

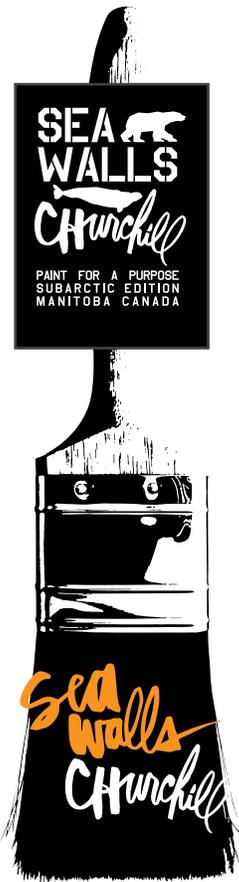


Manitoba
CANADA'S HEART BEATS



K. BARTESKI

tour notes.



SEA WALLS CHURCHILL

SEAWALLS CHURCHILL was created with the intention to educate and inspire a community to protect the ocean, but what transpired was more powerful than that. It is the story of a small town on the edge of the Arctic being reminded of their value and worthiness in this world.

In the planning for over a year, SEAWALLS CHURCHILL was curated and coordinated by Winnipeg artist KAL BARTESKI in conjunction with the PangeaSeed Foundation. This project was made possible by title sponsor Travel Manitoba and a host of generous supporters. The idea: bring a team of recognized public artists together to learn about the challenges a remote community faces living on an ocean coast - then have them create a series of large murals set to change the visual landscape and inspire ocean-health conversation. **SEAWALLS CHURCHILL took place June 16-26, 2017.**

Three weeks before the festival, the rail line was washed out and the project was unable to bring up needed equipment including four lifts, 700 sets of scaffolding, rollers, paint brushes, ladders, buckets and 500 cans of spray paint. Without the necessary equipment and combined with the lack of food supplies from the train derailment - the town (and the project) were in peril.

Instead, the town saved the project by matching the artists willingness to give by donated equipment, sharing supplies and volunteering hours. **This is a story that starts with ocean health, but dives deeply into the resilient and generous character of a small Northern community.**

NUMBERS + HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1 YEAR IN THE MAKING
- 18 ARTISTS
- 9 COUNTRIES
- 3 PRO PHOTOGRAPHERS
- 1 FILMMAKER
- 1 DOCUMENTARY IN THE MAKING
- 5 PERSON DOCUMENTARY TEAM
- 1 FLOODED RAIL LINE
- 6 DAYS OF PAINTING
- 10 DAYS IN CHURCHILL
- 19 BELUGA BOAT TOURS
- 1 BIKE TRIP TO CAPE MERRY
- 3 LIFTS SHARED BY 18 SITES
- 4000 TIMBITS DELIVERED
- 1 OUTDOOR CELLO CONCERT
- 1 BELUGA-INSPIRED YOGA CLASS
- 1 FREE COMMUNITY BBQ FOR 500
- 6 DEDICATED BEAR GUARDS
- 500 CANS OF BEER
- 10 SHORTWAVE RADIOS
- 1 EXPERTLY DRIVEN FOOD TRUCK
- 1 MIDNIGHT HIKE TO THE ITHACA
- 500 LITRES OF PAINT
- 3 RENTAL TRUCKS
- 59 CANS OF BUG SPRAY REQUIRED
- 1 AMAZING PLACE NAMED CHURCHILL



