



raise a flag

raise a flag: works from the
Indigenous Art Collection (2000 - 2015)

EDUCATION GUIDE



Rachelle Lafond, Cree
Chiichinuu "Our Home", 2012
Thread and canvas
28 x 33 cm

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

raise a flag: works from the Indigenous Art Collection (2000 - 2015)

September 16 to December 10, 2017

Onsite Gallery at OCAD University

Featuring work by:

Barry Ace
Sonny Assu
Carl Beam
Christi Belcourt
Rebecca Belmore
Christian Chapman
Dana Claxton
Ruth Cuthand
Wally Dion
David Garneau
Tanya Harnett

Faye HeavyShield
Greg A. Hill
Mark Igloliorte
Jimmy Iqaluq
Elisapee Ishulutaq
Alex Janvier
Piona Keyuakjuk
Myra Kukiiyaut
Rachelle Lafond
Jim Logan
Kayley Mackay

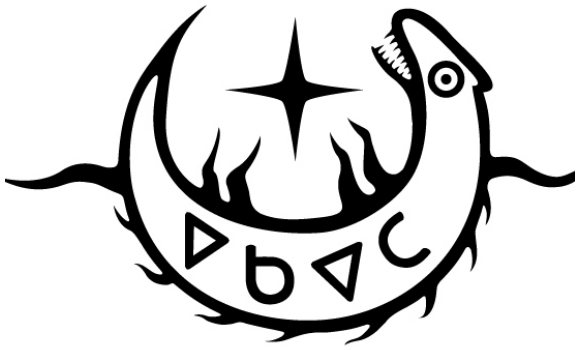
Qavavau Manumie
Ohotag Mikkigak
Lisa Myers
Nadia Myre
Marianne Nicolson
Lionel Peyachew
Tim Pitsiulak
Annie Pootoogook
Barry Pottle
Pitaloosie Saila
Tania Willard

raise a flag is an exhibition drawn from the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Indigenous Art Collection, a comprehensive national heritage collection representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis art. Since the 1960s, Indigenous artists, curators and arts administrators have actively gathered and managed the wide-range of artwork by emerging, mid-career and established Indigenous artists that comprise this important, largely unnoticed public collection.

In the age of reconciliation and confederation acknowledgement, raise a flag repurposes and activates the invaluable collection, introducing these artworks to the public with an invitation to reflect and contemplate upon issues framed through artistic perspectives and nuances of Indigeneity. With a focus on acquisitions made from 2000 to 2015, raise a flag celebrates the work of 33 artists who present diverse

points of Indigenous worldviews, which authenticate the fluid nature of Indigenous visual culture and taunt the viewer to take notice and consider a unique rereading of Canadian history.

raise a flag chronicles significant narratives through a questioning lens and a wider national and global consciousness interpreted through a wide variety of aesthetic forms and media. Together these works shed light upon parallel socio-political discourses and assigns context to marginal histories within a framework of contemporary art that critically address collective/living histories and offer true national identities.



Curated by Ryan Rice, Delaney Chair in Indigenous Visual Culture at OCAD University

Ryan Rice, Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawake, Quebec, is the Delaney Chair in Indigenous Visual Culture at the OCAD University. His curatorial career spans over 20 years in museums and galleries. Rice served as the Chief Curator at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe, NM and also held curatorial positions at the Aboriginal Art Centre (Ottawa, ON), named curatorial fellowships with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (Victoria, BC) and the Walter Phillips Gallery (Banff, AB), and Aboriginal Curator-In-Residence at the Carleton University Art Gallery. He received a Master of Arts degree in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York; graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and received an Associate of Fine Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Rice's writing on contemporary Onkwehonwe art has been published in numerous periodicals and exhibition catalogues, and he has lectured widely. Some of his exhibitions include *ANTHEM: Perspectives on Home and Native Land*, *FLYING STILL: CARL BEAM 1943-2005*, *Oh So Iroquois*, *Scout's Honour*, *LORE*, *Hochelaga Revisited*, *ALTERNATION*, *Soul Sister: Re-imagining Kateri Tekakwitha*, *Counting Coup*, *Stands With A Fist: Contemporary Native Women Artists* and *ARTiculations in Print*. Rice was also a co-founder and former director of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and currently sits on the Art Gallery of Ontario's Education Council, Ontario Association of Art Galleries and the Native American Arts Studies Association board.

