

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Columbus Centre unveils its latest project,
Riflessi: Italian Canadian Internment Memorial, by artist Harley Valentine**



June 28, 2013 Toronto, ON — On Wednesday, June 26, 2013, Columbus Centre unveiled *Riflessi: Italian Canadian Internment Memorial*, a new monument that explores the struggles and successes of the Italian Canadian immigrant story and the Italian Canadian internment history. Artist Harley Valentine said, "The monument encapsulates the internment history from a wide perspective — the internees, their families, and the Italian Canadian community as a whole — and keeps an open place for the present to reflect on our connection to this past."

The public event was held in the gardens of Villa Colombo/Columbus Centre, and was attended by hundreds of guests, including dignitaries – such as Hon. Consiglio Di Nino, who championed Columbus Centre's internment projects throughout his time in the Senate, fellow artists, educators and community members. Among these were families of those interned, plus two women – now in their 90s – who, in 1940, were designated as "enemy aliens", fingerprinted, and made to report to local authorities. Special guest speaker, Hon. Julian Fantino, Minister of International Cooperation, said, "The Government of Canada is committed to improving the future by commemorating the past. We have funded this endeavour to help us all recognize the experiences of the Italian-Canadian community and ensure that the stories are not lost. This is the reason why today's unveiling of *Riflessi: Italian Canadian Internment Memorial* is such an important contribution in helping to preserve this part of our national narrative."

The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of the sculpture by Valentine, Minister Fantino, Di Nino, and Karen Manarin, Chair of the Columbus Centre Board of Governors. The great-granddaughter of one of the project's interviewees from the Windsor community was the first to step on the podium of the monument, representing the link between the past, present and future.

The evening concluded with guests viewing and interacting with the monument; many considered their reflection in the mirror-finish of the sculpture. Others also took in the permanent exhibit, *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII*, on display in the Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery in Columbus Centre.

Other projects produced by Columbus Centre: a travelling exhibit, *Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Times* (now at Niagara Falls History Museum); a website (www.italiancanadianww2.ca); and a co-publication, *Beyond Barbed Wire*.

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Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII



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– 30 –

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