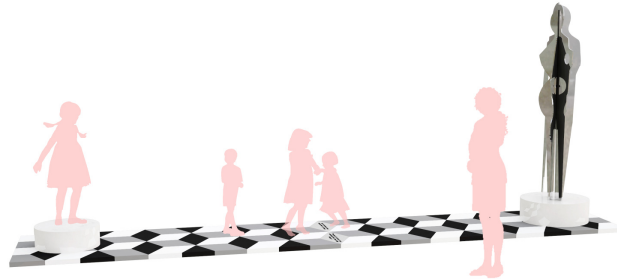


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**Columbus Centre commissions Harley Valentine for its newest project,  
*Monument: Italian Canadian War Stories.***

**May 14, 2013 Toronto, ON** – Columbus Centre has commissioned Toronto artist Harley Valentine to create a contemporary monument exploring the struggles and successes of the Italian Canadian immigrant and internment stories.

*Riflessi: Italian Canadian Internment Memorial* is an interactive artwork that invites the viewer to place themselves within the Italian Canadian story. A mirror polished stainless steel statue creates an immediate connection between the viewer and the history embodied in the artwork, allowing us to see ourselves as the beneficiaries of our elders' sacrifices. The statue is composed of multiple profiles representing an internee family – father, pregnant mother, and child – emphasizing that internment was not merely the detention of individuals, but a communal trauma. The walkway represents a multitude of entwined journeys: from Italy to Canada; from freedom to internment and internment to freedom; and from “enemy aliens” to cornerstone of modern Canada.

Says Valentine: “The challenge is to design a monument that commemorates the injustices Italian Canadians endured during WWII, while also celebrating the persevering spirit that led this community of once so-called ‘enemy aliens’ to become a cornerstone of the grand Canadian story. I achieved this by taking as my starting point not just the internees, but the whole of the Italian Canadian community, represented by the family of unique profiles comprising the main sculpture. “

Karen Manarin, Chair of Columbus Centre of Toronto Board of Governors notes, “We would like to thank Citizenship and Immigration Canada for funding that allowed us to record and archive this historical event. Valentine’s contemporary monument ensures that this forgotten time in Canadian history is remembered while celebrating the continuing success of the Italian Canadian experience.”

The *Monument* project follows the success of *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII* project, which produced a website ([www.ItalianCanadianWW2.ca](http://www.ItalianCanadianWW2.ca)), a travelling exhibit (touring Canada until 2016), a permanent exhibit (at Joseph D. Carrier Gallery, Columbus Centre), and a co-publication, (*Beyond Barbed Wire*).

The monument is slated to be completed by summer 2013 as part of the Italian Canadian Heritage Month celebrations. It will be installed in the Villa Colombo gardens on the Dufferin and Lawrence Villa Charities campus.

**About the artist**

Harley Valentine is a contemporary Canadian artist known for his open form metal-plate biomorphic sculptures and his mirrored photo-sculptural works reimagining iconic urban topographies and national mythologies. His recent works include *Persephone* [from the *Barbarians* series] at Humber College’s new Lakeshore Commons Building (May 2013) and *Dream Ballet*, a triptych of mirror-polished stainless steel forms for the Sony Plaza at Daniel Libeskind’s new L Tower building (Fall 2013). For more info, visit [www.harleyvalentine.com](http://www.harleyvalentine.com).

**About Columbus Centre**

Opened in 1980, Columbus Centre, an affiliate of the nonprofit organization Villa Charities, is the largest Italian Canadian cultural centre in Canada. The centre provides extensive educational, athletic and cultural programs and special events, and houses the renowned JD Carrier Gallery. With more than 100, 000 visitors yearly, Columbus Centre is the piazza and heart of the community.

– 30 –

**Media contact:**

Stefanie Polsinelli, Communications & Marketing Coordinator  
901 Lawrence Ave. W., Toronto, ON, M6A 1C3 | [spolsinelli@villacharities.com](mailto:spolsinelli@villacharities.com) | 416.789.7011 ext. 320

**Follow us to receive project updates:**

 Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII  @ItCanWWII  Italian Canadians WWII