

## Minute Man National Historical Park inaugural Artist-in-Residence Program presents

### *Earth Press Project: Witness*

#### **A site-specific, public engagement, environmental project**

Concord, MA - June 19, 2019 - Minute Man National Historical Park in partnership with The Umbrella Community Arts Center presents *Earth Press Project: Witness*, a collaborative public art project. Inspired by the land and the history that the park commemorates and interprets, this project invites communities across America to respond, with one word, to an online prompt, "What change would you like to witness on this Earth?" (See [www.nancymilliken.com/earth-press-project-witness](http://www.nancymilliken.com/earth-press-project-witness).)

A collaborative effort with Artist-in-Residence Nancy Winship Milliken Studio, a community-generated sculpture made of earthen blocks imprinted with the public's responses will be on view September 1 - November 1, 2019 outside the Minute Man Visitor Center, Lexington, MA. A declaration of witnessing change, this project invites public engagement and dialogue around current challenges facing our earth.

*Earth Press Project: Witness* brings the land, history and resources of the Minute Man National Historical Park together with the artists and expertise of The Umbrella, and has co-evolved to include additional regional partners such as Reflex Letterpress (MA), Building Heritage (VT), and Terra Collaborative (VT). As a pilot Artist-in-Residence program, *Witness* initiates art that engages the community in the Park. Using art to carry our stories and bridge our past with our future, these imprinted words will reflect our individual and collective hopes for our shared future.

In the 19th century, Hudson River School painters and early photographers such as Carleton Watkins captured the imagery of the American West and such majestic places such as Yellowstone and Yosemite. Their body of work helped inspire Congress to establish the National Park Service with the Organic Act in August 1916. Today, the environment, history, and resources of our National Parks have inspired more than 50 NPS Artist-in-Residence programs nationwide. BJ Dunn, Superintendent, Minute Man National Historical Park has a history of being involved with arts in the parks, previously at the helm of artist programs at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. "Art in the parks is yet another exciting way to engage new audiences in learning the history of the American Revolution and the events that this park interprets for the public. We are excited to be working with The Umbrella Community Arts Center to pilot this 2019 artist-in-residence project," says Dunn.

Nancy Lippe, Director of The Umbrella Arts & Environment Program, is excited to invite the community to participate in this installation. "The Witness Project embodies our mission to reconnect people to the land and place via the arts, and I can't think of anything more important today than to consider our individual and collective roles in shaping our future connection to the

earth.” She hopes this pilot collaborative project with the National Park Service will grow into an ongoing Artist-in-Residence partner program.

Nancy Winship Milliken Studio’s work ultimately addresses complex issues involved in sustainable living. Defining her art as “contemporary pastoralism,” Nancy Winship Milliken is inspired by our age-old relationship to nature as a way to consider ecological questions in the present. Using the material of earth and the printed word ties the project to the agrarian and literary history the park is steeped in. The battlefields, structures, and land in the park were witness to the American revolutionary spirit and are key to informing this project’s concept. In addition to printing acting as the lifeblood of engaging the development of the revolution, The Wayside, now a part of the park, witnessed literary heritage develop. The statement, “I like good strong words that mean something,” by The Wayside’s famous inhabitant, Louisa May Alcott, became the starting germ of the idea for the Earth Press Project.

Ongoing submissions throughout the exhibition will be displayed online and at The Umbrella Community Arts Center at 40 Stow Street, Concord. In addition to submitting a one word response, the public is invited to explore the physical installation at the park between September 1 and November 1. On September 22, from 10:30am -1:30pm, the public is invited to meet the artist and collaborators, make their own “witness” brick, and engage in conversation around the themes of witness and change. As in the time of the American Revolution, there is today a world of possibilities before us. Today, the internet continues the print tradition of spreading awareness of contemporary issues to create change. It all begins with a thought and a word.

The Umbrella Community Arts Center (*TheUmbrellaArts.org*) is a multifunction, nonprofit arts center dedicated to enriching lives and building a vibrant creative community in historic Concord/Metrowest that encompasses arts education, theater, music, film, visual arts galleries, 50+ artists studios, sculpture exhibits, makerspace, and public art. Its Arts & Environment Program combines a discovery of the arts, a passion for place and nature, and environmental responsibility, including such events at Minute Man National Historical Park as Musketaquid Earth Day Festival and Riverfest & Summer Solstice.

Share your response at <https://www.nancymilliken.com/earth-press-project-witness>. Follow @earthpressproject for updates and a behind the scenes look at the making of this community-generated sculpture event. For more information: <https://TheUmbrellaArts.org/Witness>.

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Media images: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6tk64pw7nc2gsid/AABjolu4iyj-rTF0-A0UqdDfa?dl=0>