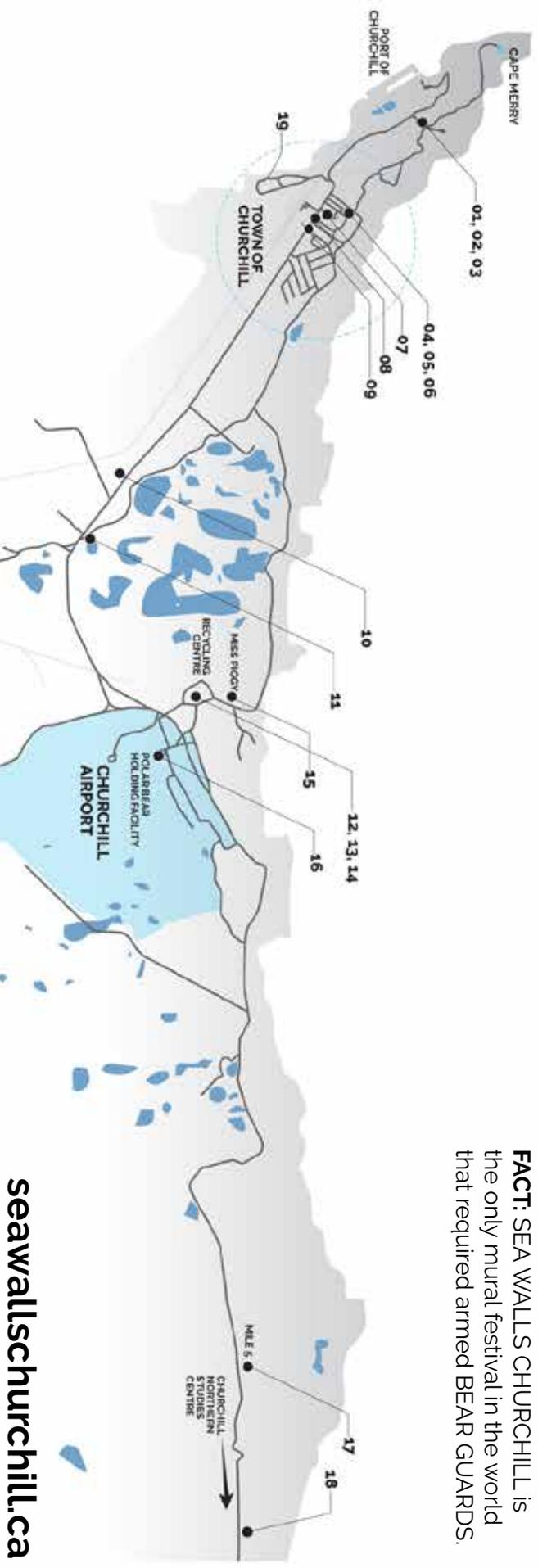
seawallschurchill.ca

SEA WALLS CHURCHILL MURAL MAP

- 01 HUMAN NATURE
- 02 THE ROPE
- 03 THE BEAR
- 04 POWER OF NATURE
- 05 THE LAST WINTER
- 06 WE SWIM IN THE SAME WATERS
- 07 FINAL DESTINATION
- 08 FOOTPRINT
- 09 ENCOUNTERS AT THE END OF THE WORLD
- 10 KNOW I'M HERE
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- 12 HOPEFUL WAITING
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- 16 PEACE + CIRCUMSTANCE
- 17 #CAMP10
- 18 IMPACT PART 2
- 19 GOOSE CABIN



FACT: SEA WALLS CHURCHILL is the only mural festival in the world that required armed BEAR GUARDS.



seawallschurchill.ca

MURALS + ARTIST STATEMENTS

1. "HUMAN NATURE"

ARTIST: ASKEW ONE / NEW ZEALAND.

LOCATION: Port of Churchill green building

Artist statement: My wall is a play on the phrase 'Human Nature', it's the universal excuse used to justify everything we're doing wrong in this world - you know, like "it's just human nature to..." insert miscellaneous bad thing here. But this is also a play on Human and Nature - the precarious balance between the two.

Churchill is a town where this is the underlying drama at all times. It's a town so dependent on the natural environment and it's wildlife and is simultaneously threatened by it too. Everything in Churchill has a duality, a total double edge to it. The text on the mural illustrates this tension and also draws from the parallels in texture of both the natural and industrial environments of the town.

artist instagram: [@askewone](#) / website: [askew1.com](#)



FACT: Askew travelled through 5 countries before arriving in Churchill at the halfway point. His mural took 3 days and he stood on a flat deck attached to a forklift because there were no lifts options available.

2. "THE ROPE"

ARTIST: CASE MACCLAIM / GERMANY

LOCATION: Port of Churchill green building

Artist statement: The piece describes the present-day situation of living in a remote coastal area of the world that is both dependent on nature and suffering from a man-made tragedy. It addresses the melting permafrost which is unsuitable for building infrastructure on, such as railways. In addition to this, massive storms and floodings are washing away the railroads making them unable to use for transportation of goods and people.

