

Additional Facts and Notes for Artists

The challenge to artists

CAM Group seeks a muscular works of art.

“This major commission is a once in a life time opportunity for artists to make visible the founding dynamic and legend of a nation. In the hands of the right artist, this sculpture will become the pre-eminent Canadian sculpture celebrating any Canadian historical figure. This commission is at least as much about the future as it is about the past.”

“In order for an artist to understand the importance of this commission and for them to imbue their proposed work of art with the fire and passion of the mythical proportions that it demands, the artist needs to get that Isaac Brock IS THE Father of Canada,” said Ian McCallum, CAM Group Associate. “For the duration of the project the artist must set aside the notion that the claim is debatable as to whether the adjective should be “*the*” or “*a*” father. “It is also imperative that each artist understands that they and we are celebrating the many dimensions of the larger than life Isaac Brock, in life already a large and powerful man. This not the time to think small; go big or stay home. This is the Brock on which Canada and the university were founded.”

McCallum also commented, “It is also important for artists to understand that this is a commemoration of life, the conception of Canada. It is not a glorification of war. Yes Brock was a celebrated General and yes Brock died on the battle field along with other Upper Canadians defending Canada. He was called to this destiny like Nelson was called to Trafalgar and Spartan king Leonidas to Thermopylae. The American attack created the crucible in which Canada was formed.”

Raw material to inform the artist - How Brock earned the title “father of Canada”

Over his 10 years in Upper Canada, together with the United Empire Loyalists, American and English immigrants the personable and sociable Brock evolved a strong sense of place and allegiance to the Canadas as they were known. This “national” self-identification by Canadians was unambiguously made visible to all when the Americans began sabre rattling and then when American’s declared both war and their intent to capture the Canadas. Ordered to return to Europe in 1812, Brock decided that his place was here, leading the defence of Canadians and Canada.

Brock rallied the 100,000 settlers in Upper Canada together with the native peoples under Tecumseh and found funding for the defensive militias. He provided trusted governmental and military leadership as both the President and administrator of the Government of Upper Canada and, for his final year, as military commander of the armed forces, the militias, the native warriors under Tecumseh and regular British Troops.

When the United States declared war, to protect Upper Canada’s western flank, on his own initiative, with Tecumseh he lead a bold and imaginative pre-emptive strike capturing the important fortified Fort Detroit with no loss of life on either side.

Two months later the Americans suddenly counterattacked across the Niagara River at Queenston. Knowing it was tactically imperative to immediately throw the first wave of Americans back across the Niagara River before they could receive reinforcements, galloping on ahead he led an early morning attack with the few available local forces even before his foot troops could arrive. He was shot dead leading the assault.

Brock's personal power was so great that it transcended his death, the news of which so upset and angered the population of Upper Canada, Tecumseh's native warriors, the citizen militia, and British regular troops that not only did they not retreat, normal under such circumstances, but they threw the invading Americans into and across the Niagara Gorge. At his funeral days later, even the American forces across the Niagara Gorge fired a rifle volley in salute of the man they much admired.

Sensing the power induced in them by Brock, the Canadians continued to repel American attacks for several years. In the face of the foreign threat, Isaac Brock perceived and created the first sense of Canadianess, a social cohesion of the 430,000 inhabitants of the Canadas that 55 years later was formally recognised as a nation.

It is generally agreed that Brock's repelling of the American forces could not have occurred or succeeded without the personal, professional and political bond that Brock and native leader Tecumseh forged together. This was atypical for the age, an early and particularly exemplary example of what Canada has come to be known for worldwide: for not only tolerating "the other" but embracing "the other", a key evolution in developing our multicultural richness which makes Canada stronger than the sum of its parts.

Brock University

Brock University is growing rapidly, building on internal and external collaboration and which, in faculty, students, administration and partners, deliberately develops, strengthens, nurtures and utilises both sides of the brain—like Brock the man. Deliberately Brock academic policy is based on interdisciplinary focus, helping students to develop rational and analytical thinking as well as their emotional, creative and innovative sides.

Other Isaac Brock values, in addition to his commitment to lifelong learning, are leadership, courage, innovation, inspiration and community involvement which Brock University honors yearly by awarding the Spirit of Brock Award to qualifying graduate students.

Little more than a cannon-fire echo away from the site of Brock's last battle, Queenston Heights, overlooking Lake Ontario Brock University sits prominently, high astride the northern lip of the narrow southern Ontario land bridge with the United States, the Niagara Escarpment. Brock is at the centre of the geo-political, tectonization of Canada.

This is further manifest by the fact that Brock University sits on the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve and is engaged in transdisciplinary research at the

University and with the Niagara region in order to transcend the often contradictory relationships between economic practices, social progress and the natural environment.

For further information on Sir Isaac Brock see:

- *The Astonishing General The Life and Legacy of Sir Isaac Brock* By Turner, Wesley B.
- *Tecumseh & Brock The War of 1812* By Laxer, James
- *Isaac Brock Larger than Life* By Begamudré, Ven
- *The Death of Isaac Brock* By Berton, Pierre
- *Bold, Brave, and Born to Lead Major General Isaac Brock and the Canadas* By Fryer, Mary Beacock