

OCAD ABORIGINAL VISUAL CULTURE PROGRAM

Vision and Progress Report

REVISED MAY 2009



Leading In The Age Of Imagination

As a leader in cultural education, OCAD, the Ontario College of Art & Design, has consistently offered more innovative and socially engaged visual arts and design programs than any school of its kind in Canada. OCAD's downtown Toronto campus offers students a unique environment that combines studio-based learning with critical inquiry. In 2007 the university embarked on a new mission to lead the way into a transformed cultural milieu it characterized as the Digital Future. OCAD's strategic plan *Leading in the Age of Imagination* identified cultural diversity as a key trend in contemporary society and initiated important objectives and innovative approaches to the challenges and opportunities diversity presents.

Other guiding themes in the strategic plan: the integration of sustainability in art and design practices and the development of contemporary ethics, were identified as key components of the university's educational mandate. OCAD's Aboriginal Visual Culture Program is a direct result of these initiatives.

The strategic plan recognizes OCAD's location within the territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (Algonkian) in a province with significant First Nations and Métis populations. It also proposes future initiatives that will create relationships and programs with Aboriginal communities in Ontario and beyond.

The strategic plan underscores the value of Aboriginal programs towards asserting a healthy diversity of knowledge and culture in Ontario and at OCAD, and acknowledges the need to create specific programs and spaces for Aboriginal cultural learning.

Aboriginal youth is a growing sector of the Canadian population and constitutes a critical part of the future Canadian and Ontario labour force. All significant studies of Aboriginal post-secondary education note the importance of developing programs that will engage Aboriginal youth, while building the capacity and knowledge of these communities in their own right and within the larger Canadian context. Yet, despite the well-documented importance of culture to Aboriginal well-being, creativity and economic capacity, Ontario is not alone in the limited availability of programs dedicated to Aboriginal visual culture, art, media and design.

Aboriginal programs, including some of considerable size and scope, may be found throughout the Canadian post-secondary education system and throughout Ontario. These provide a range of certificates and degrees with a primary focus on social work, education, addiction studies, applied linguistics, anthropology, education and health sciences. There are also language programs related to specific bands, particularly in Western Canada.

On the other hand, Aboriginal visual culture programming tends to be more scattered, marginal and decidedly less well funded and supported. Programs at First Nations University of Canada and Brandon University provide curriculum in contemporary Aboriginal visual culture, including studio practice. A new two-year program in visual art launched in 2007 at the Klondike Institute for Art and Culture under the aegis of Yukon College caters to the Aboriginal communities of the North, but with limited programming. In Ontario, McMaster University has established a Chair in Indigenous Studies, and Nipissing University offers a BFA program, though none provide significant studio-based curriculum in the history and practice of Aboriginal art.

With the exception of the University of Lethbridge in Alberta and the University of Regina, individual Aboriginal professors of visual art and art history are few and far between, Toqwa'tu'kl Kijjitaqnn (Integrative Science) and Biodiversity, a program at the University of Cape Breton Island that unites Aboriginal culture and science studies has two Canada Research Chairs to lead it. Trent University has a Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Arts and Literature and a First People's House of Learning, but visual art and design are not a focus. The Banff Centre no longer emphasizes a comprehensive Aboriginal arts program with its own director and White Mountain Academy in Elliot Lake Ontario was closed in 2005.

Although conferences and symposia may temporarily fill the gap for much needed dialogue - OCAD hosts the annual Creator Within Festival with Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts (ANPVA), a national Aboriginal visual and media arts consortium, and is building relationships with other Aboriginal arts organizations, such as the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (ACC) - and while the Banff Centre continues to provide opportunities for professionals to meet and exchange knowledge, there is neither a comprehensive design program that brings skills in planning, design, architecture and related practices in sustainability to Aboriginal communities nor a dedicated Aboriginal art, media and design degree program.

Indeed, Canada lacks significant, dedicated Aboriginal visual culture, art, media and design programs and has been losing ground in this area rather than gaining it.

This is a post secondary educational gap that must be addressed.

In recent years OCAD has received many requests from Aboriginal artists, curators, media artists, designers, architects, critics and arts organizations, as well as their communities, to step forward and create a



Ancestral IO
2008 Epson Archival Print
Meryl McMaster
3rd Year, Photography



Under a Red Cedar Moon
Date unknown
Cedar
Luke Parnell, OCAD Technician

degree program that would consolidate visual culture education and research at the national level. The Aboriginal design community, including architecture, also does not have a post-secondary home. The Aboriginal Visual Culture Program: Art, Media and Design will provide not only degrees but also an opportunity to hold study sessions, create outreach programs, advance scholarship and build a substantive threshold of knowledge in Canada.

Recognition of the role that OCAD can play in the development of an Aboriginal Visual Culture, Media and Design Program is rooted in a history of Aboriginal engagement at the university. OCAD has been offering courses in Aboriginal cultures, history, art and architecture since 1990. For the most part Aboriginal faculty members who are engaged in professional practice in the larger Ontario community teach these courses, though some courses have been taught by non-Aboriginal professionals, designers and architects who work closely with Aboriginal communities. In addition, over the past two decades, OCAD has hosted extra-curricular initiatives such as conferences and symposia that explore Aboriginal arts. OCAD has regularly undertaken partnerships with Aboriginal high schools and programs such as Seventh Generation Image Makers. OCAD also provided early administrative support for White Mountain Academy. Nonetheless, until recently, OCAD's desire to provide a formal academic context for Aboriginal art, design, media and other related knowledge has been far greater than the initiatives undertaken.