In the early spring of this year, Churchill was hit by two historic blizzards, and the resulting meltwater caused the railway to wash away in several areas last month. Now, the government and the American rail corporation are arguing over who will repair the rail, Churchill's lifeline.

For Churchill, this means that their lifeline that supplies the community with food, water, medicine, and employment, is out of commission indefinitely. The train line is the most important connection to keep the city of Churchill alive and the community employed. Many people are currently out of work and from what they say, the railroad won't be repaired within the year.

My painting touches on the issue of the railway, by showing port workers balancing like tightrope dancers on the washed away railway. It stands as a metaphor for how fragile life can be in subarctic terrain and how essential the railway and our oceans are for the survival of the people.

artist instagram: [@case_maclaim](#) / website: [case-maclaim.com](#)



FACT: Case spent many hours discussing the rail situation with community members before staging a photo to use as reference for his mural. He used local characters in authentic gear as reference and to create the realism he is known for. He reluctantly declined a beluga boat tour because he didn't want to lose painting hours.

3. "THE BEAR"

ARTIST: LI-HILL / CANADA

LOCATION: Port of Churchill green building

Artist statement: "On my last day in Churchill this gorgeous wall called me. I managed to put this image up that has haunted me for years now. Calling out amid extinction, the silent roar dissolving into the fog of memory." Li-Hill

Side note: In an epic finish, Li-Hill created this mural in ONE DAY in a steady drizzling rain by using the last of the available paint supplies.

artist instagram: @li-hill / website: li-hill.com



FACT: Li-Hill, painted this in less than 6 hours, IN THE RAIN, exposed to both the Hudson Bay and the Churchill River winds, using mostly aerosol BBQ paint from the Home Hardware store.

4. "POWER OF NATURE"

ARTIST: ARLIN GRAFF / BRAZIL

LOCATION: A Block

Artist statement: In my work, I reconstruct animals using pieces and fragments. I see it as a way of trying to fix what we have destroyed in nature. Painting them in large scale is a friendly way of asking for respect, and making people feel small when faced with the grandeur of nature.

Using vibrant colors helps gain the attention of the viewer without asking permission first, a technique I have brought with me from the graffiti era to invade space and get my message across.

artist instagram: @arlin_graff / website: arlingraff.com



FACT: Arlin was the first artist to project his image on to the building. It was midnight, but the community came out of their homes in amazement to watch. You could hear the applause and excitement from the Tundra Pub.

5. "THE LAST WINTER"

ARTIST: DULK (Antonio Segura Donat) / SPAIN

LOCATION: B Block

Artist statement: The increased melting of the Arctic, caused by global warming, threatens the survival of polar bears. Polar bears need ice to walk, hunt and breastfeed their young. If there is no ice there is no rest, no food, and death begins to persecute them. The melting of the ice sheets forces them to swim for hundreds of miles, which poses a great risk to the cubs.

This mural painted in Churchill, Manitoba (Canada), a place considered The Polar Bear Capital of the World, represents the forced journey of a family of bears and belugas during their last winter on Earth. The cub grabs its treasured iceberg, which helps it to escape from the human impact on Earth.

artist instagram: @dulk1 / website: dulk.es



FACT: When Antonio was told he could only have the lift for 1.5 days he started at the top right corner and worked downward painting in a "finished" style (like an inkjet printer). This is not his regular process (and an incredibly difficult method) but he worked expertly with the equipment and time available.

6. "WE SWIM IN THE SAME WATERS"

ARTIST: CHARLES JOHNSTON / CANADA (WINNIPEG)

LOCATION: A Block

Artist statement: Spirit in the water, spirit in the sky, spirit on the earth, all are connected.

My piece is about ancestral legacy, what was passed on to us and what we will leave for our children's children. She may be the Creator or Sedna the Inuit goddess of the sea. She may be Jessie Tootoo, a healer or grandmother.

