

***What Would Tom Do?* by Tracy Thomson**

Tom Thomson's legacy lives on through the generational talent of his great-grand-niece, Tracy Thomson, who honours his memory in her own work.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Toronto, July 18, 2025 —

Propeller Art Gallery is pleased to announce an exciting new public art installation at the southwest corner of Queen West and Abell Street in Toronto. Just steps north of Propeller Art Gallery, this large-scale mural features Tracy Thomson's original piece *What Would Tom Do*, digitally expanded from its original 25 x 25 inches to an impressive 25 x 25 feet.

Tracy Thomson is a Toronto-based painter and mixed media artist. A graduate of the AOCA (now OCAD University) and recipient of the Nora E. Vaughan Award, she often works experimentally to "work large and explore abstract space." She is a member of the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) and the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour (CSPWC). She has also exhibited her work globally.

A member of Propeller Art Gallery since 2020, Thomson recently presented a three-week solo exhibition titled *Wild Life* (May 28 – June 15, 2025), where the original painting of *What Would Tom Do* was featured and sold to a collector.

For a full gallery view of *Wild Life* at Propeller Art Gallery, visit: <https://propellerartgallery.com/exhibitions/wild-life-tracy-thomson/>

What Would Tom Do? holds particular significance for Thomson due to her unique artistic lineage. The figure in the piece, "*Tom*," references her late great-granduncle—iconic Canadian painter Tom Thomson, (1877-1917). Tom was known as a forerunner to the Group of Seven and one of Canada's most influential artists. His imagery included Canadian landscapes, especially scenes of the northern wilderness in Ontario.

Tracy refers to Tom as her "guiding light," crediting him with shaping her early understanding of what powerful, meaningful art could be. Given today's political and environmental challenges, she felt compelled to honour his memory at this moment in time. Their shared love of nature, creative passion, and strong Canadian roots are at the heart of this work.

Tracy's piece is an original drawing with mixed media collage. The scene depicts a male figure—Tom Thomson—standing in a sparse room with large glass windows. He smokes a vintage pipe, hands in his pockets, and gazes north toward a mountainous landscape where a Canadian flag waves proudly. On the back wall hangs Tom's iconic painting *The Jack Pine* (1916–17), currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

This imagined scene situates Tom in a near future where climate change has destroyed outdoor greenery. Here, he would “begin again” by cultivating hybrid vegetation indoors, represented by futuristic plants growing from test tubes throughout the space. His northward gaze and the Canadian flag underscore a political metaphor: turning his back to the American south in response to their political denial of climate change.

In Tracy Thomson's words:

“I often find myself reflecting on how Tom’s art might have evolved over time. What would he think of climate change? How would he respond to an errant American President threatening his sublime Canada? Finally, I asked myself:

What would Tom do?

At that moment, I pictured him in this room.

Of course—*THIS* is what Tom would do! He would plant hope. Make something from nothing. Offer a gift of new life to inspire future creators—not only for Canada, but for the world.

This begs the question: *What will WE do?*”

Propeller Art Gallery and Tracy Thomson gratefully acknowledge artist Ben Woolfitt, for his generous support in making this public artwork possible.



Tracy Thomson standing in front of her Mural, *What Would Tom Do?* at the southwest corner of Queen West and Abell Street in Toronto



Person walking on Abell Street towards Propeller Art Gallery in front of Tracy Thomson's Mural *What Would Tom Do?*