

TIM JOHNSON

Indigenous Advisor



Tim Johnson is director of the Landscape of Nations 360° Indigenous Education Initiative, artistic director of The Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map, artistic producer of Celebration of Nations, creator and producer of the Indigenous Niagara Living Museum Tour, and executive producer of the multiple award-winning documentary RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World.

As an experienced education, museum, and arts executive Tim was instrumental in the recent development of four masterworks of public art in the Niagara Region during the past five years. Two of these consist of public memorials of national significance that recognize and honour Indigenous peoples' contributions to Canada. The first, Landscape of Nations: The Six Nations and Native Allies Commemorative Memorial, was unveiled in Queenston Heights Park in 2016. The second, First Nations Peace Monument, designed by world-renowned architect Douglas Cardinal, who Tim recruited to the project, was established in DeCew House Heritage Park in Thorold in 2017. Tim also served on the committee and sub-committee for design and construction for Voices of Freedom Park, a public art installation dedicated in 2018 in Niagara-on-the-Lake to African Canadians whose contributions to the Niagara Region and Canada have been significant, but largely underrepresented. In addition, he was instrumental in defining the criteria and guiding the curatorial selection of the contemporary art masterpiece by Lilly Otasevic entitled Curtain Call, newly installed in 2019 on the Carlisle Street side of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre as a legacy project of Celebration of Nations and the City of St. Catharines.

As the former Associate Director for Museum Programs at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, Tim managed the museum's largest organizational group across its facilities in Washington and New York. A long list of critically acclaimed exhibits and programs were produced during his tenure, creating an era that significantly advanced the institution's museology and reputation. Over the course of his work at the Smithsonian Tim edited, conceptualized, and strategically initiated several Smithsonian books showcasing Native arts and history. He also established the museum's Indigenous Community Services department and was co-founder and publisher of the museum's flagship quarterly membership magazine American Indian, now in its third decade of publication.

As Associate Director for Museum Programs over a period of ten years, Tim successfully developed exhibits ranging in cost from \$15,000 to \$5.65 million representing myriad orientations from ethnography and history to contemporary art. One of his most popular exhibitions, Up Where We Belong: Native Musicians In Popular Culture, was an art and history exhibit as told through the biographies of Native artists whose contributions shaped popular music soundtracks since the early 20th Century. As follow up to that exhibit Tim served as a conceptual author and executive producer of the Sundance Film Festival, Hot Docs, and Canadian Academy of Cinema and Television Awardwinning documentary RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World.

Among his many highly successful Smithsonian programs was the museum's Mother Earth Festival, curated and implemented in conjunction with Al Gore's global Live Earth initiative held on July 7, 2007, which diffused American Indian knowledge and scientific evidence concerning environmental

sustainability to thousands in attendance and millions watching around the world. Produced to enhance public education about human induced climate change, it stands as one of the Smithsonian Institution's most widely viewed public programs. Now an annual event renamed the Living Earth Festival, it continues to bring together scientists, renewable energy technologists, tribal resource managers, educators, and cultural performers and exhibitors. As a leading figure who brought the reality and ramifications of climate change to the forefront in America's capital, Tim also served on the executive committee of the Smithsonian's 'Living in the Anthropocene Initiative,' a paninstitutional committee formed to advance public education about climate change and the implications of human conduct on the planet.

Active in his home community of Six Nations of the Grand River and with several prestigious education, arts, and journalism institutions for nearly four decades, Tim received the Dreamcatcher Foundation Award for Art and Culture in 2016. He recently directed the development of Empathic Traditions: Niagara's Indigenous Legacy, an online exhibition of the Niagara Falls History Museum's Indigenous collections. Since leaving the Smithsonian and returning home he has dedicated himself to creating legacy projects that educate the public about the Indigenous experience.