Whoever she is, from her open hands the Aurora is unleashed, the ethereal cosmic voice of the ancestors speaking to us. The beluga swims through the aurora, a spirit guide legacy reminding us of what is truly valuable and worthy.

artist instagram: [@c5charlie](#) / website: [charliejohnston.ca](#)



FACT: Charlie is one of Canada's most recognizable mural artists working in the industry for more than 30 years.

During the festival, community members shared the connection they felt through Charlie's mural to the memories of a young girl named Danica who died tragically the year before. Charlie dedicated this mural to her.

7."THE FINAL DESTINATION"

ARTIST: STORM ANGECONEB / CANADA (WINNIPEG)

LOCATION: Town Square (old S&M grocery store)

Artist statement: I wanted to pay homage to the more than 250 species of birds in the Churchill area.

artist instagram: [@storm_eee](#)



FACT: Stormy was the youngest artist in the group at only 18 years old.

8. "FOOTPRINT"

ARTIST: MANDY VAN LEEUWEN / CANADA (WINNIPEG)

LOCATION: Seaport Hotel, Kelsey BLVD

Artist statement: Celebrating the resilience of the north throughout the passage of time, a place man and nature meet, where humans choose to walk together or face a great divide. As they navigate the unknown climate, government & corporate challenges that will shape their future.

artist instagram: [@mandy_vanleeuwen](#) / website: [mandyvanleeuwen.com](#)



FACT: Mandy used local community members as reference for her mural. She had to climb over loose stones and large rocks in order to complete her mural.

09. "ENCOUNTERS AT THE END OF THE WORLD"

ARTIST: KELSEY ELIASSON / CANADA

LOCATION: WEBBER LODGE GARAGE Kelsey BLVD

Artist statement: I paint the dreams and the memories of wildlife encounters; bold primary colours translate the emotional impact of these moments.

The bears stand as a record of Churchill as it is today, they are based on real bears that I have met over the years. This trinity may be seen as the 'Father Son and Holy Ghost' of Churchill's main drag, as watchers presiding over Churchill's fate or simply as the three sides of every northern story.

As the two first bears weather and likely disappear, the ever-present beluga whales will emerge to take their place as the focal point of the piece. The third bear will also remain, as a somewhat mysterious and judgmental figure.

SIDE NOTE: Kelsey is a bear guide, photographer, and filmmaker who splits his time between Churchill and Whitehorse.

artist instagram: [@polarbearalley](#) / website: [polarbearalley.com](#)



FACT: Kelsey starred in the reality series filmed in Churchill titled: POLAR BEAR TOWN

10. "KNOW I'M HERE"

ARTIST: GEORGIA HILL / AUSTRALIA

LOCATION: Abandoned naval base, Kelsey BLVD

Artist statement: My artwork for Sea Walls Churchill focuses on climate change and it's impact on our sense of place. Churchill as a town has been struggling through the direct consequences of melting sea ice, blizzards and flooding, affecting not only people's livelihood and morale, but also the future of the unique sea life the town works alongside.

My goal was to create an artwork that subtly references the sea ice of Hudson Bay, along with the rock textures of Inukshuks built by Canada's indigenous people, which are used to navigate and reference land, water and locations.

The phrasing 'Know I'm Here' creates a strong message of valuing the people of Churchill, but also communicating to all people that we need to read the water and world around us in order to know our place and take actions to nurture what we have been given.

artist instagram: [@georgiahillbth](#) / website: [georgiahill.com.au](#)



FACT: Georgia painted this 400 foot long heavily corrugated metal building completely BY HERSELF. Her lift was donated for her use by the Mayor of Churchill.

11. "PUMP"

ARTIST: TAKASHI IWASAKI / JAPAN (WINNIPEG)

LOCATION: Pump House - Churchill, Manitoba

My artwork addresses the circulation of water in the world in connection to the Pump House on which my mural is painted. The water travels from the Pump House to the faucet, to the people, back to the ocean, plants, and back to the Pump House again. We are all connected and depend on the health of our water supplies and sources to survive. Simply put, water is life.

artist instagram: [@the.takashi.iwasaki](#) /
website: [takashiiwasaki.info](#)



FACT: Takashi used the water from the pond behind his mural and also created beautiful sketches of the other artists during the festival.

