

# **ArtScape: creating an artist-in-residence program at the Joggins Fossil Institute, Nova Scotia, Canada, to engage the public with earth sciences**

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Museums are critical institutions for furthering public education and can do so through creative means. The Joggins Fossil Institute (JFI) is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization that manages the Joggins Fossil Cliffs UNESCO World Heritage Site. JFI aims to engage the public and create world-class educational experiences pertaining to earth sciences and natural history. In 2017, it unveiled its new artist-in-residence program, ArtScape, in order to further the educational and outreach components of the museum and its mission. ArtScape is open to visual artists, literary artists, and performing artists on a revolving basis in a 3-year cycle and provides the time, financial support, and space to enable them to better focus on their work. JFI looks for artistic proposals that engage with, complement, examine, and reflect the natural environment (flora, fauna, weather, water, geology, paleontology, cultural history etc.) of the Joggins Fossil Cliffs and Centre. The residency benefits artists who, through artistic creation and expression, wish to explore the myriad relationships between the human experience and the natural world. It provides the opportunity for artists to personally encounter nature in a unique rural setting. Now entering its third year, ArtScape has hosted a visual artist (2017) and a literary artist (2018), and will complete the cycle with a performance artist (2019). While each artist has time to create their own works, they also have a commitment to engage with the public and school groups through artist's talks, gallery openings, and workshops. ArtScape provides artists, visitors, and the JFI itself with new and exciting ways to consider the natural phenomena embodied in the Joggins Fossil Cliffs.