Labour Market Benefits

OCAD's Aboriginal Art, Media and Design Program will provide skilled Aboriginal professionals and researchers for Ontario's growing knowledge economy.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit artists, designers, curators and cultural experts will find significant career opportunities as interest in and demand for Aboriginal art, media and design continue to grow in the Canadian and international markets. Studies such as *Brokering Aboriginal Art: A Critical Perspective on Marketing, Institutions and the State*, indicate the strength of the market for contemporary Aboriginal art and design, the need for increased presence and capacity in circulating the existing production and the value of Aboriginal people in creating this economy within their own institutions and in partnership with the larger cultural community. In addition to working as artists, OCAD graduates will find jobs in museums, galleries, and community centres. Graduates of OCAD's program would also be well positioned to exploit, among other opportunities, the creation of a significant Woodland industry in traditional craft and visual art, with all manner of arts business development.

Designers with skills in environmental design, industrial design, sustainable practices, participatory design and architecture will find work in multiple applications in Aboriginal communities where design skills are in high demand for housing and other built structures, as well as practices that respect land, tradition and resources. These jobs include architecture, community planning, system design and health service development.

Communications designers and media artist graduates will find work in many fields such as advertising, graphic design and communication, media and other cultural industries.

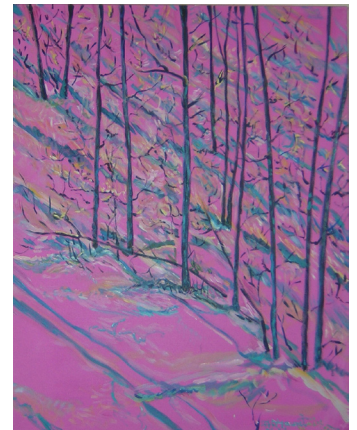
OCAD's growing strengths in digital media through the Digital Futures Initiative provides opportunities for the development of Aboriginal expertise for the cultural and entertainment industries and will build Aboriginal capacity for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal media entities.

As the Aboriginal Visual Culture Program at OCAD continues to foster expertise and scholarship in the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous Ontario from an Aboriginal perspective, graduates will find employment as teachers and professors, scholars and researchers, an area of increasing interest and potential growth.

Fields such as health communication, health care delivery, design ethnography, engineering, mining and forestry need skilled communications, industrial designers, illustrators and environmental designers with Aboriginal cultural knowledge and expressive skills. Career opportunities for graduates would exist in a wide range of opportunities in the Ontario and Federal public service. Establishing this capacity supports government objectives in the elimination of poverty and the creation of opportunities for Aboriginal communities and individuals in Ontario.

These knowledge industry opportunities align with Ontario's Next Generation Jobs strategy and the focus in the 2007 Speech from the Throne that emphasizes the importance of developing capacity in Aboriginal communities.

For all these reasons, OCAD's significant new initiative in Aboriginal Visual Culture: Art, Media and Design is timely indeed and meaningful progress has been made since its inception almost a year ago.



Magenta Hills
2009
Acrylic on canvas
Antoine Mountain
3rd Year, Drawing and Painting

Establishing The Program

Recognizing that Aboriginal peoples are a distinct group, OCAD is building a program based on Aboriginal values, culture, history and art. The recommendations of "No Higher Priority: Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada" and other reports and publications noted at the end of this document, continue to provide a rich foundation for the development of this program.

Consulting with the President and the Executive Leadership Group that includes all Vice-Presidents and Deans, and working through

the Academic Council of OCAD, an Aboriginal Education Committee led by the Chancellor is working with OCAD faculty and academic administrators to identify overall institutional needs.

On the ground, Interim Director Bonnie Devine, in collaboration with the VP Academic's office and the ABVC working group, is engaged in curriculum development, community outreach, recruitment, fundraising and the overall development of the program.

It is an exciting and challenging time, for the needs of the Aboriginal community are many and the resources necessary to meet them scarce indeed. Yet on every front we are encouraged by the warm reception our initiative is receiving from educators, students, artists and cultural practitioners within OCAD, the Aboriginal community and across the broader population. Curriculum development, community outreach, recruitment, fundraising and development of the program are now well underway.

Acknowledging the need for national opportunities, networks and international links, OCAD's Aboriginal Visual Culture program (ABVC) is designed to embrace undergraduate and eventually graduate programs as well as research and outreach, in response to the dynamic growth of scholarship and practice in Aboriginal visual arts, design, critical and curatorial studies during the last twenty-five years. Located in the city of Toronto, OCAD's Aboriginal program is expected to attract students from Ontario, across Canada and from countries around the world. Moreover, OCAD's interest in providing learning paths for Aboriginal students in K-12 into visual art, media and design fits with its commitment to art and design advocacy in education and its research focus on excellence in art and design education.

While the focus of the program is on teaching Aboriginal students, the program also serves to disseminate Aboriginal knowledge to the wider community by immersing non-Aboriginal students in Aboriginal ways of thinking and perceiving. All program courses are open to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike.

Program Objectives & Overview

The Aboriginal Visual Culture Program: Art, Media and Design draws on the rich histories, traditions and linguistic expression that underlie First Nations, Métis and Inuit art, media and design, and concentrates on contemporary practice, theory and expression in Canadian and international contexts. The program includes Aboriginal critical and historical knowledge across a range of media and brings a unique Aboriginal focus to design history and criticism. The program provides learning opportunities in visual art, material art, media arts, performance art, curatorial and critical studies, architecture and environmental design and sustainability, as well as other design practices.