Indigenous Visual Culture at OCAD University

<https://www.ocadu.ca/academics/undergraduate/indigenous-visual-culture.htm>

ABOUT THE IAC COLLECTION

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100012794/1100100012798>

The Indigenous Art Centre program at Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada (INAC) manages the federally supported national Indigenous Art Collection, which includes more than 4,000 works by prominent, emerging and mid-career First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists.

Established in 1965 and recently celebrating a 50th anniversary in 2016, the collection remains the only active cultural program withstanding in the federal government. The expanse of the collection represents a distinct national legacy of cultural production and survivance that supports and maintains the tenacity of visual culture upheld by generations of Indigenous artists and curators across the country.

The Indigenous Art Collection is one of the most important and comprehensive collections of contemporary Indigenous fine and cultural arts in Canada and beyond. However, the public collection, sanctioned by the Treasury Board of Canada, may be one of Canada's best-kept secrets. The collection represents a sweeping range of Indigenous cultures across Canada and reveals the immense contributions by ground-breaking artists such as Allan Sapp, Robert Davidson, Joanne Cardinal-Shubert, Arthur Shilling, Shelley Niro and Annie Pootogook across 20th / 21st century Indigenous and Canadian art history. A large representation of work from the collection has been borrowed for significant exhibitions that have travelled to prominent venues nationally and internationally. Key works have supported the retrospective exhibitions of Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig, Carl Beam and Alex Janvier at the National Gallery of Canada.

The administration of the centre was significant as well, and included Indigenous artists and curators: Tom Hill, Richard W. Hill Sr., David General, Viviane Gray, Barry Ace, July Papatsie, Ryan Rice, Barry Pottle, Lee-Ann Martin and Linda Grussani, who developed and shaped the collection with great intention, expertise and cultural responsibility.

JORDAN BENNETT



Jordan Bennett,
Water Weighs, 2016
Acrylic on wood panel
30" x 40"

Onsite Gallery is thrilled to feature artist Jordan Bennett, whose vibrant and inspiring take-away art multiple is featured on the raise a flag exhibition brochure. As a specially commissioned work for raise a flag: works from the Indigenous Art Collection (2000-2015), Bennett responded to the concept of raising a flag. As he described, he "wanted this flag to be raised to support and reflect on the current realities facing our Indigenous communities, but especially our waters and land through the exploitation of natural resources."

Jordan Bennett is a Mi'kmaq multi-disciplinary visual artist from Stephenville Crossing, Ktaqmkuk (Newfoundland). Jordan has shown extensively in Canada and abroad, in venues such as The Museum of Art and Design, NYC, NY; Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM; Project Space Gallery, RMIT, Melbourne, AUS; The Power Plant, Toronto, ON; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, QC; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France; The Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver BC and most recently was one of two artists to represent Newfoundland and Labrador at the 2015 Venice Biennial at Galleria Ca'Rezzonico, Venice, Italy. Jordan has recently been long listed for the 2016 and 2015 Sobey Art Award, presented with the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Councils Artist of the Year, received the Excellence in Visual

Arts Newfoundland's Large Year Award, and named as one of the artists in the 2014 Blouin ARTINFO's Top 30 under 30 in Canada.

Jordan's work explores a combination of observations and influences from historical and popular culture, new media, traditional art forms, political issues, and his own cultural practices through the processes of sculpture, digital media, installation, painting, sound installation and various other mediums. Jordan recently completed a Master's degree from the University of British Columbia Okanagan, with a particular focus on exploring Mi'kmaq and Beothuk visual culture and histories.

Jordan Bennett

<http://www.jordanbennett.ca>

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Visitors may use this guide to enrich their experience of the artworks in raise a flag. The information provided here will aid in interpreting the meaning of Indigenous art forms in the context of tradition, contemporary art and today's society. This guide provides contextual information, artist biographies, suggested activities and discussion points for selected works in the show. It is a compilation of texts from the artists, the curator, original material and other sources.

