

INSTALLATIONS |
DAWSON CITY, YUKON
BY NICOLE DEXTRAS

temperature
climate change
rivers
water
naming

ICE writing history

Les Noms, LEGACY and *The River's Bride* were new works created during a residency at the Klondike Institute of Art in Dawson City from November 10 2008 to February 4 2009.

In the past I have battled the warming weather trend in cities such as Toronto and Montreal where I did other ice projects. The intent of going to the far north was to avoid weather uncertainties. Unfortunately severe cold of -50°C , followed by unheard of above 0° winter rain, caused difficulties for these installations. My work is a testimony to the vagaries of climate change.



LEGACY consists of eight-foot tall letters made of ice, installed on the Yukon river. Wooden forms were set out on the river, filled with water in-situ and left to freeze. Unfortunately the extreme cold caused fissures in the ice and they cracked and fell almost as soon as they were released. The L and Y were left standing surrounded by huge broken ice blocks resembling the ruins of some frozen archeological dig. *Legacy* refers to the landscape as being the heritage of the inhabitants of this region.



Les Noms (a coucher dehors) is a series of names made of ice taken from the 1901 Census of Dawson City during the gold rush. They were people who originally came from Québec. Many were mis-spelled or Anglicised and I have represented them they way they appeared in the census. Elphese is one of these old names or *noms a coucher dehors*, as we used to call them when I was a kid, that are no longer in use. *Noms a coucher dehors* means names that sleep outside, because they were uncultured, rural names. It is the kind of name, such as Gédéon, Cléophas and Gandias, which belong to my grand-parents generation. Today I feel these names are quite beautiful and poetic.