The OCAD Aboriginal Visual Culture Program: Art, Media and Design welcomes all Canadian Aboriginal people from First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban centres. It is also building an international presence and links with Aboriginal peoples in Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and other sites. With curricula spanning art, media art and design as well as curatorial and critical studies, the program is

unique in Canada and significant in the world. In addition it provides a unique complement to important provincial programs throughout the Ontario PSE environment, none of which focus on visual and media art or design.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

OCAD's initiative in Aboriginal Art, Media and Design has five inter-related objectives:

- To contribute to the much-needed interdisciplinary education of visual artists, designers, media artists, critics and curators through undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programming.
- To remove barriers to learning through the design of culturally appropriate curricula, with a significant range of options regarding Aboriginal content and at the same time set in place extracurricular supports in the interest of student recruitment, retention and graduation.
- To provide Aboriginal Ontario residents with professional futures in the growing knowledge economy.
- To create a national Aboriginal Visual Culture Research Centre to consolidate and advance scholarship in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, other post-secondary institutions and individual researchers.
- To establish a Gallery of Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Design at OCAD to showcase Canadian and international Aboriginal artists and designers and foster the development of critical and curatorial dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal discourses.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Undergraduate Programming



**Golden Routes
2009**
Oil & Mixed media on canvas
Lindsey Lickers
4th year, Drawing and Painting

Undergraduate programming, including a BFA in Aboriginal Visual Culture, Art, Media and Design; an Interdisciplinary Minor in Aboriginal Visual Culture (interdisciplinary studio/liberal studies); with delivery of a least a portion of these courses via video conference and/or other distributed learning mechanisms to northern and remote communities.

Curricula will build on OCAD's current program strengths by integrating Aboriginal perspectives in course syllabi and by placing Aboriginal faculty in the studios and classrooms, resulting in a set of unique programs.

- Visual Culture Studies (curatorial and critical knowledge in Aboriginal visual art and design)
- Communications and Media Arts (communications and media production knowledge)
- Environmental/Industrial Design (design, architecture and planning)
- Sustainable design practices
- Visual and Material Art and Design (visual art, material art practice)

The approach outlined above allows the program to integrate traditional and contemporary practices by relating Canadian practice and theory to international histories and contemporary developments. Canada has a respected practice in Aboriginal media and new media art and OCAD is uniquely positioned, with its strengths in digital media and design, to support a new generation of Aboriginal media artists, visual artists and designers into the digital future. With a concentration on the broad framework of Visual Culture, Media and Design, the program recognizes the ways that Aboriginal cultural practices include close links with sound, performance and tactile mediums (such as craft forms) and hence the program has been interdisciplinary from its inception.

Elective courses of study are planned to include a link to Aboriginal Education programs in Ontario. The ABVC program will then collaborate with Education programs at other universities and institutions to provide specialized teachable options in Aboriginal art, design, media art and visual culture. It will link with reserve communities in Northern Ontario and other parts of the province to bring K-12 students visual literacy skills and provide a means for cultural continuity, as well as training opportunities for teachers.

The program incorporates an important aspect of Aboriginal Environmental Design, building on current faculty skills. There is an ongoing crisis of housing and infrastructure in Ontario and Canada's Aboriginal communities that underscores the need to educate environmental designers and planners who are able to address these needs in thoughtful and successful ways.

Although open to all students at OCAD, the interdisciplinary curricular design and pedagogy of the Aboriginal Visual Culture: Art, Media and Design Program focus on Aboriginal students and their needs as Aboriginal people. The entire initiative nevertheless has sufficient scope and flexibility to meet a broad range of needs and preferences. Many Aboriginal students will prefer a smaller proportion of Aboriginal-specific course content, in which case they may opt for the Minor or Area of Concentration – or even just a course or two. Further, we expect that the Minor and subsequent program development will be of interest to the broader student population as well.

While the Minor in Aboriginal Visual Culture will be in place in 2009/10 with many willing participants, the Major will require more time to recruit qualified students. We are seeking to develop a transition or bridging program in collaboration with at least one northern

Ontario university and other partner institutions (see Collaborations and Partnerships below) to ensure a robust intake.

Graduate Programming

In many ways, it may prove quicker and easier to offer Aboriginal graduate programs than an undergraduate degree. Both of OCAD's new interdisciplinary Master's programs—the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design, and the MFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice—would lend themselves beautifully to a new field in Contemporary Aboriginal Practice. In light of the interdisciplinary nature of both programs, which combine a large range of disciplines with art or design practice, the pool of interested and eligible candidates for these programs may actually be larger than at the undergraduate level. Plans to establish a major research centre for Aboriginal visual culture would also enhance the draw of these programs. Once demand is established, one or both of the Master's program areas could be developed into a Ph.D program. As with undergraduate programming, these graduate programs would be open to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike, and further, Aboriginal graduate students would have access to the same range of support services as undergraduates.

A National Centre for Aboriginal Visual Culture and Research

Although scholarship in Aboriginal visual art, media art, design and visual culture has burgeoned in the last decades, a lead institution to consolidate and extend this work is lacking. The OCAD initiative proposes the establishment of a National Centre for Aboriginal Visual Culture and Research. The Centre would be dedicated to archiving and advancing scholarship in Aboriginal art, design, media, critical and curatorial studies, through collaboration with Aboriginal communities and other post-secondary institutions and researchers.

A Gallery of Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Design

The exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal art and design in a designated gallery and within an aboriginal curatorial perspective is an identified gap in the museum and gallery landscape not only in Toronto but across Ontario. OCAD's proposed Gallery of Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Design will provide a critical forum for the exploration of ideas within contemporary Canadian and Aboriginal discourses, of benefit to OCAD students and the broader Aboriginal community in Toronto and Ontario. The gallery will complement and support OCAD's Aboriginal Visual Culture program while linking OCAD to the international Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a strategic dialogue that is both supportive and critical. The gallery will showcase contemporary art and design from Ontario and across Canada in a vibrant, teaching, environment and will highlight OCAD's position as a leading advocate and producer of contemporary, cross disciplinary, multi cultural art and design.

