

ARTWORK **THIRD BANK OF THE RIVER**

ARTIST **ALAN MICHELSON**

SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN 2009  
U.S. LAND PORT OF ENTRY  
MASSENA, NEW YORK

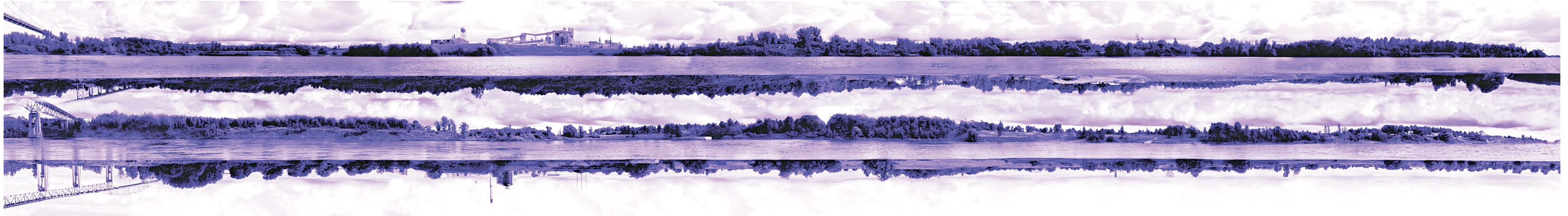
For a window in the passenger lobby of the port building designed by Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects, artist Alan Michelson is creating a seamlessly integrated artwork, which he describes in his concept narrative:

*“Third Bank of the River* is a monumental, silk-screened and photo-sandblasted float-glass window panorama documenting twelve miles of the local international shorelines of the St. Lawrence River. The area is a unique site encompassing multiple jurisdictions—the United States, Canada, New York State, Ontario and Quebec Provinces, and Akwesasne Mohawk Territory—that from the local Akwesasne Mohawk perspective comprise three nations.

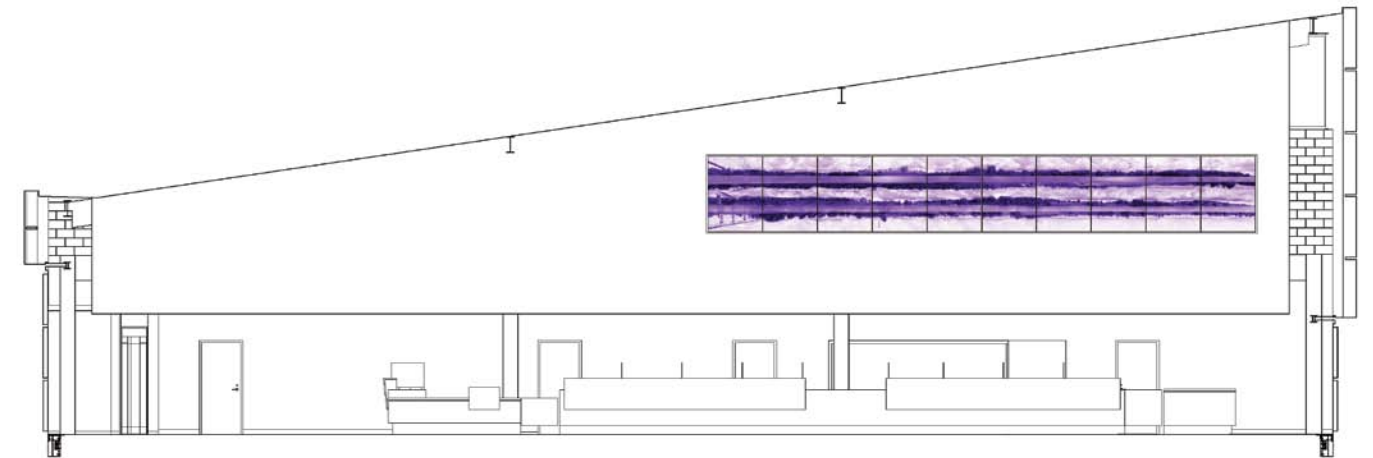
“The artwork is a digital composite of a river landscape that unites two diverse cultural traditions: tourist river panoramas of the nineteenth century and Iroquois wampum belts. *Third Bank of the River* depicts, in a stacked and mirrored arrangement, pairs of opposing shorelines at the Three Nations Crossing international bridge. The first pair includes the Cornwall, Ontario, mainland and the north shore of Cornwall Island, which is part of Akwesasne Mohawk Territory. The second pair comprises the south shore of Cornwall Island and the Massena, New York, mainland. I photographed these shorelines from a boat on the St. Lawrence River in the summer of 2007.

“In form and color, the artwork intentionally echoes the historic Two Row Wampum Belt, which recorded and signified—through two rows of purple shell bead alternating with three rows of white beads—an early seventeenth-century treaty of friendship and coexistence between native Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and immigrant Europeans. The rows symbolized the parallel paths of the Haudenosaunee canoe and the European sailing ship, and the respective customs and laws of each group, which were to remain parallel and inviolate.

*“Third Bank of the River* expands the binary structure of the wampum belt to include the four shorelines and three bordering entities: New York State, Akwesasne Territory, and Ontario Province. The symbolic rows and purple-and-white color scheme are retained but no longer strictly contained within alternating borders. The stacked panorama is also a temporal sequence: read vertically from bottom to top it moves south from Ontario to New York State via Akwesasne, the route of passage across the international bridge from Canada to the United States.”



**Alan Michelson** was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1953, grew up in western Massachusetts, and now lives in New York City. He studied art at Columbia College in New York and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and earned his BFA from Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, in 1981. A Mohawk member of Six Nations of the Grand River, Michelson plays with North American geography, history, and identity in his multi-layered, multi-media installations. Exhibitions of his work include *New Tribe: New York - Alan Michelson* (2005-06) at the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York; and *NATIVITY* (2004) at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. Michelson's work has been included in many group exhibitions, including *The American West* (2005) at Compton Verney in Warwickshire, England; *Living-places/Art-spaces* (2003) at the Museum of World Cultures in Frankfurt, Germany; *Keeping Track of the Joneses* (1998) at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York; and *SITEseeing: Travel and Tourism in Contemporary Art* (1991) at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Michelson's public artworks include projects with the Public Art Fund, Creative Time, and REPOhistory—all in New York. Michelson teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence.



MEDIUM TEMPERED GLASS PRINTED WITH CERAMIC GLAZE  
 DIMENSIONS TEN PANELS, EACH 5 FT 9 IN X 4 FT 9/10 IN (5 FT 9 IN X 40 FT 9 IN OVERALL)