The content of this guide is also designed to complement the Ontario provincial Native Studies and Visual Arts curriculum. We recommend that educators use this package to encourage discussion with their students on the themes addressed in raise a flag.

INTERPRETING THE ARTWORKS

Here are a few questions to ask yourself when visiting the exhibition. Remember, there is more than one way to interpret artworks which are layered with multiple meanings.

- Describe the artwork and consider the title. What do you think the artist is trying to convey?
- Consider the techniques used to create the piece. What might be significant about the use of specific materials, symbols or colours?
- What genre of art would you classify this artwork?
- What is the tone of the piece of art? Tone may be playful, serious, angry, ironic, intimate, nostalgic, etc.
- How do you think the political, social, cultural or economic climate of the time influenced the artist's intention?
- What larger themes does this artwork speak to in society?
- Consider how the artwork's meaning may shift and evolve in relation to different time periods and contexts. How does it represent our current milieu?
- Do you like it? Why or why not?

SELECTED WORKS

"The collection has been referred to as a bundle; like a bundle, the Indian Art Collection contains narratives, dreams, magic, medicine and necessities of life. The objects that testify to our artistic and creative achievements bring a 'sacredness' to our bundle." - Ryan Rice¹

¹ Ryan Rice, "Presence and Absence: Indian Art in the 1990s" in *Definitions of Visual Culture V: Globalisation and Post-Colonialism*, (Montreal: Musee d'art contemporain, 2002).

POSITIONING SOVEREIGNTY

As Canada celebrates 150 years of confederacy, Indigenous artists in Canada continue to pro-actively insert their creative agency to counter and disrupt the accepted narrative. They do this as a means to bring attention to and reconcile the devastating and perpetual effects of colonialism. The lasting effect of oppression continues to stir individual and collective insistence for justice and recognized presence in our home and native land.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTWORKS

The following discussion prompts will aid in deeper engagement with the themes and concerns addressed by the artworks in this section:

**Engage in a discussion about the statement:
"nation building is an ongoing activity."**

- Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasons why. Students are encouraged to change their position if compelling arguments are made by their peers.
- Students are encouraged to consider the statement from multiple perspectives (e.g. Indigenous, immigrant, etc.) and government policies that encourage or limit participation and representation in both the idea and practice of "nationhood."

Is there a unified Canadian identity? Should there be? Consider Rachelle Lafond's piece *Chiichinuu "Our Home"* and discuss the following questions:

- What is a reserve?
- What is a land claim?
- Do you acknowledge the territory where you live? If so, what nations are addressed?

Research and discuss the overlapping meanings of the terms "sovereignty," "self-determination" and "self-government."

Divide the class into groups to research and present the flags, symbols, crests and visuals representing each of Canada's distinct First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

RACHELLE LAFOND



Rachelle Lafond, Cree
Chiichinuu "Our Home", 2012
Thread and canvas
28 x 33 cm

"Being an artist, for me, means sharing knowledge and ideas. It's a virtual language, some images are clear and straightforward in meaning, other works are for the individual to create understanding with their own perception." – Rachelle Lafond

Born to a James Bay Cree mother and to a French/Canadian father, Rachelle Lafond was raised by her late mother in the northern reservation called Chisasibi, Québec. She graduated from Concordia University, where she obtained a brevet in teaching and a BA in Fine Arts. Recognizing the need for more First Nations self-representation in an urban area like Montréal, Lafond's artwork addresses historical, political and cultural matters so that people may gain more of an understanding of Native issues. She currently works in the Cultural Centre of her hometown, surrounded by tons of history, a thriving culture and the need to preserve Cree language.

"Artist Rachelle Lafond from the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee renders Canada in *Chiichinuu* '(Our Home)' as an embroidered map evoking traditional crafting aesthetics to document the country's architecture. Lafond stitches the outline of Canada as a foundation divided by the provinces to illustrate a national floor plan for a typical single-family detached dwelling. Such mass settlement patterns demarcating the land as plentiful and free focus on the real estate built over native land. The map is void of any trace of the traditional demarcated territories or the tiny plots of Reserve land set aside under the Indian Act and Treaties in the name of the Crown. Lafond offers a map key to shed light upon the dispossession of homeland and infrastructure crisis consequent of a federally failed Reserve system."
– Ryan Rice