Outreach Programming: Partnerships and Collaborations

To develop this program OCAD has undertaken comprehensive research into existing Aboriginal program offerings, has held meet-

ings with the presidents and provosts of several Ontario universities as well as with First Nations University, and has held several initial meetings with experts in the field of Aboriginal art, media and design. These meetings indicate strong interest in partnering in the ongoing development of the program which will include articulation agreements or joint programs with institutions that are located in or near Aboriginal communities or with easier access to northern and other remote Aboriginal communities.

As a result OCAD is working in collaboration with Ontario's three northern universities-- Lakehead University, Laurentian University and Nipissing University-- in order to provide a means for students to learn close to their own communities, especially in the first years. The proposed Transition Program will allow students to ease into university education in communities close to their homes and either transfer to Toronto or access faculty and programs from Toronto, as suggested by the AETS review. OCAD will follow up on preliminary discussions with Trent University to link performing arts studies and research with visual culture, art, media, and design studies. These universities have strong Aboriginal Studies programs for which the colleges that serve Aboriginal communities act as conduits. Art, media and design can be applied and linked to these programs, including education and health.

Building on current pilot programs, e.g., KIAC/SOVA, a key element of OCAD's planning in support of Aboriginal learners is and will be the provision of distance learning in visual culture, art, media and design, allowing students to remain in or close to their communities. This initiative will position OCAD to provide minors in this field for partner institutions' current Aboriginal programs. OCAD will also develop agreements with the Association of Canadian Institutes of Art and Design (ACIAD comprises Emily Carr Institute, Alberta College of Art and Design, NSCAD University, The Banff Centre, and OCAD) where there has been an expressed interest in developing collaborative programs in Aboriginal visual culture, art, media and design.

The OCAD initiative is building links with individual Aboriginal visual art, design and media faculty who teach at ACIAD institutes and/or at First Nations University. As well, OCAD is working with Aboriginal curators and designers at institutions such as Western Front, Art Gallery of Ontario, National Gallery of Canada, Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (ACC) and APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network). Consulting and working relationships are being developed with the Métis Association of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, and other appropriate Aboriginal organizations and councils. Preliminary discussions with individuals and associations have begun. Apart from facilitating undergraduate and graduate program options, collaborative outreach programming will also encompass the development and implementation of bridging or transition programs for high school and college students seeking entrance to OCAD, and internships and work-study programs for OCAD students in northern Ontario communities as well as in Toronto.

Dedicated Aboriginal Program Infrastructure

According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (1991): "Programs tailored to the values and needs of Aboriginal people are the starting point for inviting students to follow a

successful path. The recruitment of Aboriginal faculty and instructors, the presence of elders, the creation of an advisory committee, the sponsorship of Aboriginal cultural events, and appropriate counsellors and support staff are all ingredients for success." It is well recognized that Aboriginal students have often encountered a curriculum and environment that neither captures their reality and goals nor provides them with adequate support. The OCAD initiative addresses this challenge through the following:

- Creation of an Aboriginal Education Council with national representation to advise on the creation and ongoing development of the program.
- Expanded opportunities for scholarships and bursaries.
- Recruitment and hiring of tenure-track Aboriginal faculty, including a Program Director, complemented by sessional instructors and visiting artists and designers.
- Development of ancillary support services through the creation of an Aboriginal Advisor/Counsellor position to assist students on campus, augmenting OCAD's current student services.
- Establishment of a Mentor/Advisor program to augment counselling and support for students, cultural activities, faculty development and curriculum development.
- Creation of an Aboriginal student meeting place or student centre.

In light of recent changes at OCAD, from becoming degree-granting in 2002, to the launch of graduate programs in 2008, to new leadership and a new strategic plan, OCAD is now well positioned to take up the challenge of building on its historical strengths and developing this important initiative.

Current ABVC Program Activities and Course Offerings at OCAD

ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM AND FACULTY



Bonnie Devine, AOCAD , MFA
Associate Professor,
Interim Director

In June 2008, OCAD hired Bonnie Devine, artist, curator and cultural practitioner, a member of Serpent River First Nation, as interim director/tenure track faculty to lead the initiative. Associate Professor and Interim Director Bonnie Devine (Ojibwa), holds a tenure track full-time

cross-appointment to the Faculties of Liberal Studies and Art, and the Aboriginal Visual Culture Program. In collaboration with the ABVC working group Associate Professor Devine has developed curriculum for an interdisciplinary minor in Aboriginal Visual Culture. She teaches several courses with an aboriginal focus in the Faculties of Art and Liberal Studies.



Gerald McMaster, Ph.D., OC,
Sessional Instructor

Dr. Gerald McMaster (Cree), Curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, holds sessional appointments in the Faculty of Liberal Studies and Research & Graduate Studies (2009/2010), teaching courses in contemporary aboriginal Art and issues in Curatorial Studies



Tannis Nielsen, MVA
Sessional instructor

Tannis Nielsen (Métis), artist, holds sessional appointments in the Faculties of Art and Liberal Studies, teaching studio and contemporary issues courses.



Julie Nagam, BFA, MA,
Lecturer

In 2009/10, the Aboriginal Visual Culture Program will welcome Julie Nagam, its fourth faculty member, a 60% CLTA cross-appointment to Liberal Studies and Aboriginal Visual Culture.



Duke Redbird, MA
Mentor/Advisor

Duke Redbird (Ojibwa), poet and broadcaster, was hired as Mentor/Advisor in January 2009, a position established with one time seed funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Access to Opportunity Fund.



