imitations of Thomson's paintings will not be considered.

PROJECT REACH AND VISIBILITY

The Canoe Lake mural will be situated at a prominent visitor destination in the heart of Algonquin Park, offering the selected artist an opportunity to share their work with a large and diverse audience.

Visitor statistics provided by Algonquin Outfitters, based on Ontario Parks visitation data, indicate continued growth in summer park visitation over the past three years:

Summer Season	Park Visitation	Annual Increase
2023	1,109,504	—
2024	1,135,348	+2.33%
2025	1,234,560	+8.74%
2026 (projected)	~1,421,568	+15.15%

The 2026 figure is a projection based on a linear extrapolation of annual growth rates, rather than a confirmed visitor count.

Algonquin Outfitters identifies its Portage Store at Canoe Lake as a central and particularly busy stop along Highway 60. Visitors from all over the world frequent the location for canoe and equipment rentals, outdoor gear, restaurant services, washroom facilities and access to canoe trips. Its location provides the mural with the potential to reach a substantial number of park visitors throughout the season.

In addition to this in-person exposure, the project partners will support the mural through media outreach and social media promotion, extending the visibility of the artwork and selected artist beyond the park.

Compensation

The selected artist will receive an inclusive artist fee of **$5,000 (+HST, if applicable)** for the creation of the mural. This fee will cover all related expenses, including but not limited to travel to the site and cost of artists' materials. An additional **$5,000** is allocated to site preparation which will be overseen by Algonquin Outfitters, for a total project budget of **$10,000**.

Site preparation will be completed by a third-party contractor under the supervision of Algonquin Outfitters. Technical requirements and installation coordination will be managed through the project partnership.

The final scope of work, production requirements and artist responsibilities will be outlined in a formal artist agreement before work begins.

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to professional visual artists and muralists residing in Canada who meet the Canada Council for the Arts' definition of a professional artist.

Applicants should demonstrate an established artistic practice through specialized training or equivalent experience, recognition by their peers, a commitment to their practice and a history of public presentation or publication.

We are particularly interested in artists who demonstrate:

- A strong artistic practice and distinctive visual language.
- Experience with murals, public art, large-scale or site-responsive projects (an asset).
- An ability to engage meaningfully with landscape, community, history and context.
- An ability to collaborate, meet project requirements and contribute to the development and installation of a public artwork.

Artists from diverse backgrounds and communities are encouraged to apply.

SITE DETAILS

The mural will be painted directly onto matte white 3 mm aluminum composite material (ACM) panels installed on a support wall at the Algonquin Outfitters Canoe Lake store. The panels will be prepared and installed prior to the mural being painted, with installation anticipated in Spring 2027.

The mural surface will measure approximately 6.5 ft. high × 32 ft. wide, with a total coverage area of approximately 208 sq. ft. The surface will consist of eight cut 4 ft. × 8 ft. sheets of 3 mm ACM panels with a light-coloured factory finish suitable for painting. A finished frame will be added to the sides, top and bottom to conceal and block sightlines behind the canvas.



Image caption/credit: Photograph of the designated mural wall location at Algonquin Outfitters Canoe Lake Store showing the eight 3mm ACM mural panel surface rendering approximately 32 feet wide by 6.5 feet tall.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection Process

The commission will be awarded through a two-stage open competition.

Stage One: Expression of Interest

A selection committee representing TOM and Algonquin Outfitters will review applications and shortlist up to three (3) artists or artist teams.

EOIs will be evaluated based on:

- **Portfolio:** Artistic skill, originality and consistency.
- **Relevant Experience:** Experience with murals, large-scale public art or site-responsive projects.
- **Thematic Alignment:** Engagement with landscape, place, community and history, and the potential to respond meaningfully to Thomson's legacy and the significance of Canoe Lake.

Shortlisted artists will be invited to develop a detailed design proposal.

Stage Two: Design Proposals

Up to three (3) shortlisted artists or teams will receive an honorarium of **$500 (+HST, if applicable)** to develop a detailed proposal.

Proposals will include a written artist statement, design concepts, proposed materials and approach, anticipated lifespan of the work, references and community engagement plans, where applicable.

Final proposals will be evaluated on artistic merit, conceptual approach, community relevance, site integration, public engagement and connection to Thomson's legacy. The selected artist will be chosen by the committee in consultation with both project partners.

Stage One: Submission Requirements

Submit your Stage One EOI as a single PDF application package containing:

- **Contact Information:** Name, preferred pronouns, mailing address, email, phone number and website (if applicable). Artist teams must identify one primary contact.
- **Artist Statement / Expression of Interest:** Maximum 500 words outlining your artistic practice, experience and interest in the project, including how your work could respond to Canoe Lake, the Algonquin landscape and Thomson's legacy.
- **Artist CV:** Maximum three pages outlining relevant exhibitions, commissions, public art projects and professional experience. Artist teams must provide one CV per member.
- **Portfolio:** Three to ten images of existing or past work demonstrating the strength and relevance of your artistic practice. Include an image list identifying title, date, medium, dimensions and location, where applicable.

Please do not submit preliminary sketches, designs or completed mural concepts at Stage One. Only shortlisted artists will be invited to develop a detailed mural proposal during Stage Two. The initial application is intentionally straightforward and accessible.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Applications must be submitted by email as a single PDF package.

Email: hmcleese@tomthomson.org
Subject Line: Tom Thomson 150 – Canoe Lake Mural
Application Deadline: Friday, December 18, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Late submissions will not be accepted. Artists requiring accommodations or an alternative application format are encouraged to contact the Project Lead in advance of the deadline.

Submission Deadline: December, 18, 2026

For additional information or questions, contact:

Heather McLeese
Curator of Public Projects and Education
hmcleese@tomthomson.org | 519-376-1932 ext. 5006

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Subject to change

Milestone	Timeline
Call for Artists Launch	Late November 2026
Application Deadline	December 18, 2026
Shortlisted Artists Notified	December 23, 2026
Stage Two: Detailed Proposals	January 2027
Final Artist Selected	February 2027
Artwork Development	February – April 2027
Mural Installation	May 2027
Public Launch	May 2027

The timeline is subject to adjustment based on artist availability, weather, site conditions, permitting and project requirements.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Tom Thomson Art Gallery

The Tom Thomson Art Gallery (TOM) is a public art gallery in Owen Sound, Ontario, dedicated to exploring art, ideas and creative practice. Named for iconic Canadian landscape artist Tom Thomson, the Gallery presents exhibitions and programs, supports emerging and professional artists, and cares for a nationally significant collection of historical and contemporary Canadian art.

Funded by the City of Owen Sound and supported through provincial and federal arts council funding, TOM is committed to creating an open, welcoming space where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can explore, discover and engage with art.

Vision: *To be an open landscape for exploring art.*

Algonquin Outfitters

Algonquin Outfitters has been part of the Canoe Lake community and Algonquin Park experience for generations. As the project's site and funding partner, Algonquin Outfitters is supporting this public art initiative through its partnership with the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, providing an opportunity to celebrate the relationship between Canoe Lake, art, nature and cultural history.

INSPIRE A PLACE. IMAGINE WHAT COMES NEXT.

Tom Thomson’s Canoe Lake was a place of observation, exploration and artistic discovery.

As we commemorate 150 years since his birth, we invite artists to bring a contemporary voice to that story—creating a public artwork that connects Thomson’s enduring legacy with the landscape, creativity and spirit of exploration that continue to define Canoe Lake.

TOM

ALGONQUIN OUTFITTERS EST. 1961