JIMMY IQALUQ



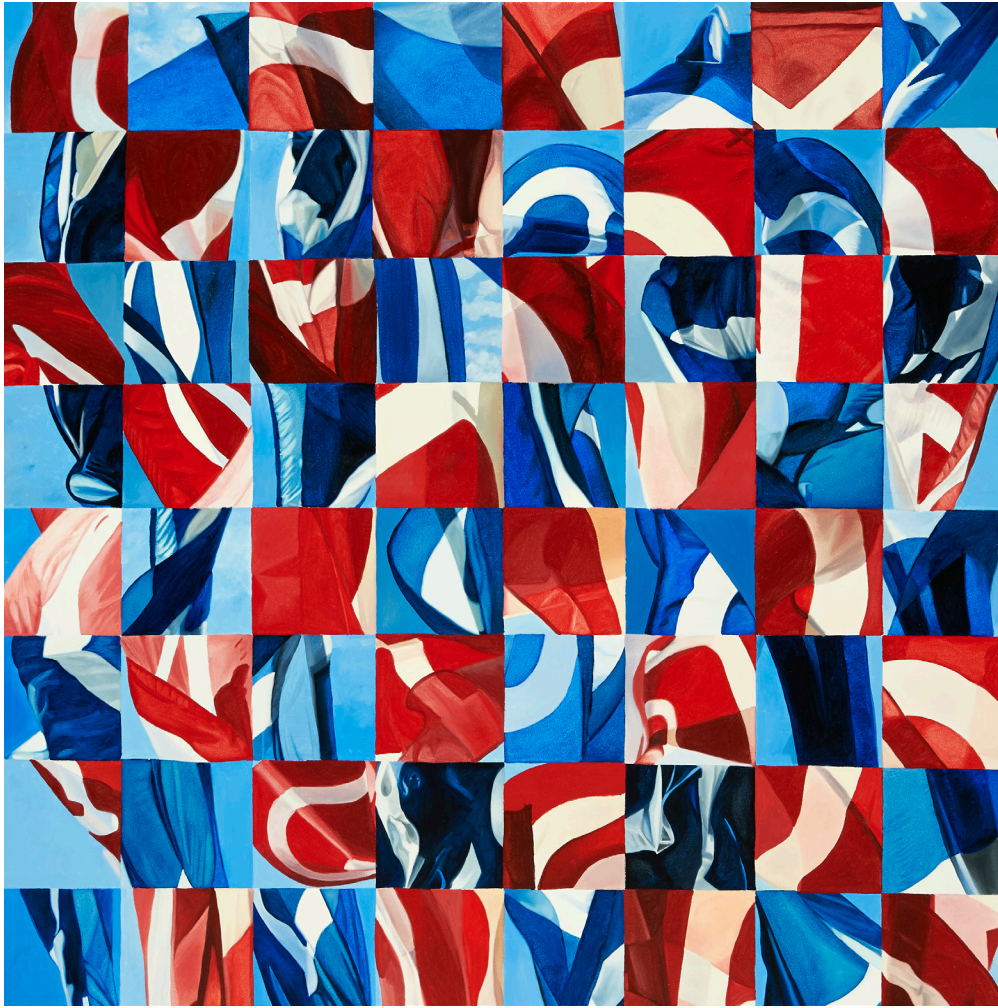
Jimmy Iqaluq, Inuit
In the Past, the RCMP Killed the Dogs, 2005
Mixed media on argillite
Gun: 8.5 x 1.5 cm; overall: 11 x 21 x 9 cm

Jimmy Iqaluq was born in Kataapik, near Sanikiluaq, in 1947. He has been carving since he was 13 years old. He learned to carve by watching his parents, Mina and Samwillie. His carvings are inspired by his experience and knowledge as a hunter. His work is included in many important collections. Besides making art, Jimmy enjoys providing country food for his family and friends.