12. "HOPEFUL WAITING"

ARTIST: PAT LAZO / CANADA (Winnipeg)

LOCATION: Town Recycling Center

Artist statement: The Polar Bear sits in a vast field of fireweed and awaits the return of the ice just as the people of Churchill await the repair of the recently damaged rail line; a vital link to their livelihood and access to essentials.

The bear is flanked by the arctic sea ice on one side and open water on the other, and sits beneath the Aurora Borealis. Despite the changing climate, the bear appears strong and hopeful signifying optimism for humanity to take action on climate change.

artist instagram: [@patlazo](#) / website: [patlazo.com](#)



FACT: Pat's wall was exceptionally challenging as he needed bear monitors, extreme bug protection and to be alert for the ornery and large guard dogs on site.

13. "ON THE BRINK"

ARTIST: LI-HILL / CANADA

LOCATION: Town Recycling Center

Artist statement: The tension between human societies and the natural environment is a reoccurring theme in my work. In a town such as Churchill, built directly on the central migration route of polar bears, this tension is not only prevalent but exacerbated.

For my piece I have depicted two scenes, a local conservation officer from the town and a flurry of Polar bears, Canadian Eskimo dogs and or wolves. Poised to shoot cracker shells, the main tool to scare off bears, the uniform and stance of the officer allude to times of hunting and stand for human aggression.

In this case aggression used to protect both bears and humans alike. On the right side is a flurry of Polar bears and Canadian Eskimo dogs or wolves (depending on what you see). In the town of Churchill there is an added tension due to one figure's rearing practices attempting to save an overlooked species, the Canadian Eskimo dogs. Put to the brink of extinction by the Canadian government, this animal, which for thousands of years ensured survival in the north, is also at risk and together with the polar



FACT: Especially inspired by the Canadian Eskimo Dogs at Mile 5 and the passionate bear talks by Churchill's Conservation Officer - Aaron Li-Hill used photos he took of both the dogs and the officer to create this mural. He also used a precarious lift nicknamed MAD MAX to reach the great heights of his wall.

bears call out amid extinction.

In the context of the town and specifically the recycling center where this mural was painted, the interaction between bears and conservation officers are extremely common and the reading of this piece becomes more specific. In the broader context and more central to theme is the fact the image radiates outward from a division line. Instead of man vs nature here, it is two sides of the same coin. Both humans and endangered species are in a state of fight or flight. A heightened sense of emergency due to climate change and the long list of global issues place everything in a precarious position. In a town such as Churchill the tensions are local but the story is global.

artist instagram: [@li-hill](#) / website: [li-hill.com](#)

FACT: Aaron Li-Hill is a vegetarian, but he (alongside Jason Sivixay and Lana Bakun) BBQed over 500 hot-dogs and hamburgers for the town of Churchill. It was a blustery day, but the entire community showed up to "break bread" with the artists who had arrived to paint the town. This BBQ was sponsored in full by The Northern Store.

14. "IMPACT" / PART 1

ARTISTS: KAI KAULUKUKUI HAWAII + CRACKED INK / UK

LOCATION: Town Recycling Centre - Churchill, Manitoba,

Artists statement: The beluga whales seem so peaceful and playful swimming up and down the shores of Churchill, its easy to forget some of the dangers they may face in their aquatic homes. There are a few threats that are directly affected by our actions and can be slowed or eliminated with a bit of care, and one of them is fishing debris.

Mr. Crackedink and myself decided to bring this topic into view and hopefully start a discussion that moves any fisherman to consider his waste and dispose of it properly.

SIDE NOTE: These two artists were also the dedicated operations team, mixing paint, building scaffolding, making sure the equipment and mechanical pieces of the project ran smoothly.

artist instagram: [@artworkofkai](#) / website: [kaiilikaulukukui.com](#)

artist instagram: [@crackedink](#) / website: [crackedink.com](#)



FACT: This mural was created in less than a day by the operations team at the very end of the festival when most of the other walls were complete.

