



**MUSEUM OF TORONTO LAUNCHES CITY-WIDE BRAND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:  
“FOR THE T.O. YOU DON’T KNOW”**

*The campaign, crafted by Berners Bowie Lee, encourages Torontonians to step outside and uncover the surprising stories woven into the city’s streets and corners*

**(Toronto, ON) July 21, 2025** — The [Museum of Toronto](#) is turning the city into a living, breathing exhibition with its bold new brand awareness campaign, “*For the T.O. You Don’t Know*,” launching this July. The campaign created by [Berners Bowie Lee](#) is designed to uncover and celebrate the city’s lesser-known histories, the campaign invites Torontonians to rediscover their city through surprising and thought-provoking stories hidden in plain sight.

“Our goal is to share histories that are often overlooked or unknown, allowing communities and individuals to think more deeply about the city they call home,” says Heidi Reitmaier, Executive Director of Museum of Toronto. “We want Torontonians to engage critically and creatively with their city’s past and to imagine its future with fresh eyes.”

With over 25 locations featured across Toronto, this campaign transforms streets, sidewalks, and transit spaces into immersive storytelling platforms. Wayfinding signage, including plaques, posters, and sidewalk stickers will appear at Bike Share stations, subway platforms, and high-traffic pedestrian areas. Each marker reveals a unique slice of Toronto’s past, from the Jamaican Patty Wars and the Circus Riots to the Children’s Protest against candy bar inflation and the hidden histories of The Ward. Many of these hidden or lesser-known stories were revealed through Interviews with the museum’s network of local historians, architects, journalists, and culture aficionados.

"We wanted to create a campaign that turns the entire city into an open-air museum," says Michael Murray, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer at Berners Bowie Lee. "By revealing these hidden stories, we hope Torontonians will see their city in a new light, one that sparks curiosity, pride, and a deeper connection to the places they walk by every day."

### **Highlight Locations And Histories**

**Andrew Mercer Reformatory, 1155 King St W, Toronto** (demolished in 1971): The Mercer Reformatory for Women opened on August 28, 1880 in Toronto’s Liberty Village area as Canada’s first all-women’s prison and a separate Industrial Refuge for Girls, funded by the estate of Andrew Mercer. Initially aimed at ‘reforming’ women deemed “incorrigible”, such as those deemed immoral, alcoholic, or mentally unwell, it devolved into a site of systemic abuse, including beatings, torture, medical experimentation, and riots, most notably in 1948 when over 100 inmates protested harsh treatment. Following a damning 1964 grand jury report and growing public outcry, the institution closed on April 3, 1969 and was eventually demolished.

**Harriet Tubman Centre, 15 Robina Avenue** (demolished in 1998): From November 1972 to September 1975, the Harriet Tubman Centre operated at 15 Robina Avenue (near St. Clair West

and Oakwood) as a Black-led cultural hub organized through the YMCA, offering tutoring, steel drum lessons, sports, and community gatherings for Toronto's Black diaspora. In 1974, photographer Joan Latchford unknowingly captured a young Bob Marley playing soccer in the Centre's parking lot, a moment only recognized years later by her son. While no official records explain Marley's visit, Toronto's rich reggae scene suggests he may have been exploring Little Jamaica and connecting with local youth. It closed in the mid-1970s amid funding and organizational challenges, and was eventually demolished in 1998, leaving few physical traces but a lasting legacy.

**Dueling Spot, Yonge and College:** In July 1817, the future corner of Yonge and College was a meadow, and the site of Toronto's last fatal duel. Samuel Jarvis, a wealthy and notoriously corrupt man who enslaved six people, killed law student John Ridout after a bitter dispute over an unpaid bill led to a duel challenge. Ridout missed his shot; Jarvis did not, and was later acquitted, likely never paying the bill.

Visitors can scan QR codes on these markers to dive deeper into each story and access a full tour map, encouraging exploration by bike, subway, or foot.

Museum of Toronto invites everyone to step outside and experience the city like never before, because history isn't static; it's alive, and it's all around us.

For more information and to find the locations, visit [museumoftoronto.com](https://museumoftoronto.com).

For images of the campaign, click [HERE](#).

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### **About Museum of Toronto**

Founded in 2015, Museum is Toronto's City Museum. They offer a collection of experiences that tell the histories of Toronto. Their exhibitions and content aim to evoke curiosity and foster deeper connections between its visitors and the city. With a focus on building a living archive of the city, they strive to be a valuable resource for those interested in the cultural heritage of Toronto. Enjoy Museum of Toronto's programming in their downtown exhibition space, throughout the city, and online.

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