Jimmy Iqaluq's sculpture, *In the Past, the RCMP Killed the Dogs*, speaks of an issue that has left deep wounds across Canada's Arctic. Between the 1950s to 1970s the Royal Canadian Mounted Police intentionally killed thousands of Inuit sled dogs. The Inuit insist the slaughter was part of a campaign to force them off the land and into federal programs and villages, while the RCMP claim that the killings were for public health purposes and to control disease. Not only did the practice disrupt the Inuit way of life and their mobility for hunting, the decades-long dispute caused further distrust and segregation between the two cultures. In 2005, the RCMP conducted an internal investigation into the matter which exonerated their actions. Believing the RCMP's report to be biased, incomplete and flawed, the Qikiqtani Truth Commission was set up in 2007 to gather testimony, request a formal acknowledgement by the government of Canada and propose steps towards compensation and healing.

Truth Commissions are bodies that investigate patterns of abuse over a period of time. They are not criminal trials and don't have powers of prosecution. Their purpose is to provide a safe place for victims to tell their stories and to have their experiences become part of the official record.

DAVID GARNEAU



David Garneau, Métis
Two Metis Flags (Quilt), 2012
Oil on canvas
122 x 122 cm

[David Garneau](#) is an Associate Professor of Visual Arts at the University of Saskatchewan. Garneau's practice includes painting, drawing, performance art, video, curation and critical writing. He is interested in visual and tactile expressions of contemporary Indigenous identities – especially innovations in Métis art – and moments of productive friction between nature and culture, materialism and metaphysics.

"*Two Métis Flags (Quilt)* belongs to a series of 'quilt' paintings I made between 2011 and 2015. I am interested in homey material culture, especially handmade things popular with Métis people as well as their First Nations and non-Indigenous neighbours. Quilts are complex, labour intensive, they often include shared labour and are made from cast-off things. Quilts are repositories for memories as well as bodies. They allow many different aspects to live together. Even opposites are housed in the quilt. This painting features two aspects of historical Métis identity. While the flag goes back more than two hundred years, it came to prominence with the Battle of Seven Oaks (1816). It is the most recognizable of the Métis symbols. The blue flag is associated with the North West Company (French-allied) and the red with the Hudson's Bay (Anglo-allied). The white infinity symbol signifies perpetual harmony and the joining of European and First Nations origins of the Métis Nation. I wanted to make a quilt/painting that recognized the two European origins of the Métis. The quilt, like the flag, wants to show Métis are in relation, if not always in harmony. The motion is dynamic. The fluttering flags are in conversation."
– David Garneau

GREG A. HILL



Greg A. Hill, Mohawk
Flags, 2004
Digital print
Framed: 71 x 58 cm;
overall: 59 x 45 cm

Greg A. Hill is a Kanyen'kehaka (Mohawk) member of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Audain Senior Curator and Head of the Department of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Canada. As a multidisciplinary artist, he has been exhibiting his artwork since 1989 with over 50 exhibitions and performance works in North America and Europe. His work explores aspects of colonialism, nationalism and concepts of place and community through the lens of his Mohawk and French identity.

Greg A. Hill redesigns the Canadian flag to position Indigenous sovereignty. The maple leaf is replaced with three feathers representing the First Nations, Inuit and Métis of Canada while the red bands symbolize their enduring presence from coast to coast. This work was part of a larger performance and installation project called *Kanata*, where symbols of national identity – flag, passport and souvenirs – were transformed to reflect an Indigenous perspective. By invoking Kanata, the Mohawk origin of the “Canada” meaning “town” or “village,” Hill gestures at a future that acknowledges the past as a challenge to the present political moment.

CONNECTIONS TO THE LAND

Despite the loss of traditional territories to colonial settlement across Canada, Indigenous people maintain a connection to the lands and waters through ceremony, storytelling, custodial responsibility and political activism. These practices inform a living cultural knowledge of the ecology and spiritual connectedness to the country.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTWORKS

The following activities will aid in deeper engagement with the themes and concerns addressed by the artworks in this section:

Experiment with different materials harvested from the land.

This can include:

- making your own dyes from pigments found in food or plants;
- making your own paper; or
- creating a sculpture from objects found in nature

Keep a diary to document the plants found in your garden or home.

- Draw them at various stages of growth.
- Are any of the plants used for food? Do they have medicinal properties?
- If you don't have any plants at home, walk through a natural area to identify and document plants that you encounter. Do they have significance to Indigenous peoples from the area?

Research current issues and pipeline resistance movements such as DAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline) and Water is Life.

