## curatorial statement

## Katie Lawson, Guest Curator

The presence of temporary public art is, by nature, fleeting. In the time that these interventions are a part of our common spaces, we are encouraged to appreciate these offerings much in the way we do the bounty of a finite growing season. The exhibition *Seeds to Sow* evokes the cyclical time of seasons, each seed carries an inheritance from our past and a potential for the future. Over the course of six weeks, the shore of Kempenfelt Bay and Barrie's downtown is host to six site-specific artworks by Adrian Blackwell, Amy Bagshaw, Lisa Hirmer, Lou Sheppard, Native Art Department International and Ted Fullerton. Each of these artists has developed a new project that responds to local ecologies, history, and stories.

In relation to dominant forms of public art, these works are modest in scale and material, yet they urge viewers to engage with that which already surrounds them, whether that is the built environment, the air we breathe, or the soundscape of the Bay. The seeds sown by the artworks in this exhibition are the seeds of curiosity—to notice what makes up the fabric of a place and linger on the slippage between the work of art and its surroundings. Lisa Hirmer draws our eye to the ever-shifting surface of Lake Simcoe while Ted Fullerton's figurative work cultivates a new appreciation for the mature weeping willows

that anchor the south shore. Native Art Department International invites us to see the forms of municipal infrastructure anew, as does Lou Sheppard with the reframing of the resonant concrete shell of the Lion's Pavilion as a space for communal listening. Amy Bagshaw asks us to notice our body's relationship to the horizontal planes and built environment of Barrie from the Rooftop Garden of the Library and Adrian Blackwell rearticulates City Hall as a space for public discourse on critical issues.

As the trajectory of each artist's project began to take shape, I was grateful for the opportunity to extend the initial framework of *Seeds to Sow* through a Satellite Exhibition at the MacLaren Art Centre. The temporary public artworks that are dispersed along Kempenfelt Bay and through Barrie's downtown are grounded and complemented by Derek Liddington's transformation of the Carnegie Room. The artist's exploration of painting in *Their horizon was mountain*, their distance reveals invites visitors to move slowly and look closely at what lies beneath surfaces.

The artworks in *Seeds to Sow* offer the opportunity for reflection: an encouragement to look to the past as we imagine our collective future. The act of planting a seed is a powerful symbol of hope and potential, oriented towards the season to come. Artists urge us to reflect particularly on interconnected crises that define our current moment, as a time marked by major social, political and environmental change.