Cheryl L'Hirondelle,
Sessional Instructor

Cheryl L'Hirondelle, (Metis), artist and musician, held a sessional appointment in 2009 in the Integrated Media area.



Keesic Douglas, AOCAD
Recruitment

Keesic Douglas (Ojibwa), OCAD alumnus, has been hired by the Admissions and Recruitment office to assist in outreach and recruit potential Aboriginal students.

A complement of non-tenure track faculty continues to teach in the program in order to provide a wide range of cultural and disciplinary representation. These faculty members are experienced teachers and professional practitioners across art, design, media, curatorial and critical studies. Every effort will be made in future hiring processes to ensure representation from across the full spectrum of Aboriginal communities: First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The interdisciplinary minor in Aboriginal Visual Culture includes and builds on existing courses from the Faculties of Liberal Studies, Art and Design. For instance, the ABVC minor curriculum includes a second year course *The Story of Us*, a history of Aboriginal Visual Culture in the Americas and *Critical Issues and Ideas in Contemporary First Nations Art*, a third year survey of contemporary Canadian Aboriginal art practices, both of which were previously taught in the Faculty of Liberal Studies. In conjunction with OCAD's Environmental Design program a new course was developed, *Designing Across Difference: Aboriginal Communities*, that teaches architecture and planning within the context of Aboriginal culture, and introduces approaches to designing for Aboriginal communities. Elements of other OCAD courses, including architectural history and design traditions that incorporate Aboriginal contributions and perspectives, led to the creation of a new course: *Kanata, The Village; Sustainability And Survivance In Aboriginal Design*. New courses in the Faculty of Art include a third year sculpture/installation course *Introduction to Contemporary Aboriginal Sculptural Practices*, focusing on contemporary and traditional Aboriginal approaches to materials, and in first year, two new sections of an elective, *Narrative, Series and Sequences, Strategies in Contemporary Aboriginal Sculpture* will be introduced in 2009/10.

The interdisciplinary ABVC working group will continue to develop an innovative roster of new undergraduate curriculum for introduction in 2010/11.

RESEARCH

Support for much needed research in Aboriginal visual culture, media and design is an important benefit of the ABVC Program. Identified areas of research and critical commentary include:

- Aboriginal visual culture, contemporary art, critical and curatorial practice
- Traditional and contemporary design innovation

on Canadian reserves

- Sustainable practices and the application of these to Aboriginal design, architecture, art and ethics in contemporary Canada
- Aboriginal cultural history in the Americas and beyond
- Gender identity in Aboriginal cultural expression
- Youth-at-risk, visual art and healing
- Exploration of the development of a national Aboriginal Visual Culture Research Institute as a result of the 2007 Visual Art Summit in Ottawa

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

There is a long history of Aboriginal Students Associations at OCAD. The ASA meets regularly in the Aboriginal student centre at 113 McCaul St. Members provide one another with academic and personal support. The ASA also collaborates with external associations on exhibitions and events of interest to both the Aboriginal and general community, and is looking forward to a curated exhibition at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg Ontario in late 2009. Duke Redbird, mentor/advisor and Bonnie Devine, interim program director and faculty member, provide guidance and support to ASA members.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

OCAD has developed a Mentor/Advisor program. This program provides Aboriginal students with personal and academic consultation, guidance and mentorship through contemporary life skills, with an emphasis on Aboriginal perspectives and methodologies. Mediated by the Mentor/Advisor, the program provides reference materials and links to the many Aboriginal communities in Toronto and Ontario. The Mentor/Advisor also supports the OCAD community at large by offering outreach and educational initiatives for both Native and Non-Native students, faculty and staff, and consulting on existing Aboriginal curriculum development.

THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Honourable James K. Bartleman was induct-

THE POWER OF THE LAND

In every Nation, in every Clan,
The Elders to a person.
Whether woman or a man,
Shared a common truth,
One Truth to understand,
That the spirit of the people
Is equal
To the Power of The Land.

The Mother of us all
The sacred Mother Earth,
Is constant in her giving,
And perpetual in her birth,
In meadows and in fields,
Where weeds and flowers grow,
She conceives the summer showers,
And spawns the winter snows.
In forests and in mountains,
She gives the birds that fly,
Every type of wing,
Then coaxes the wind to join,
In harmony, when they begin to sing.

In brooks and streams,
And rivers as they flow,
She generates the dreams
And makes the fires glow.

And in every creature,
Whether large or small
She buries gems of wisdom
In them all,

And in every grain of sand,
She plants the knowledge,
Of the Power of The Land.

And those that honour,
Her creations,
And acknowledge her grand design,
She gives the templates,
Of the sacred,
And the patterns of the divine.

And then with certain knowledge,
This to understand,
That the spirit of the people,
Is equal,
To the Power of the Land.

Duke Redbird

ed as Chancellor of OCAD in October 2007, providing a wonderful opportunity to showcase Aboriginal culture and learning. His Honour has been directly involved in the development of the Aboriginal Education Council at OCAD and continues to link OCAD students with the Summer Literacy Camps facilitated through Frontier College. Through this program selected students are given an opportunity to work as arts and crafts instructors in northern Aboriginal communities.

BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

OCAD has established a series of financial aid mechanisms to address the needs of First Nations and Métis students (www.ocad.ca/students/financial_matters/aboriginal.htm). As the program grows OCAD will seek funds from multiple sources to help to recruit, support and retain Aboriginal students.

