



**Miaja**  
A gathering focused  
on Anicinabe language



September 12 and 13, 2019  
Kebaowek and Wolf Lake



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**Indigenous Languages**



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summary

# Miaja, A gathering focused on Anicinabe language

**On September 12 and 13, 2019, Kebaowek and Wolf Lake will host the second edition of Miaja, a unique get-together event celebrating Anicinabe art, culture and heritage.**

Everyone is invited, in particular Anicinabe artists, social and political players from the Anicinabe communities and all cultural stakeholders in the Anicinabe territory. It is with great enthusiasm, which we hope will be contagious, that Minwashin invites you to join the crowd. Together, let's make sure that this year's Miaja event is the second in what we hope will become a long and lasting tradition.



# Honoring the Anicinabe language

**The 2019 edition of Miaja will revolve around the theme of the Anicinabe language. While coinciding with UNESCO's International Year of Indigenous Languages, it is essentially because our language is in danger of becoming extinct that we chose to put it at the center of our celebrations. Oral tradition will be at the core of the event, and all participants will be invited to discover Anicinabe words through legends, stories, songs, slam and poetry.**

In addition to providing the Anicinabe people with the opportunity to gather and shape a future true to their values, the second edition of Miaja will provide a forum conducive to forging links that transcend the language, cultural and temporal barriers that usually separate us. It will be a powerful means to learn more about one another and to create an oral tradition of our own, built with ideas, values and stories that will help us conceive a life together.



## objectives



Artistic gatherings like Miaja serve to building constructive bridges among cultures and opening new paths to a more harmonious cohabitation for tomorrow. While long and complex, this process is crucial to break down prejudices, which are obstacles to the growth of our society.



**Since its creation, Minwashin has sought to identify ways to enhance the Anicinabe culture among the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities living on the territory. Miaja provides a privileged occasion to collectively reflect on what actions to take to promote the Anicinabe identity, and to share views on the role it will be called upon to play in the social development of its territory.**

Miaja aims at attaining the following objectives:

- Creating links between Aboriginal artists from the seven communities in the territory.
- Maintaining the dialogue on First Nations art and culture development.
- Promoting and restoring traditional culture, and helping Anicinabe artists define themselves as contemporary artists and the heirs of a centuries-old tradition.
- Providing Anicinabe artists with networking tools, and contributing to the enhancement of their professionalism through an art dissemination experience.
- Contributing towards bringing peoples together by creating a positive, warm and engaging public event.
- Reaching out to youth through trendy activities, and ensuring their presence through partnerships with educational bodies.

## context



**It all starts with the realization of the void existing between our cultures and the shared desire to fill it. While the presence of the Anicinabe is at the heart of the identity of our territory, our region's phenomenal cultural growth over the past 20 to 30 years has been achieved largely without their participation. Need we to point out that the Anicinabe communities have brought more than 8,000 years of culture, history and wisdom to our collective heritage, thus making their presence one of our region's greatest treasures.**

With 2019 being the International Year of Indigenous Languages, this year's event is of special significance. We couldn't ask for a better timing to bring together our artists and great minds from across the territory to discuss talk about revitalization of the Anicinabe language. It represents an unhopd-for opportunity to address a pressing situation: the Anicinabe language is endangered, but also the culture and history it conveys.

The first edition of Miaja was a resounding success. It is therefore with renewed energy that we are preparing for the upcoming second edition and on making it more inspiring and livelier than ever. In addition to initiating a necessary and forward-looking dialogue, the 2018 gathering demonstrated that we still have a long way to go. That is why we hope to make Miaja a recurring and anticipated happening.



## description of event

True to our traditions, this gathering is nomadic in nature and takes place every year in a new location within our ancestral territory. It is with great pleasure that Verna Polson, Grand Chief of the Algonquin and Anishinbeg Tribal Council, extended the invitation to hold this year's Miaja celebrations in Témiscamingue, a land occupied by four Anicinabe communities. In addition to contributing to the dynamization of the Témiscamingue region, the location chosen for the second edition of Miaja will facilitate the participation of the Aboriginal communities of Témiscamingue's next door neighbor, Ontario.

A number of First Peoples personalities of Quebec and Canada who have distinguished themselves through their commitment to preserve Aboriginal identity and culture will be invited to share their experience and discuss regional issues. The purpose of their participation is to inspire our youth, cultural transmitters and Anicinabe artists, to motivate them to join the First Nations in the country in this common fight and, in turn, to raise the awareness of cultural, political and social players in their respective community to the importance of language, art and culture. We are also very pleased to welcome Mr. Sébastien Goupil\*, Secretary General, Canadian Commission for UNESCO.



In addition to the many lectures and workshops conducted by our guests, the event includes several performances and arts and crafts booths. The entire activities are organized so that all Anicinabe communities can be represented and Miaja showcases their remarkable, rich diversity.

Above all, Minwashin wishes to celebrate the Anicinabe culture and create a festive and positive atmosphere. The event will feature many art performances and shows that will dazzle the audience. For some, it will be the discovery of a beautiful culture; for others, an opportunity to learn from and reconnect with their roots. Miaja 2019 promises to be no less than a vibrant and unifying cultural event.



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