How many places in Canada do not have clean running water?

Make a protest banner about an environmental issue that you care about.

It can be graphic, text-based, or both. Explain your design choices in relation to the message you are trying to convey.

Write a story about a site of significance to yourself or your family.

Is it in Canada or elsewhere?

Draw an aerial view from memory of your neighbourhood, city, or province.

Illustrate or annotate the map with events and stories that are significant to you, your family, or your community.

BARRY ACE

[Barry Ace](#) is a practicing visual artist who currently lives in Ottawa, Canada. He is a band member of M'Chigeeng First Nation, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada. His mixed media paintings and assemblage textile works explore various aspects of cultural continuity and the confluence of the historical and contemporary.

"This work is based on the two different perspectives of relationship to land – between settler and Indigenous peoples. The two beaded strips represent the visual mnemonic code of wampum belts of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence peoples – in particular, the Anishinaabeg and Haundenosaunee. These belts denoted the Indigenous perspective of the relationship with the settlers. The line of freight cars traversing the landscape mirror the beaded wampum belts, and metaphorically reflect the settler perspective of land and material ownership, where each freight car represents a settler bead that is filled with personal wealth and commodity while the railway line that traverse the land represents the dispossession and forced removal of Indigenous people from the land. The single porcupine quill and swatch of indigo blue paint directly above the landscape represents the signed treaties and the settlers perspective of the divine authority through Christianity and Crown that was used to over-write Indigenous perspectives and stake claim to traditional Indigenous territories." – Barry Ace



Barry Ace, Anishnaabe Odawa
Parallel Roads, 2014
Mixed media on paper
76 x 56 cm

LISA MYERS



Lisa Myers, Anishnaabe
*Blueprint (Water)/Blueprint (Land)/
Blueprint (Traintracks)/Blueprint*, 2012
Serigraph on paper
55.9 x 76.2 cm each

“This series comes from an ongoing body of work where I use blueberries as a material in mark making and as ink for screen-printing. I’ve titled these works under the term ‘Blueprints’ as in the stories told to us by our families and the things we witness are the blueprints for our lives, and they inform how we locate ourselves and retain a sense of belonging.” – Lisa Myers

In addition to being an artist, [Lisa Myers](http://lisarosemyers.com) is an independent curator, musician and chef. These disciplines inform her various practices. Lisa’s mother’s family is Anishnaabe and French from Shawanaga and Beausoleil First Nation in the Georgian Bay region, and her Dad is from English and Austrian ancestry who settled in southern Ontario. In 2011, Myers earned her Master of Fine Arts in Criticism and Curatorial practice from OCAD University, which focused on the use of food in Indigenous art practice.

Rendered in blueberry ink, Lisa Myers’ *Blueprint* series depicts the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and surrounding land and waterways at a site between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, Ontario where the Mississaugi River empties into Lake Huron. In the early 1900s, before a road was completed between the two cities, train travel was the main means of transporting children to residential school. The artist’s grandfather ran away from residential school, following these tracks along the north shore of Lake Huron and surviving on blueberries. The area mapped in Myers’ prints is where her grandfather first heard his language after leaving school and saw Anishinaabe people cooking food down by the river. It is a site of importance in her familial history that she has connected with and honoured by creating these works and walking this distance (with members of her family) in the summer of 2009. By memorializing her grandfather’s journey, Myers redresses omissions in the historical record.

Lisa Myers

<http://lisarosemyers.com>

ELISAPEE ISHULUTAQ



Elisapee Ishulutaq, Inuit
Bridge in Pangnirtung, 2010
Stencil on paper
Framed: 77.5 x 56 cm;
overall: 60 x 43 cm

[Elisapee Ishulutaq](#) is a noted carver and artist whose work is found in major national and international collections. Born in 1925 at Kagiqtuqjuaq, Baffin Island, she experienced the traditional Inuit lifestyle until 1970, when she moved to Pangnirtung, Baffin Island. Ishulutaq was among the first Pangnirtung artists to make prints, and over the decades, became known for her drawings recalling the old way of life. In 2014, Elisapee Ishulutaq was appointed to the Order of Canada.