KIAC/SOVA PARTNERSHIP & ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

In the summer of 2007, OCAD signed a three-year contract with Yukon College to provide two first-year Visual Culture courses to 20 students at its Klondike Institute of Art and Culture/School of Visual Art (KIAC/SOVA) in Dawson City via video conferencing. During the pilot year of 2007/08, we learned a great deal about delivering courses through this medium. As well, with the help and advice of our partners at KIAC/SOVA, we have expanded the Aboriginal content of the first-year art and design history course. In addition to this partnership, we have signed a trial articulation agreement that offers graduates of the two-year KIAC/SOVA program entry into third-year programs in the Faculty of Art at OCAD.

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMITTEE (EEEC)

In 2005 OCAD established The Employment & Educational Equity Committee (EEEC). Reporting to the President and informing the Board of Governors and Academic Council, EEEEC reaffirms and builds on previous equity initiatives begun in 1991. Under the New Ecology of Learning initiative of OCAD's Strategic Plan, \$195,000.00 was allocated to support Aboriginal academic and administrative initiatives for the three-year period ending 2010. In February 2009 Jane Ngobia took up the position of Director of Equity and Diversity initiatives and is redefining the mandate of the EEEEC to create a standing committee overseeing equity and diversity initiatives at OCAD.

Creating A Network

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The program will develop a significant network that will stimulate dialogue among Aboriginal artists, provide opportunities for professional placements, outreach and impact. This network will be virtual

and organizational.

OCAD has a number of ongoing partnerships with Aboriginal groups. Seventh Generation Image Makers in partnership with Native Child and Family Services and OCAD holds its annual emerging artist-in-residence program at OCAD. This partnership provides opportunities for a group of emerging Aboriginal artists from across Canada to participate in the creation of mural and video projects while simultaneously providing a recruitment base of potential Aboriginal students for OCAD. OCAD also collaborates with the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (ANDPVA) and has been a conference and festival site for their annual program. OCAD continues to develop a deeper association with ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. Most recently, OCAD has formed a relationship with the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (ACC), a national association of professional Aboriginal critics, curators, artists and scholars.

The Aboriginal Visual Culture, Media and Design Program network will have links and where appropriate, formal ties to:

- Regional institutions (such as the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Inuit collection) and national collections (National Gallery of Canada)
- Architectural projects and internships on Aboriginal reserves in Ontario and beyond through the efforts of Professor Colleen Reid, Faculty of Design
- Regional Aboriginal institutions such as the Woodland Cultural Centre, De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Group and Weengushk Film Institute
- National Aboriginal institutions such as The Banff Centre's Aboriginal Arts Program and the En'owkan Centre;
- Broadcasters such as the Aboriginal People's Television Network and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation;
- International Aboriginal publications including on-line discussion groups and publications;
- Small existing programs such as First Nations University of Canada's Fine Arts Program led by Alfred Young-Man;
- Programs at other universities such as Trent University's Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Arts and Literature and First People's House of Learning, and Toqwa'tu'kl Kijitaqnn (Integrative Science) and Biodiversity at Cape Breton University;
- Aboriginal Teachers Training programs, such as those at Queen's University, Laurentian University, Nipissing University and its affiliated Colleges;
- Colleges that offer Aboriginal learning;
- Scholarship and awards programs in the Aboriginal community like the Aboriginal Achievement Awards;

- Curators, architects and designers and their companies who work for galleries, museums or enterprises that specialize in Aboriginal visual culture and media and national associations that represent Aboriginal, Métis and First Nations people;
- Associations and organizations that represent Aboriginal, Métis and First Nations artists, curators, critics, media producers and designers, such as ACC (Aboriginal Curatorial Collective) and ANDPVA (Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts).

Development Timeline & Budget

The importance of public and private sector funding at the provincial and national level to support OCAD's initiative cannot be overestimated. Government, corporate and individual support to improve scholastic and professional achievement by First Nations, Inuit and Métis students is an important component in the implementation of OCAD's plans for Aboriginal student recruitment, retention and graduation, as well as in the creation of new undergraduate and graduate programs. In fact, OCAD's Aboriginal Visual Culture program is no less essential to Ontario and Canada, as a critical advance in the opportunities available to future Aboriginal artists and designers striving to attain the education that will allow them to participate meaningfully in the knowledge, digital and cultural future unfolding around them. It is our hope to continue to build on the successful track record we have established this year to create a significant program, one that is sorely needed in Ontario and Canada.

OCAD originally planned to launch the full program in 2010-2011. This was dependant on a commitment from the Government of Ontario for program development funds in the academic year 2008-9 to allow rigorous consulting, strengthening of pilot programs and courses. A further commitment is needed to ramp up program funding from 2009 to 2011. Unfortunately these commitments remain unconfirmed. Yet, despite the absence of dedicated government funding, the hiring of additional faculty beyond the director

began in 2008-9. Funding for a modest Aboriginal student centre was accessed through an MCTU Access to Opportunities grant, which covered operating costs but did not include a capital plan for an Aboriginal space. The program moved forward, albeit at a more modest pace than originally planned.

Operating funds partially cover the costs of faculty, staff, program support, Aboriginal learning resources, outreach and the beginning of on-line outreach capacity. Additional funds will be needed to renovate or build an Aboriginal Centre for faculty and students and to build up dis-

tance education capacity. The creation of a research institute would draw from faculty hires and capital investment and would require additional research funding. Finally, the establishment of a Gallery of Contemporary Aboriginal Art & Design will require additional capital and operating funding but will attract national and international attention to OCAD's ongoing effort to showcase and develop the vibrant creative output of Aboriginal Canadians.

In 2008/09 OCAD invested \$359,000 in the program and its development and will invest a further \$415,000.00 in 2009/10, including \$195,000 in funds from its strategic plan,. This investment helps to support tenure/track faculty, a CLTA lecturer, sessional instruction, some administrative support, some current outreach to Aboriginal students and support for the Aboriginal Education Council. Without additional funding, OCAD will not be able to achieve all the goals and objectives of this program over the next five years.



