

The Gordie Howe International Bridge will benefit the economies of Canada and the United States and will also help connect the rich and diverse cultures of the host communities on both sides of the border. The Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan includes a robust Workforce Development and Participation Strategy that helps ensure local Windsor and Detroit residents and Canadian Indigenous Peoples have opportunities to engage with the project and be part of its positive social and economic impacts.

### MEET THE ARTISTS

The artwork created on the tower crane climbing systems is the result of the talent and vision of diverse artists. Learn more about the artists and what they had to say about working on this project.

#### Canadian Artwork Artists



**Paul White**, 76, was born in Detroit, Michigan, but has spent most of his life living on Walpole Island. He is a descendant of the Ashkebee family, from the Walpole Island Pottawatomi tribe. White established a construction contracting company in the 1970s which has served the community and hired local residents for five decades. Through his company, White was contacted to co-ordinate the artwork for the tower crane climbing system on the Canadian side of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project. White first developed a passion for art as a high school student, creating various sketches and paintings. It is a hobby he continues to enjoy to this day and is proud of the community's work on such a large international project.

"We now have artworks that have been locally designed and implemented that will be showcased on an international stage. We expect and hope that this project and its display is going to create questions from people, and the answers they seek will bring us all closer to understanding one another and show that we are all brothers and sisters of one family."

- *Paul White, Artist and Entrepreneur*



**Teresa Altiman**, 72, has lived on Walpole Island for most of her life and is a descendant of the Ojibwe Pottawatomi Odawa people. Altiman graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto and was a recipient of an honorary fellowship from that school. Altiman is a well-known artist in Southwestern Ontario with many of her works on display in Sarnia and Windsor. She created a turtle sculpture for a parkette for the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway as well as designs along the Parkway's multi-use path. Teresa also created a turtle sculpture and an 11-foot tall textile piece that are on display at Point Pelee National Park and created seven banners with the seven teachings from Indigenous ancestors for the University of Windsor's Turtle Island Walk. Her teaching of First Nations

culture continues with the installation of her art pieces that will be on display as part of the Gordie Howe International Bridge project.

"It's a marvellous opportunity to teach people a little bit about who we are as First Nations People. I hope people will take the time to find out more about our paintings. It's a tremendous teaching and learning process."

- *Teresa Altiman, Artist*



**Naomi Peters**, 24, is a member of Caldwell First Nation and graduate of Tyndale University. She currently lives in Richmond Hill, Ontario and is proud of her Pottawatomi and Chippewa heritage. Peters seeks to pursue art and live her life expressing herself creatively. She mixes traditional Indigenous art styles with unique forms in her work that includes animals which are considered sacred to her culture. She also represents her heritage through other art styles and pieces, including representations of Indigenous people and culture. Some of her work can be seen at Rondeau Provincial Park and at Erie Shores Hospice in Leamington. Her work on the Hoop Dancer for the Gordie Howe International Bridge tower crane climbing system is her first large-scale project.

"One of the main reasons for hoop dancing is to bring healing to the person engaging in the dance. This then extends to those watching the dance. The hoop dance routines often mimic the

movement of animals and the dance itself is used as a way to honour and display the beauty of those creatures who share this land with us."

- *Naomi Peters, Artist*



**Daisy White**, 17, is a resident of Walpole Island First Nation and is currently in her fourth year of high school attending Ursuline College Chatham. She is the granddaughter of Project Co-ordinator, Paul White, and is the youngest artist to work on the Canadian art pieces. Art has been a passion for White since she started drawing as a form of therapy and credits art with helping her become the person she is today. Her favourite art styles are realism and surrealism and she prefers to work with pencil crayons. Her previous work mostly encompasses portraits. This is her first large-scale design as she has previously created portraits.

“I am very proud of my design of the creation story. I went through a lot of stress while trying to create it through different ideas as it took me out of my comfort zone. I am excited to see the reactions of people.”

- *Daisy White, Artist*

## US Artwork Artist



**Roberto Villalobos** was born in Southwest Detroit in the late 1970s and spent his early years accessing art by virtue of his environment, learning graffiti and immersing himself in the music and dance of not only his Mexican roots, but also the newly emerging hip hop culture. His studies led him to Wayne State University and eventually Columbia College Chicago, an independent college specializing in art and media disciplines, where he cultivated an expertise in graphic design. Villalobos has had extensive experience working for the design teams at several major clothing brands. He returned to the Detroit area in 2017, and is well-known for his work as a street artist, muralist, graphic designer and photographer under his nickname BearLobos.

“I was very excited to be chosen for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project since this neighborhood is near and dear to my heart. I just want to do the best possible job that I can do and showcase that us local folks also have some talent.”

- *Roberto Villalobos, Artist*

## SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS



“Showcasing the talent of our community artists has been a great way to demonstrate a partnership in our traditional territory between the Walpole Island First Nation, Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, and Bridging North America as part of the consultation and accommodation process. Our First Nation has been involved in the bridge project for over 15 years, and we look forward to the education, training, business, and workforce development opportunities this partnership will provide. It is also very important that we look at this as an opportunity to tell our story and to educate the public about the indigenous nature of this land.

Over the course of two months, a total of 20 members of the community came together at our arena to complete the artwork led by Walpole Island’s own Paul White and Teresa Altman. Our future is literally in the hands of our youth, and we are especially proud of our youth artist, Daisy White, who along with Caldwell youth artist, Naomi Peters, will have their art seen by countless people as their art slowly moves its way up the tower forms. The land, like the artwork is proudly indigenous, and we celebrate this.”

- *Charles R. Sampson, Chief, Walpole Island First Nation*



“The importance of Indigenous art cannot be downplayed. It is centred on storytelling, an expression of feelings, and it can be used to communicate knowledge of the land, events, and beliefs. Caldwell First Nation’s connection to the water is evident in written and oral history, its traditional territory extending along the Detroit River, east to Long Point. Having Caldwell citizen and artist Naomi Peters contribute to the Indigenous art display at the Gordie Howe International Bridge project is key in fostering reconciliation of Indigenous people, and in maintaining a Caldwell presence in its traditional territory. Caldwell First Nation Council is proud of the connection the Indigenous art brings to the project and in ensuring that Caldwell is represented as a First Nation group whose ancestors once called this place home.”

- *Nikki van Oirschot, Director of Operations, Caldwell First Nation*



“The Gordie Howe International Bridge is not only a leading example of how our government’s infrastructure investments support transformative social, economic and environmental changes in our communities, it provides an opportunity to recognize those that helped build Canada as we know it. The creations of local artists from Walpole Island First Nation, Caldwell First Nation, and Southwest Detroit will be on full display during the construction of the bridge. Congratulations to Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority and Bridging North America for this initiative, reminding us all of the long-standing history and contributions of Indigenous Peoples of Canada.”

- *The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities*



“The rich history and culture of Southwest Detroit has inspired artists for generations, and MDOT officials are very pleased that creativity can be reflected during the building of this iconic structure. The artwork adorning the tower cranes offers a fitting tribute to the heritage of the neighborhoods on both sides of the border.”

- *Paul C. Ajegba, Director, Michigan Department of Transportation*