

# ARTS&LIFE

Editor: Peter Robb, 613-596-3754 • [arts@ottawacitizen.com](mailto:arts@ottawacitizen.com) • [life@ottawacitizen.com](mailto:life@ottawacitizen.com)

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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, PAGE C6

Take that, Batman!  
Captain Canuck  
is about to become  
a movie, C8



CHRIS MIKULA/OTTAWA CITIZEN

For decades, this statue of an Anishinaabe scout has been on display in Ottawa, but until last week it was nameless. The scout was named 'Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini' by an Algonquin elder at the opening of an exhibit of artwork inspired by the scout at Blink Gallery.

## THE SCOUT WITH NO NAME

Artists correct the 'insult of anonymity' as part of exhibit inspired by the sculpture



PETER SIMPSON  
BIG BEAT

### Scout 007

**When & where:** to Sept. 1 at Blink Gallery in Major's Hill Park  
**More:** See photos and links at [ottawacitizen.com/bigbeat](http://ottawacitizen.com/bigbeat)

The Citizen published a report in 1999 declaring that the "long-running feud" over the statue of Samuel de Champlain and his aboriginal scout on Nepean Point "is over."

Well, the feud was over, but the contentious story wasn't, until last week.

The 1999 report was published after the National Capital Commission finally separated Champlain from the Anishinaabe scout who for decades had crouched obediently at the feet of the European explorer. Indigenous groups had for years decried the sculpture as demeaning and racist, and finally the scout was moved to a nearby location in Major's Hill Park, where he looks over

the flowing waters and maintains a regal presence in the busy, tourist-filled gardens. It was almost a perfect ending to the sometimes bitter story, except for one thing: the Anishinaabe scout was nameless.

Ottawa, meet Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini, who you've know for many years, though not by that or any other name.

The scout was named last week during a ceremony at the opening of Scout: 007, an exhibition of art at Blink Gallery in Major's Hill Park. The art is all inspired by the scout and made by a group of indigenous artists who collectively go by 007.

Algonquin elder Annie St. George was invited by visiting artist Howard Adler to bestow a name on the scout, and she chose "Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini."

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Anishinaabe Scout, by Barry Ace, is made of glass beads, rhinestones, plastic, felt, rope, rooster feathers, and porcupine quills.



Barry Ace's beaded artwork of Samuel de Champlain has the explorer dressed in technicolour military uniform.



## ARTS &amp; LIFE



WAYNE CUDDINGTON, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

This statue of Samuel de Champlain at Nepean Point was originally connected to the scout, who was depicted at the explorer's feet. But indigenous groups decried it as racist, and the two figures were separated in 1999.

## Big Beat: 'Big river people'

Continued from page C6

"Kitchi = big; Zibi = river; omamiwinini = the people. The name translates to 'big river people,'" explains 007 artist Barry Ace. "The name Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini is what the people of this particular region called themselves, as a part of the larger Anishinaabe linguistic nation, before the term Algonquin was applied to them."

Adler says the naming ceremony corrected an insult of anonymity.

"If you look at all the statues that are in Ottawa, most of them are statues of people who have names. It's just a weird situation: why is it that the Indian scout doesn't have a name?" Adler says. The real names of Champlain's scouts may be lost to history, he says, "but it's important to think about that, to give a name and a face to the statue, to say that indigenous people are people, too. We have names."

After the ceremony Adler set to work editing a video of the event, to include as one of the exhibits in the show at Blink, which is only feet away from the scout. The exhibition includes other works by Ottawa-area artists Ace, Rosalie Favell, Ron Noganosh, Frank Shebageget, Bear Witness, Leo Yerxa and Ariel Smith.

A spectacular part of the exhibition is Ace's pair of beaded neck pieces. The pieces are a lush construction of glass beads and other materials that include rooster feathers and porcupine quills.

The boisterous colours of the beads and rhinestones contrast with Ace's scout, who, unlike in the original sculpture, holds a large knife in his hand, made of a quill. Champlain, meanwhile, still stands erect with his eyes to the sky, his astrolabe incongruously held upside down, as it also is in the original sculpture by Hamilton MacCarthy. Ace has

dressed his Champlain in technicolour military uniform, complete with long, golden hair that brings to mind the vainglorious and doomed Gen. George Custer.

Elsewhere, Favell has a digital print of the scout in four Warholized poses that are titled, simply enough, Pop Scout. Shebageget has two triptychs of photographs of himself shooting, and then showing, the Scout's Point of View. The juxtaposition creates a clean link between aboriginals of yesterday and today, and of the enduring costs of social and racial tensions.

Scout: 007 continues at Blink Gallery to Sept. 1, noon to 5 p.m. daily. At 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29, the public is invited to be part of a photograph to be taken by Ottawa artist Jeff Thomas. It'll be a group photo of people with Kitchi Zibi Omamiwinini, who for a century has been a part of our community, nameless but not forgotten.

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