Bear's Dream

2009

Acrylic on canvas

Antoine Mountain

3rd Year, Drawing and Painting

Appendix A:

INTERDISCIPLINARY MINOR IN ABORIGINAL VISUAL CULTURE

(3.0 CREDITS)

Objectives

The focus of the interdisciplinary minor is contemporary practice, theory and expression in First Nations, Métis and Inuit art and design in Canadian and international contexts. The interdisciplinary minor builds on OCAD's current strengths by integrating Aboriginal perspectives into course syllabi and by placing Aboriginal faculty in the studios and classrooms, resulting in a set of unique courses.

The expected outcomes are multilateral. For OCAD, the interdisciplinary minor is a first step toward realizing the desired cultural shift expounded in the Strategic Plan and begun with the appointment of the Honourable James K. Bartleman as OCAD's Chancellor. For the community, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the minor has broader and longer-term objectives, not least of which is the much-needed introduction of a dedicated Aboriginal art, media and design degree program, the first of its kind in Ontario.

Courses

Students must complete 3.0 credits as follows:

I. TWO REQUIRED COURSES:

ABVC 2B01

The Story of Us, Aboriginal Peoples of The Americas

This interdisciplinary studio seminar course examines the historical and contemporary culture of North and South American aboriginal peoples. Various linguistic and cultural areas of the New World are considered, including the Inuit, the Northwest Coast and Woodland cultures of Canada, the Southwest, Great Plains and Eastern regions of the United States and the Aztec, Mayan and Incan empires. Through a consideration of the social, economic and political issues affecting aboriginal peoples, students contextualize and respond in the studio to the issues pertaining to the aboriginal arts and cultures of the New World.

VISC 3B42

Critical Issues & Ideas in Contemporary First Nations Art

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of the major political and social discourses currently informing contemporary First Nations art. The class will contextualize specific contemporary art practices within the historical and cultural critiques they articulate. Our discussions will emphasize but not be limited to the visual arts. Emerging expressions in new media, theatre and

literature will also be examined. Lectures will be supplemented by slide presentations, video and visiting artists.

Some topics and artists to be covered include: Land, the Indian Act, treaties, reservations and urban spaces, Carl Beam, Nadia Myre, Rebecca Belmore., Conflict, Beaver Wars, Oka, Ipperwash and Saskatoon, Alanis Obomsawin, Robert Houle, Rick River. Language, assimilation and nationhood, Norval Morrisseau, Zacharias Kunuk, Tom Hill.

II. ELECTIVE COURSES

Take 4 of the following courses, including 3 at 300/400 level; choices much include at least one (0.5 credit) course from each Faculty.

VISC 2B11

Special Topic: Reclaiming Indigenous Voice And Vision

In this studio seminar course students are introduced to certain theories born of the European Enlightenment that have served as justification for imperial domination over the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Class discussions and readings focus on ideas and ideologies such as Thomas Hobbes's state of nature, the survival of the fittest, manifest destiny, and aspects of Modernism, that have affected and defined the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally. Students examine how contemporary Indigenous artists, activists, and scholars voice political autonomy and Indigenous sovereignty in their work.

The course encourages students to respond to the issues presented in the studio within a broad range of aesthetic and material practices.

VISC 2B32

Canadian Art: The Modern Era

This course addresses the central themes of Modernism in the Canadian visual arts from the 1920s to the 1960s. Beginning with an examination of the strong landscape traditions of the Group of Seven, Emily Carr and their followers, we explore the social and cultural debates of the 1930s and how artists and designers in the post-World War II period adapted the international concepts of Modernism and High Realism within a Canadian setting. The course concludes with an examination of the optimism and creativity of artists and designers presented to the world at Expo 67.

SCIN 3B13

Special Focus Studio: Introduction to Contemporary Aboriginal Sculptural Practices

This course encourages students to explore the poetic resonance of natural materials through an orientation to traditional gathering and construction practices. Students are encouraged to develop alternative approaches to making and design using natural found or foraged objects or elements. Students examine issues relevant to contemporary Aboriginal artists working in an alternate narrative and aesthetic tradition, located within land and the body.

VISC 3B28

Latin American Art and Culture

This course offers an overview of Latin American art and culture of the 20th century from a broad historical and social perspective. Themes to be explored include: the impact of conquest and colonialism, the relationship of European artistic influences to modernity and indigenous culture, new Latin American cinema, hybridity and post-modernity.

GDES 3B21

Designing Across Difference: Aboriginal Communities

0.5 Credit(s) Studio Seminar

This course focuses on creating an initial understanding of the scope and richness of North American aboriginal communities, while developing methods of negotiating as a designer with these communities in the context of a design project. Participants will share their insights, research, and designs in the classroom, creating a collective understanding of the fertility and depth of difference. Students will explore methodologies for developing designs for and with client cultures other than their own. This studio/seminar is intended to enhance discourse through appropriate vocabulary and strengthen abilities to generate and participate in relevant dialogue with aboriginal communities.

This studio will utilize guest lecturers from the aboriginal academic community.

VISC 4B17

Special Topic: "Indians": Post-colonial and Critical Theories of Aboriginal Representations

This course consists of a series of focused ideas on First Nation visualities, which have appeared at the intersection of Native and non-Native social, cultural, and political realities. With a bit of history and anthropology mixed with politics yet solidly grounded in art, this course will draw on post-colonial and critical theories. As well, the art will be examined through the lens of cultural analysis, theory,

and interpretation. Some of the issues raised in class include: museology, mimesis/alterity, veracity, abstraction, hybridity, word/image (ekphrasis), myth, memory, power, and voice. This "Special Topic" course provides more advanced analysis of a topic of general interest or relevance. This course fulfills 0.5 credit toward the Liberal Studies requirements for a BFA or BDes.

