



HAMILTON ARTISTS INC.

Hamilton Artists Inc.
155 James St N,
Hamilton, ON

February 22, 2020

For Immediate Release: Statement of Solidarity with Wet'suwet'en Nation

Hamilton Artists Inc. recognizes that it exists on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabeg. This territory is covered by Treaty 3, the Between the Lakes Purchase of 1792, which covers the territory between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. This territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon wampum, an agreement between people and place to share the resources of this land in respectful harmony. Hamilton Artists Inc. acknowledges that it is responsible for the people, animals, plants, land and water of its region, and strives to be an ally to Indigenous nations across Turtle Island.

The undersigned staff and board of directors of Hamilton Artists Inc. are writing to pledge our solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in the face of assaults by armed RCMP officers, and publicly denounce the actions of the Canadian government.

Justin Trudeau and Premier John Horgan have both claimed to be committed to reconciliation with Indigenous nations, yet their government continues to perpetrate overt colonial violence against the Wet'suwet'en people. Canada has a long history of violent forced removal of Indigenous people from their lands, environmental racism, and repression of Indigenous modes of government. There can be no reconciliation without change.

The RCMP invasion and the proposed building of the pipeline on this territory violates multiple articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including: Article 10 which states that "Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories"; Article 18 which states "Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures", and; Article 19 which says "States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them." The Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs have not given consent. Wet'suwet'en territory has never been ceded and the Canadian government has no jurisdiction over this land.

The Wet'suwet'en have called on all people of conscience to act in solidarity. As an artist-run centre committed to dismantling systematic barriers and addressing discrimination, bias, and inequities within our organization, Hamilton Artists Inc. stands in solidarity with the

Wet'suwet'en People at the Unist'ot'en camp and the Gidemt'en checkpoint and throughout all Wet'suwet'en territory. We join many others across the Turtle Island and the world who are demanding:

- That the province cease construction of the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline project and suspend permits.
- That the UNDRIP and the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) are respected by the Canadian state and RCMP.
- That the RCMP and associated security and policing services be withdrawn from Wet'suwet'en lands, in agreement with the most recent letter provided by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's (CERD) request.
- That the provincial and federal government, RCMP and private industry employed by CGL respect Wet'suwet'en laws and governance system, and refrain from using any force to access Wet'suwet'en lands or remove their people.¹

Hamilton Artists Inc. has a moral obligation to support the rights and sovereignty of the Wet'suwet'en nation. We call on our partners, collaborators, artists, and members to share this support by [learning about the issues](#), and sending their own strong signal of allyship that recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples across this land.

Sincerely, the undersigned

Julie Dring
Sarah Sproule
Shauna Taylor
Ashley Watson
Setareh Masoumbeiki
Mary Porter
Sally McKay
Adrienne Crossman
Alejandro Tamayo
Christopher McLeod
Tara Westermann
David Perrett
Abedar Kamgari
Jasmine Mander
Kristina Durka
Danica Evering

¹ http://www.wetsuweten.com/files/October_1,_2018_Press_Release.pdf