

**Trinidadian artist creates 300-person street procession for TO2015 Parapan American Games, August 9, along University Avenue, Toronto.**

Featuring persons with disabilities, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, Capoeira Athletes, and young spoken word poets from Jane-Finch, Malvern, and Regent Park, this procession re-defines public ritual in the City of Toronto.

For immediate release  
July 9, 2015

On **August 9, 2015 at 12 pm**, Toronto will bear witness to one of the most extraordinary images of its cosmopolitan self.

*Ring of Fire*, a commissioned procession by internationally renowned artist **Marlon Griffith**, takes to the streets—and not just any street in any city. This kind of event can *only* happen in Toronto.

This not-to-be-missed, 300-person strong street procession, punctuated by spoken word poetry by some of Toronto’s most promising “word-warriors,” weaves through the heart of Toronto’s downtown core along **University Avenue from Queen’s Park to City Hall**. At **2 pm** the procession culminates in a Round Dance worthy of the Guinness Book of World Records—an unbelievable image to open TO2015’s cultural program at **Nathan Phillips Square** that day.

The procession is based on the **Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings: Wisdom, Courage, Respect, Honesty, Truth, Humility, and Love**—themes that are dramatized in the elaborate, custom-designed costumes and newly conceived mobility devices and that structure the “bands” of the procession. Importantly, these Teachings are also the ethical basis of the project and inform the working principles of its making.

A project over two years in the making, *Ring of Fire* brings together members of local First Nations, Disability, Capoeira, and Spoken Word communities in an unprecedented collaboration. As a project dedicated to the **future of Toronto**, *this project is made by Torontonians for Torontonians* through the multi-generational and trans-cultural contribution of hundreds of people from across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Members of the public are invited to join *Ring of Fire* by emailing **procession@theAGYUisOutThere.org**.

Using the structural dynamic of Trinidadian Carnival and appropriating the “mas camp” as a site of co-authored exchange, this elaborate and multi-faceted project innovates a *new kind of pedagogy*. From spoken word poets learning from First Nations and deaf youth who sign their poems in the procession, to institutions and organizations learning from persons with disabilities (and becoming more accessible in the process), to mixing integrated dance with traditional forms of Capoeira, this project seeks to mobilize Toronto’s latent energy and position it as a place for a new form of collective, and performative cultural resistance that is *also* a **contemporary form of festive celebration**.

**Marlon Griffith** has participated in residencies and exhibited extensively across the globe. Recent projects include new commissions for 7th GWANGJU BIENNALE (Gwangju, Korea, 2008), CAPE09 BIENNIAL (Cape Town, South Africa, 2009), MANIFESTA 9 Parallel Projects (Hasselt, Belgium, 2012), AICHI TRIENNALE (Nagoya, Japan 2013), TATE MODERN (London, England, 2014) and the ART GALLERY OF YORK UNIVERSITY (Toronto, Canada, 2015). In 2010, Griffith was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and of a Commonwealth Award.

*Ring of Fire* is commissioned by the **Art Gallery of York University (AGYU)** and curated by **Emelie Chhangur**. The project is produced in partnership with **York University's School of the Arts, Media & Design, Art Starts**, and **SKETCH**, where "mas camps" have been developed and hosted. Legendary Artists, Activist **Rose Jacobson** and Elder **Duke Redbird** are project mentors.

For more information on the project and to view images of the work in progress, please visit: **[Ringoffire.theAGYUisOutThere.org](http://Ringoffire.theAGYUisOutThere.org)**

Follow (all of) us on Twitter: **#RingoffireTO**  
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**@SKETCHToronto**  
**@PicassoPRO**  
**@EqualGrounds**

And *take to the streets* with us by emailing:  
**[procession@theAGYUisOutThere.org](mailto:procession@theAGYUisOutThere.org)**

*Ring of Fire* is generously supported by the Ontario Arts Council, IGNITE Ontario and IGNITE Toronto, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Arts Council, York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design, and through the passion and commitment of every individual and organization involved in this project. "Mas camps" are produced in collaboration with Art Starts & The Lawrence Square Shopping Centre and SKETCH. Workshops in movement are produced in collaboration with SKETCH, Picasso PRO, and Escola de Capuêra Angola. AGYU's year-long spoken word poetry program was developed in partnership with the Malvern S.P.O.T, Success Beyond Limits, and COBA with the support from the Honey Family Foundation and the Vital Toronto Fund at the Toronto Foundation and the Toronto Arts Council: Targeted Enhanced Funding. Special thank you to Community Living Toronto for their incredible in-kind support of *Ring of Fire* and Strathcona Paper LP for donating the paperboard material for masks.

An exhibition of *Ring of Fire* takes place at the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) from 23 September – 6 December 2015 and a book, generously supported by the Partners in Art (PIA), will be published in 2016.

The Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) is a public, university-affiliated, non-profit contemporary art gallery supported by York University, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, and by its membership.

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For more information on *Ring of Fire*, or to request images or interviews with the artists, please contact Emelie Chhangur, Assistant Director/Curator at [Emelie@yorku.ca](mailto:Emelie@yorku.ca) or 416 736 5169.