VISC 4B13

Modern Mexican Art (not offered 08/09)

This lecture-seminar course offers an overview of modern art in Mexico to provide students with an opportunity to extend their understanding of Mexico's visual culture, both past and present. Beginning with Frida Kahlo, who is now an international icon of Mexican culture, we then survey the public art projects of the great muralists, including Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros. We also study the work of Abraham Angel, Dr. Atl, Posada, María Izquierdo and Velasco, as well as a number of contemporary artists - Elizondo, Soriano, and Toledo among them.

GDES 4B21

Kanata, The Village; Sustainability And Survivance In Aboriginal Design Studio/Seminar

Through an analysis of historical Indigenous urban centres, architecture and material culture, students explore models of sustainability.

Large ideological systems and structures like the Longhouse, the pueblo and the pyramid, and smaller implements such as the teepee and the canoe are examined in terms of governance, construction and resource management.

The studio format encourages students to undertake projects that test the applicability of traditional Indigenous public, community and personal structures and implements in contemporary architecture, industrial and environmental design.

Course to be co-taught by Aboriginal Visual Culture faculty and Design faculty.

VISC 4B21

Arts & Cultures of Asia and Oceania (not offered in 08/09)

This course explores the cultural production of Asia and Oceania to consider the impact of colonialism and globalization on local art forms, and how they are invested with meanings through cross-cultural exchange and consumption. Students develop an understanding of how meanings in traditional art have been reinterpreted and transformed through the dynamics of colonial encounters and global consumption. Field trips and a case-study approach provides students with the analytical tools necessary to understand how social, economic and political forces construct and transform cultural categories and issues such as gender, museums and representation, authenticity, tourism, cultural appropriation and the "primitive".

Appendix B:

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. James K. Bartleman	Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
Tony Belcourt	Former President of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Métis Nation Ambassador for International Issues by the President of the Métis National Council
John Kim Bell	CEO, Bell & Bernard Limited
Douglas J. Cardinal	Douglas Cardinal Architect Inc.
Shirley Cheechoo	Director, Weengushk Institute
Dana Claxton	Independent Curator and Interdisciplinary Artist
Jim Compton	CEO, Rising Day Media
Michael Doxtater	Director First Nations & Inuit Education, McGill University
Laara Fitznor	Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education
Stephen Foster	Associate Professor, Department of Creative Studies UBC Okanagan, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies
Peter Garrow	Director of Education, Assembly of First Nations
Thomas Vernon Hill	Independent Artist, Curator, Writer; Former Director, Woodland Cultural Centre
Candice Hopkins	Director, Curator Programs, Western Front
Zacharias Kunuk	Producer Director
Sandra Laronde	Founder, Red Sky Performance; Director of Aboriginal Arts at The Banff Centre
Jean LaRose	Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
Cheryl L'Hirondelle	Independent Artist & Curator; Faculty, OCAD
Lindsey Lickers	Resource Centre Coordinator, Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts (ANDPVA)
Cynthia Lickers-Sage	Executive Director, Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts (ANDPVA)
Catherine Martin	Mi'kmaw Filmmaker and Drummer
Lee-Ann Martin	Curator of Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Art Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation
Scott McIntyre	Founding partner and Current Chairman, CEO and Publisher Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group
Gerald McMaster	Curator of Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario
Alanis Obomsawin	Director, Artist; National Film Board of Canada
Louise Profeit-LeBlanc	Aboriginal Arts Coordinator, Aboriginal Arts Office, Strategic Initiatives Division, Canada Council for the Arts
Jean-Paul Restoule	Ph.D. (Toronto) Assistant Professor. Adult Education and Community Development Program, Ontario Institute for the Study of Education

Appendix C:

REFERENCES

There is a series of reference texts that frames policy approaches and needs for Aboriginal education in Canada and supports the value of an Aboriginal Arts program. These texts also stress the importance of cultural integrity and the role of cultural learning for Aboriginal people:

Aboriginal Curatorial Collective: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities, Aboriginal Curatorial Collective: Round Table Final Report, May and July, 2005

Aboriginal People and Post-Secondary Education in Canada, Caledon Institute for Social Policy, Michael Mendelson, July 2006

Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education, A Think Piece from the Center for Native Policy and Research, Harvie McCue, August 2006

British Columbia 2020, Aboriginal Education Section, April, 2007

Brokering Aboriginal Art: A Critical Perspective on Marketing, Institutions and the State Jon Altman, Director, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, April, 2005

CononDrum On-Line, Ahasiw Meskagen-Iskwew, and Candice Hopkins Editor, http://www.conondrumonline.org/Issue_2/features.htm

Evaluation of the Government of Ontario's Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS), Educational Policy Institute, Toronto, Virginia Beach, Melbourne, 2007.

Making a Noise! Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community, Candice Hopkins, Editor, Banff Centre Press, 2006

No Higher Priority: Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada, Colin Mayes, MP, Chair, February 2007

Ontario Arts Council Strategic Planning, Community Consultations Report, Nanibush Innovations, Ontario Arts Council, February, 2008

Redressing the Balance: Canadian University Programs in Support of Aboriginal Students, David Holmes, Report for AUCC, June, 2006

Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's Report, 1991

Tell: Aboriginal Story in Digital Media Horizonzero.ca, Issue 17, edited by Cheryl L'Hirondelle

Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nations, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures, Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, June, 2005

Transference, Tradition and Technology, Edited by Dana Claxton, Melanie Townsend and Steven Loft, Banff Centre Press, 2006