15. "EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION"

ARTIST: PAT PERRY / USA

Artist statement: Found, as written by the artist, in its entirety at the end of this document.

artist instagram: [@heypatyeah](#) / website: [patperry.com](#)



FACT: After Miss Piggy was painted - Pat Perry organized the performance art pictured here - along with flares, community members and elaborate costumes.

16. "PEACE + CIRCUMSTANCE"

ARTIST: KAL BARTESKI / CANADA (WINNIPEG)

LOCATION: Polar Bear Holding Facility

Artist statement: My artwork for Sea Walls Churchill focuses on the conservation and respect of the polar bear. My goal was to create a piece using the building's architecture and location (on the highest hill in the community) to portray a larger than life polar bear peacefully asleep as the world operates around her.

The relaxed pose and vibrant yellow colour of the bear is what would typically be seen during a subarctic sunset.

The location of this bear, on the polar bear holding facility, highlights the intensity and necessity of wildlife management along polar bear migration paths where polar bears, the largest predators in the world, continue to adapt to the shameful realities of our consumer-driven culture.

SIDE NOTE: Kal Barteski was the coordinator and curator of the SEA WALLS CHURCHILL project. She fundraised over \$150,000 to make this project possible. In 2016, she started the POLAR BEAR FUND to support non-invasive and innovative polar bear projects at a community level in Churchill. polarbearfund.ca

artist instagram: [@kalbarteski](https://www.instagram.com/kalbarteski) / website: kalbarteski.com



FACT: This mural can be clearly seen from the air when landing or departing Churchill.

FACT: one painting day was so windy that gallon pails of paint were blowing off the scaffolding.

FACT: the entire wall was done with a 2 inch brush.

FACT: You can see as many as 6 of the other murals, the Hudson Bay, the Churchill River and the Northern Studies Centre from this site.

17. #CAMP10

ARTIST: JASON BOTKIN / CANADA

Location: Mile 5

Artist statement: The mural is an homage to #camp10, and the Sayisi Dene First Nation Aboriginal peoples of Canada, who were forcibly relocated to Churchill around the time this base was operational.

A tragic and too largely unknown chapter in Canada's sordid history with its indigenous population.

Featured here are a couple of stylized caribou antlers, carried away in a river of 'ribbons'. Hands of a skeletal figure offered up in prayer. According to the Manitoba Government, the tragic decision to relocate the Dene community at Duck Lake was due to incorrect assumptions from wildlife officials about the impact of the Dene's traditional hunting practices on what was in fact a healthy caribou herd.

This homage to #camp10, and the Sayisi Dene Features a quote from Elder Betsy Anderson (tadule lake, MB): "There was a time when all the people and all the animals understood each other and spoke the same language. ("Yanizj Denesutiné chu t̄ch'adie j̄tághe yati hot'a etnedäreni hél tth'i etedári tth'agh nisnj.")

artist instagram: [@robotkin](https://www.instagram.com/robotkin) / website: jasonbotkin.com/



FACT: Jason Botkin was instrumental in making this festival a reality. He and Kal Barteski visited each site in 2016 to assess the needs and challenges that would face each artist.

FACT: Jason was named to the Governor General's Leadership Program for 2017.

FACT: Jason Botkin, born in Winnipeg, now lives in Montreal. He is a notable Canadian artist exhibiting internationally.

18. "IMPACT" PART 2

ARTISTS: KAI KAULUKUKUI HAWAII + CRACKED INK / UK

LOCATION: Block house, Northern Studies Centre

Artists statement: The beluga whales seem so peaceful and playful swimming up and down the shores of Churchill, its easy to forget some of the dangers they may face in their aquatic homes. There are a few threats that are directly affected by our actions and can be slowed or eliminated with a bit of care, and one of them is fishing debris.

We hope to bring this topic into view and hopefully start a discussion that moves any fisherman to consider his waste and dispose of it properly.

artist instagram: @artworkofkai / website: kailikaulukukui.com
 artist instagram: @crackedink / website: crackedink.com



FACT: this mural has a hidden gem on the opposite side of the building that features the likeness of SEA WALLS CHURCHILL's official HEAD OF BEAR SECURITY, operations chief, get-everything-done: Dennis Compayre.

