

One month left to get your Antarctica passports at Rodman Hall

MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2014 | by [The Brock News](#) | 1 



An Antarctica World Passport

A summer-long contemporary art exhibit at Brock University's Rodman Hall about water is heading into its final month. And so is your chance to become a citizen of Antarctica by getting your hands on an Antarctica World Passport at the art centre.

[*The Source: Rethinking Water Through Contemporary Art*](#), which opened at [Congress 2014 "Borders without Boundaries" at Brock](#) this past spring, examines the many social and cultural facets of this vital resource that is such an integral part of our daily lives.

"The subject of water is very topical, people are thinking about their relationship to this essential resource," says Stuart Reid, director of Rodman Hall who also curated the four-month exhibit that runs until Sept. 28.

"It's also a meta-topic in that it's hard to be specific about it, but it encompasses so many aspects of contemporary life," he says. "Contemplating water leads us to confront our frail relationship with the natural world."

The origins of the project go back to 2011, when three of the artists from the group exhibit were awarded a SSHRC grant to bring together an initial group of

[Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959](#) by Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, the United States, France, the UK, Japan, Norway, New Zealand, South Africa and the USSR.



The Ortas' Antarctic Flag flying out from of Rodman Hall Art Centre

The Treaty, which entered into force in 1961, also provides that any member of the United Nations can accede to it. It now has [50 signatory nations](#) and membership continues to grow.

The [Antarctic Treaty](#) states that the sixth continent is a common territory, open to all peaceful peoples and to cultural and scientific cooperation. The passport created by the Ortas is a symbolic proposal for a new nation of humanity based upon the foundation of the 2007 *Antarctic Village*.

“The Ortas’ experience of Antarctica has been fodder for a whole body of work. Antarctica is governed by a treaty that is a powerful document setting out a kind of utopian state,” explains Reid. “The treaty forbids mining or any kind of military activity and upholds the continent as a place of peace and co-operation.”

The passport may be issued to any person wishing to become a citizen of the world allowing them to travel freely. On deliverance, it requests in return that citizens take responsibility for their actions and dedicate themselves to combat all acts of barbarity, to fight against intimidation and poverty, to support social progress, to protect the environment and endangered species, to safeguard human dignity and to defend the inalienable rights to liberty, justice and peace in the world.

“The artists recognize the importance of the ideals stated in the treaty and, through

the issuance of passports, are mobilizing peoples' awareness of Antarctica as a beacon of hope for people of earth," adds Reid.

"The passport office is a provocative site where the audience engages in a performance of sorts. People come into the gallery and go into our passport office, which looks like a regular bureaucratic hole-in-the-wall office, and sit down and take a pledge to support the tenets of the Antarctica treaty."

To date, a couple hundred passports have been administered to visitors at Rodman Hall, and the online database the Ortas established to record and track all of the citizens of Antarctica has more than 10,000 names in it.



"In the end, recipients have an art object that looks very much like a real passport that would probably confound any customs official if you actually tried to use it at an airport or border crossing," says Reid.

The gallery's Antarctica World Passport office is open Tuesday to Friday from 2 to 4 p.m., by appointment on weekends, and at special events. To book a visit, call 905-684-2925. It takes five minutes to apply and passports are \$5.



[UPCOMING EVENTS RELATED TO THE SOURCE EXHIBIT AT RODMAN HALL:](#)

- Thursday, Sept. 11, 7 p.m.
Guest Lecture: “Water & Hope: Facing Fact and Inspiring Optimism in a Declining Era” by Robert Sandford, EPCOR Chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative in support of United Nations “Water for Life” Decade. Presented in conjunction with Brock’s Environmental Sustainability Research Centre.

- Saturday, Sept. 27, 2 p.m.
Exhibition tours with Nadine Bariteau and curator Stuart Reid. Presented in conjunction with the pan-Canada celebration of [Culture Days 2014](#)

- Sunday, Sept. 28, 1 to 4 p.m.
“Drawing Water”- an artists’ presentation and workshop with Patrick Mahon and Gautam Garoo. Presented in conjunction with the pan-Canada celebration of [Culture Days 2014](#)

MORE ABOUT THE [ANTARCTIC TREATY](#)

The Treaty, which applies to the area south of 60° South latitude, is surprisingly short, but remarkably effective. Through this agreement, the countries active in Antarctica consult on the uses of a whole continent, with a commitment that it should not become the scene or object of international discord. In its fourteen articles the Treaty:

- stipulates that Antarctica should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, military activities, such as the establishment of military bases or weapons testing, are specifically prohibited;
- guarantees continued freedom to conduct scientific research, as enjoyed during the IGY;
- promotes international scientific cooperation including the exchange of research plans and personnel, and requires that results of research be made freely available;
- sets aside the potential for sovereignty disputes between Treaty parties by providing that no activities will enhance or diminish previously asserted positions with respect to territorial claims, provides that no new or enlarged claims can be made, and makes rules relating to jurisdiction;
- prohibits nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste;
- provides for inspection by observers, designated by any party, of ships, stations and equipment in Antarctica to ensure the observance of, and compliance with, the Treaty;

- requires parties to give advance notice of their expeditions; provides for the parties to meet periodically to discuss measures to further the objectives of the Treaty; and
- puts in place a dispute settlement procedure and a mechanism by which the Treaty can be modified.



The Antarctica Passport Delivery Bureau at Rodman Hall

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