



Nelson Mandela's fight for freedom
showcased in new exhibition

MANDELA

presented by TO Live at the Meridian Arts Centre
Opens October 10, 2019

(Toronto, ON – UPDATED: August 23, 2019): **MANDELA** - a major exhibition developed by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg in collaboration with the Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa – will open in Toronto at the Meridian Arts Centre (formerly the Toronto Centre for the Arts). Currently on exhibition in Winnipeg, **MANDELA** opens in Toronto October 10, 2019.

A rich sensory experience of imagery, soundscape, digital media and objects, **MANDELA** explores Nelson Mandela's fight for justice and human dignity in South Africa. At Robben Island Prison, a former leper colony and animal-quarantine station off Cape Town, Nelson Mandela – Prisoner 466/64 – was kept by South Africa's white-supremacist regime for eighteen years. Among the exhibitions many dramatic visual features and original artifacts is a replica of Mandela's eight-foot by seven-foot prison cell.

Born 101 years ago (b. July 18, 1918, Mvezo, South Africa, d. 2013), Nelson Mandela was one of the most famous human rights defenders of the 20th century and the face of a movement against racial injustice that rocked the world. In 2009, in recognition of the former South African President's contribution to the culture of peace and freedom, the United Nations General Assembly declared July 18 "Nelson Mandela International Day."

MANDELA looks at Nelson Mandela and the movement that formed around him. Follow Mandela into hiding after he is declared an outlaw. Experience the bittersweet joy of his release, after 27 long years of imprisonment. Finally, witness South Africa's first democratic elections, and find out about Mandela's efforts to rebuild a nation shattered by racism and injustice. In addition, you can take a stand in front of a replica of a giant armoured vehicle, make a virtual protest poster on a digital light table, and enter a secret apartment for freedom fighters forced underground.

Nelson Mandela is one of only five people to be made honorary Canadian citizens and he travelled to Canada just a few months after his historic 1990 release from prison to thank Canadians for their continued support.

“Nelson Mandela forged a strong relationship with Toronto through his multiple visits,” said TO Live president and CEO Clyde Wagner, “We are honoured to be given the responsibility to present the exhibit, **MANDELA** immediately following it’s extended engagement at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.”

**Benefit performance featuring The Kingdom Choir
Tuesday, November 5, 2019**

Proceeds to support the presentation and accessibility of **MANDELA** in collaboration with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Audience members are invited to attend reception following the performance by The Kingdom Choir with performers and special guests in attendance, including special extended access to **MANDELA**. Dinner packages for exhibition supporters are also available for earlier that evening, including a cocktail reception and special guided exhibition tours.

Dinner Tickets Starting at \$500 per person.

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

Performance at 8pm

For tickets, visit <http://www.tocentre.com/events/kingdom-choir>. For information on dinner packages, please contact donate@tolive.com or 416-368-6161 x7217.

Originally home to MOCCA (Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art), the Gallery at the Meridian Arts Centre consists of over 3,850 sq. ft. of exhibition space over two floors that are linked by the upper and lower levels of the lobby. **MANDELA** utilize both floors of the Gallery and areas of the lobby.

Highlights of **MANDELA** include:

- Five zones – Apartheid, Defiance, Repression, Mobilization and Freedom – house interactive exhibits, artifacts and objects, oral histories, video and art. Each zone corresponds to a different colour of the South African flag, adopted with the first democratic elections of 1994 to symbolize unity. Visitors start with the stark black-and-white of apartheid oppression and end in the full living colour of freedom.
- A five-metre-high "wall of laws" is covered with signs and laws, based solely on skin colour, which dictated how people had to live their lives, including where they could go and what they could do under South Africa's former system of apartheid. Apartheid was used as a system of racial segregation and labour exploitation, imposing control on all aspects of life – as evidenced by the number and diversity of laws. A replica bench at the exhibition's entrance sets the tone by inviting "Europeans only" to sit.
- The scene of young Mandela's famous first TV interview in 1961 in a clandestine apartment location is recreated in front of the actual film footage of the then-42-year-old lawyer's interview with British reporter Brian Widlake. At this time, freedom fighters are moving underground. A "covert" area in this gallery zone features hidden objects and peek holes.
- A tiny prison cell with rear-projection scrim walls comes alive with silhouettes of Mandela moving about in his daily routine, then relays a story of continued resistance in the face of repression. Visitors are exposed to the dehumanizing conditions of Robben Island, the tools of hard labour, the censored letters, the meagre contents of the cell, and a little-known plot to escape.
- Tanks against trash-can lids: Music, rhythmic toyi-toyi dancing, and rich "schwe-schwe" fabrics enliven the story of action and uprising. A massive, tank-like truck emerges from one wall, where visitors can grab a trash-can lid as their only protection, like students had done during the Soweto Uprising.
- Original artifacts include a battered ballot box used in the country's first democratic elections in 1994 when Mandela became president; a letter in Mandela's own hand, sent from prison to a union leader involved in anti-apartheid mobilization;

a notepad Mandela used during negotiations for democracy; and a message Mandela wrote in the Canadian Senate during a visit shortly after his release from prison in 1990.

- In-gallery activities include a virtual poster-making station on a digital touchscreen table, with the ability to project your poster among others displayed in the exhibit (this can also be done online). Poster-making was a major part of the South African community resistance. People with few resources would gather to make inspiring posters that called people to action and solidarity in the struggle. Hundreds of examples still exist.

MANDELA at the Meridian Arts Centre received financial assistance from the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation.

MANDELA at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was generously supported by The Asper Foundation, TD Bank Group, Travel Manitoba and Air Canada.

MANDELA

October 10, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Exclusive Media Preview: Thursday, October 10, 10AM

Exhibition hours: Tuesday & Wednesday: 1PM – 6PM; Thursday – Sunday: 10AM – 6PM

Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge Street

General Admission Tickets: \$10 • \$5 (students)

Tickets for all TO Live events are available online at www.ticketmaster.ca, by calling 1-855-872-7669, or in person at the following TO Live box offices:

St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts Box Office 27 Front St. E.,

Monday-Friday, 12pm – 6pm

Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St.,

Tuesday-Saturday 1pm – 6pm

Ticketmaster phone lines operate 9:30am – 8pm Monday to Saturday, 12pm to 8pm

Sundays and holidays. On-line sales operate 24 hours per day.

The exhibition will be closed December 24-25, 2019 and January 1, 2020.

Schedule is subject to change.

Editors, please note: This media release has been updated to reflect a new name for the exhibition. The exhibition is now called, simply, **MANDELA**.

ABOUT TO LIVE

Previously known as Civic Theatres Toronto, TO Live is one of the Canada's largest multi-arts organizations, operating three iconic venues and presenting a full range of performing arts, theatrical and concert events in both downtown and uptown Toronto at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts (soon to be Meridian Hall), the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and the Toronto Centre for the Arts (soon to be the Meridian Arts Centre). With two hubs of creativity and content creation in both downtown and uptown Toronto, TO Live has a unique place and perspective in Toronto. The mission of TO Live is to activate creative spaces by inspiring local and international artists, connect audiences and to be the nexus for new ideas, elevate artistic potential, and be the catalyst for creative expression that is reflective of Toronto's diversity.

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