

WALDE STUDIOS  
3648 Doncaster Drive,  
Victoria, BC V8P 3W6  
CANADA  
250 661 6826  
paulwalde.com



## TOM THOMSON CENTENNIAL SWIM

### Site Specific Event:

On July 8th 2017, Paul Walde swam the length of Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park on the 100th Anniversary of Canadian Painter Tom Thomson's death. The swim, a site-specific and temporally specific event, was used as an opportunity for exploring and understanding this landscape and history through performative experience. The duration of the piece was determined by the length of the lake approximately 3kms and the artist's ability to navigate it. The swim was accompanied by a series of interconnected events: a brass band with a mandolin soloist performing a new long form music composition by Walde, three synchronized swimming routines at various points along the route, and a flotilla of canoes carrying the band. The work primarily exists in two forms, that of the event itself and an audio/video work based on the footage of the event.

### Audio Video Installation:

Using footage from the site and temporally specific event Tom Thomson Centennial Swim as the cornerstone of the piece, a forthcoming video installation of the same title is under development. Footage from the swim from multiple points of view including underwater, body-cam, mobile units (from boats), drones, and stationary positions along the route, are combined with shots of the lake and locations featured in Thomson's paintings. Synchronized swimmers who signal the passage of time, provide connection between the swim and Thomson's death through a choreographed routine that was performed at several locations along the swim route. The duration of the piece mirrors the length of the event, which was approximately 50 minutes.

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About the Music:

This score was written to accompany the 3km swim of the length of Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park on July 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, the centenary of the death of Canadian Painter Tom Thomson. Walde wrote the score with the following considerations: “The meter and time signatures are adapted from my stroke rate, and the relationship to my kick and strokes, which alternate from a 6/4 in the first half to a 4/4 in the second half. I wanted the score to be something that could have been created at anytime in the past 100 years. Erik Satie’s timeless work was an inspiration for this undertaking, particularly *Vexations* and the *Gnossiennes* (both c.1893). Distance swimming is a very repetitious, rhythmic, and meditative activity so this score attempts to create a work that is at once dirge-like, hypnotic, yet transformative. One of the limitations of the piece was to compose a work over 45 minutes long that could fit on marching band lyres, miniature portable music stands that clip to instruments, so that musicians could perform from canoes, this was accomplished by writing a modular score in which repeated sections and elements are interleaved sonically.” In the Audio Video installation performances of the score are mixed with location sound recorded at the event including audio from microphones on the artist’s bod and featuring a minute of “silence” recorded at the bottom of Canoe Lake using hydrophones.