Elisapee Ishulutaq's birthplace, Kagiqtuqjuaq, is one of several small seasonal camps situated near Pangnirtung on Baffin Island. When Ishulutaq took up permanent residence in Pangnirtung at the age of 45, she became involved in the community's new art-making program. Like many Inuit artists of her generation, Ishulutaq often depicts the traditional Inuit way of life that she knew before the transition to permanent settlements. Her works are largely domestic snapshots of Inuit experience. *Bridge in Pangnirtung* makes reference to a major local event when, in 2008, the eponymous bridge was destroyed by a flash flood that tore massive pieces of permafrost out of the tundra and carried them to the sea. The bridge's destruction highlights the challenges of engineering projects in the far North with respect to global warming.

Elisapee Ishulutaq

<https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artist/elisapee-ishulutaq>

TANYA HARNETT



Tanya Harnett, *Assiniboine Suite Scarred/Sacred Water*, 2011
Photograph on paper
Framed (each):
84.5 x 64 cm;
overall: 84 x 366 cm

“Water is the most important issue right now, because it’s the thing that’s being used up the most. It’s being used by industry. And it’s being contaminated by industry.” – Tanya Harnett²

Tanya Harnett is a member of the Carry-The-Kettle First Nations in Saskatchewan. She is an artist and professor at the University of Alberta in a joint appointment in the Department of Art and Design and the Faculty of Native Studies. Working in various media including photography, drawing, printmaking and fibre, Harnett’s studio practice engages in the notions and politics of identity, history, spirituality and place.

Tanya Harnett’s *Suite Scarred/Sacred Water* brings attention to contaminated bodies of water on Albertan Reservations. In 2011, Harnett travelled to

five First Nations reserves: Paul First Nation, Alexis First Nation, Driftpile First Nation, Cold Lake First Nation and Lubicon Lake First Nation, where she located a body of water believed to be contaminated. By pouring red food colouring into the affected water source and photographing the result, Harnett makes visible what is unseen or minimized. Her *Scarred/Sacred Water* series is an attempt to make Albertans outside of the the reservations aware of the damage done to the natural environment by industry and oil spills.

² April Hudson, “Beneath the surface of Scarred/Sacred Water at the Multicultural Heritage Centre” in *Spruce Grove Examiner* (2013).
<http://www.sprucegroveexaminer.com/2013/08/01/beneath-the-surface-of-scarredsacred-water-at-the-multicultural-heritage-centre>

CHRISTI BELCOURT



Christi Belcourt, Michif/Otepmisiwak
So Much Depends Upon Who Holds the Shovel, 2008
Acrylic on canvas
Framed: 125 x 248 cm; overall: 121.9 x 243.8 cm

[Christi Belcourt](http://christibelcourt.com) is a Métis visual artist whose work celebrates the beauty of the natural world while expressing concern for the environment, biodiversity, spirituality and awareness of Métis culture. She is the lead coordinator and a contributing artist for Walking With Our Sisters: A Commemorative Art Installation for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women of Canada and the author of books on traditional medicine and beadwork.

Beadwork is so essential to the Métis that they became known as the “Flower Beadwork People.” Christi Belcourt draws on her Métis heritage to bring new life to the art form of beadwork, using thousands of raised dots of acrylic paint to simulate a beadwork effect. *So Much Depends on Who Holds the Shovel* speaks to the artist’s deep respect for the traditions and knowledge of her people as well as her ecological concerns for plant species facing extinction - many of which are used in traditional medicine. The plants depicted in this painting include the arrowhead water plant, yellow pond lily, strawberry, skunk cabbage, purple beebalm, chock cherry, wild grapes and oak leaves. The bird is the Kirtland’s warbler, an endangered species.

IDENTITY

Through much of Canadian history, “Indians” were to be imagined out of existence and erased from society through assimilation policies supported by legislation and religion. These violent tactics severed relationships of being to language, customary tradition, artistic expression, community and identity. Indigenous artists are re-examining these histories of racial and cultural intolerance through contemporary nuances of identity, hybridity, stereotypes and misrepresentation.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTWORKS

While there are many differences between First Nations, Métis and Inuit, these names refer to the three main groups of peoples who are the traditional inhabitants of this land. Review the following terminology and legislation to provide context for the artwork in this section:

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous means “native to the area.” It is a self declared term (rather than government imposed, such as “Indian”) for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The term has been growing in popularity in Canada and globally since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly to guide member-state national policies on the collective rights of Indigenous People.