19. "GOOSE CABIN"

ARTIST: PAT PERRY / USA

LOCATION: The Flats

Artist statement: This piece was done as a gift to bear guard Eddy for his long hours spent guarding Pat Perry at Miss Piggy where their friendship was formed.

artist instagram: @heypatyeah / website: patperry.com



FACT: This festival and these murals could have been possible without the TOWN OF CHURCHILL, the SEA WALLS CHURCHILL TEAM and our generous sponsors.

FACT: Special mention goes to LANA BAKUN, JASON SIVIXAY, SEBASTIAN BOTKIN and REID VALMSTAD.



A SMALL NORTHERN TOWN AND OUR COMMON CRISIS

EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION:
58°45'37"N, 94°5'11"W

What I see happening in Churchill, Manitoba is frighteningly similar to what was happening in Michigan in the 1970's, 1980's, and through the present. You had the livelihoods of millions of people in Michigan tethered on life support to one industry. When that industry died and shut down, the rest of the economy followed slowly. Like a body's delayed reaction before the head is gone - instead of millions of people like in Michigan, this time in Churchill there are less people, less companies, and less variables. Hundreds of people, a single port, and a single rail line.

And just like in Michigan when the life line was cut, the people here ask the company, how could you do this? What will you do to support us? The company asserts that those responsibilities are not theirs', that they cannot be expected to be accountable for the town's fate. And the company, under a model to which we are all complicit, and through the collective values of this new half century, is perfectly correct. And that opens the scope of this crisis to something more fundamental like bones, something more deep-rooted to take issue with.

Following the decline of one economy, just like in Michigan, an idea takes hold in Churchill that tourism will now be the bedrock economy that will sustain the town. So then, a dozen artists are brought here to make the town their muse and to beautify it, but just before that happens, unprecedented flooding washes out the rail line, cutting the flow of goods, essentials, and seasonal visitors. Prices soar, and dogs begin starving. So what are the artists to do? Choice A: Paint social works that bring some brief yet genuine psychological respite to the village. Choice B: Cautiously bracket choice A, and instead tell the truth.

Because at the same time as people in the town of Churchill are speak of omertax, the railroad corporation's indifference to the life of their town, the boats of extractive energy companies across North America march forward in a precisely similar step and fashion. November 2016: An expansion project for Enbridge's Line 3 is approved to pump almost double the amount of tar sands oil out of Alberta, through Southern Manitoba and down to Superior, Wisconsin. Enbridge is the same company whose Line 6 pipeline ruptured into the Kalamazoo river in Michigan in 2010, causing one of the largest oil spills in US history. The company's Line 5 still pumps 200,000 barrels of oil beneath the straits of Mackinac, and under the Great Lakes, every day.

June 1st, 2017: The same day the United States pulls out of the Paris Climate Agreement, oil starts flowing through the Dakota Access Pipeline against the wishes of the Standing Rock Sioux, breaching the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie.

But with these companies, instead of threatening an 800 person village, or the state of Michigan, those projects named from the spearhead of a crisis so large in scope and reach, that it's possible destructiveness is unfeeling, to polar bears, to caribou, and to humans alike. And as the failures of this current direction have proven to be numerous and profound, we know that the sources of our peril are common, and at the bottom of it all, we are left knowing they must be addressed. We must change course, which, brings me back to my point of telling the truth and what-are-the-artists-to-do.

To not proliferate a myth, I believe my greatest service to the people here is to acknowledge what's happened; what's happening in this town, what's happening across this continent, and what's happening around this world. Post-9/11, post-inauguration Day 2017, post-every-tricky-broken, post-start of new extinction period, post-normalization of decline, equivocation now is intolerable. One way or another, in the end, we will all be facing this together, and in my heart I know it would be wrong to look away from the crash course we are on.

It is with my utmost humility that I ask for understanding and grace from the people of Churchill as to why I couldn't make something more cheery on the beloved MISS PERRY plane wreck, and it is my greatest wish that you find a sincere expression of solidarity in the artwork I've made.

Pat Perry
Churchill, Manitoba
June 22nd, 2017

