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LGBTQ2+ NATIONAL MONUMENT

Question by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

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LGBTQ2+ NATIONAL MONUMENT

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I rise today to congratulate the winners of the international public competition to create the National LGBTQ2+ Monument in Ottawa. The selected group for this major monument is the only all-Canadian shortlisted group — Winnipeggers Liz Wreford, Peter Sampson and Taylor LaRocque of Public City, a multidisciplinary architecture and landscape architecture studio; visual artists Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan; and Indigenous and two-spirited people subject-matter expert and adviser, Albert McLeod.

Their winning design, “Thunderhead”, will be installed in 2025 on Wellington Street, next to the Ottawa River, close to the Judicial Precinct. It meets all the competition goals: to educate, memorialize, celebrate and inspire. Minister Rodriguez said in the March 24 announcement that “Thunderhead”:

. . . embodies the strength, activism and hope of LGBTQ2+ communities. It will be a lasting testimony to the courage and humanity of those who were harmed by the LGBT Purge, homophobic and transphobic laws and norms, and Canada’s colonial history. . . .

In selecting this team, the jury sought public input through a national survey, which had 5,469 valid responses. The shortlisted teams were graded on each of the principles and goals in the call,

with the winning group being a favourite. This team was set on creating a dynamic place “for gathering and honouring, for contemplation and performance.” Meant to be a people place, its landscaped park traces the history of LGBTQ2+ people in Canada and includes a healing circle, the stones for which will be hand-picked by two-spirit elders. The monument is a cylinder containing the impression of a thundercloud. It is solemn and luminous. As artists Dempsey and Millan say:

The thundercloud is an expression of energy transmuting, rising and transforming. It is a symbol of renewal and hope, cleansing the earth through life-giving rain. . . .

This inclusive, innovative, inspiring, commemorative design bears both truth and optimism. Reflecting on past wrongs and looking to the future with hope, this visionary landmark will be timeless.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to my fellow Manitobans for their integrity, honesty and innovative approach. I wish them all the best as they undertake the next steps for this important installation — the development of the detailed design and then its construction. I will follow the project with interest and pride. Thank you.