First Nation(s)

First Nation is a term used to identify Indigenous peoples of Canada who are neither Métis nor Inuit. This term came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the terms “Indian” and “Indian band” which many find offensive. First Nations people includes both status and non-status Indians. There are more than 600 First Nations/“Indian bands” in Canada and over 60 languages reported by First Nations people – an indication of the diversity of First Nations people across the country.

Inuit

Inuit are Indigenous people in northern Canada, united by a common culture and language and living mainly in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. The word Inuit means “the people” in Inuktitut and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. The Indian Act does not cover Inuit. However, in 1939, the Supreme Court of Canada interpreted the federal government’s power to make laws affecting “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” as extending to Inuit.

Métis

The word Métis is French for “mixed blood.” Historically, the term Métis applied to the children of French fur traders and Cree women in the Prairies; of English and Scottish traders and Dene women in the North; and of British and Inuit in Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, the term is used broadly to describe people with mixed First Nations and European ancestry. The Métis National Council adopted the following definition of “Métis” in 2002: “‘Métis’ means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.” The Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes Métis as one of the three Indigenous Peoples of Canada and they are now covered by the Indian Act.

Indian

“Indian” is the legal term for an Indigenous person who is registered under the Indian Act. It should only be used in legal/ constitutional matters requiring precise terminology, or in matters related to the governance of the Indian Act. Whenever it is necessary to use this term, it should be placed in quotations to indicate the fraught nature of the word.

Status Indian

Status Indians are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list administered by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian and only Status Indians are recognized as “Indians” under the Indian Act and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Non-Status Indian

Non-status Indians are people who consider themselves “Indians” or members of a First Nation but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as “Indians” under the Indian Act, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians.

The Indian Act

The 1876 Indian Act attempted to consolidate all existing legislation that covered First Nations and their relationship to Canada. The act is very wide-ranging in scope, covering band governance, reserves, land use, healthcare, education and defines who is recognized as “Indian.” The Indian Act essentially made Status Indians wards of the Crown, and regulated their lives and land use. The theme throughout the Indian Act is that of “civilizing,” where Indian status was regarded as a temporary stage on the road to assimilation. The Indian Act:

- denied women status;
- introduced residential schools;
- created reserves;
- renamed individuals with European names;
- restricted First Nations from leaving reserve without permission from an Indian Agent;
- enforced enfranchisement of any First Nation admitted to university;
- could expropriate portions of reserves for roads, railways and other public works, as well as to move an entire reserve away from a municipality if it was deemed expedient;
- could lease out uncultivated reserve lands to non-First Nations if the new leaseholder would use it for farming or pasture;
- forbade First Nations from forming political organizations;
- denied First Nations the right to vote;
- forbade First Nations from speaking their native language;
- forbade First Nations from practicing their traditional religion;
- forbade western First Nations from appearing in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant wearing traditional regalia; and
- declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal.

There were various federal policies over the years that caused Status Indians to be removed from the Indian Registry. Some lost Status when they earned a university degree, joined the Army or the priesthood, gained title of land, or married a non-Indian.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Discuss the term “culture.”

- Is it static or continuously evolving? Why or why not?
- What outside forces influence culture? Are these beneficial or detrimental?
- Consider disruptions to cultural continuity.

Discuss the implications of losing access to song, art and language.

- What would the impact be on one’s sense of identity?
- Why is reclamation and revitalization so important?

Discuss gender equity in relation to the Indian Act and Bill C-31, which was passed in 1985 as an amendment to the Act.

Discuss recent current events related to cultural appropriation.

(e.g.: The Cultural Appropriation Prize in Canadian media, Urban Outfitters using Navajo symbols, Plains sacred headdresses appropriated at Coachella, etc.)

- Who has access to cultural material?
- Consider the significance of symbols, art, music, and stories to a people who were once denied their culture.
- Consider the term “authenticity.”
- Consider who gains (financially or otherwise) from cultural material.

BARRY POTTLE

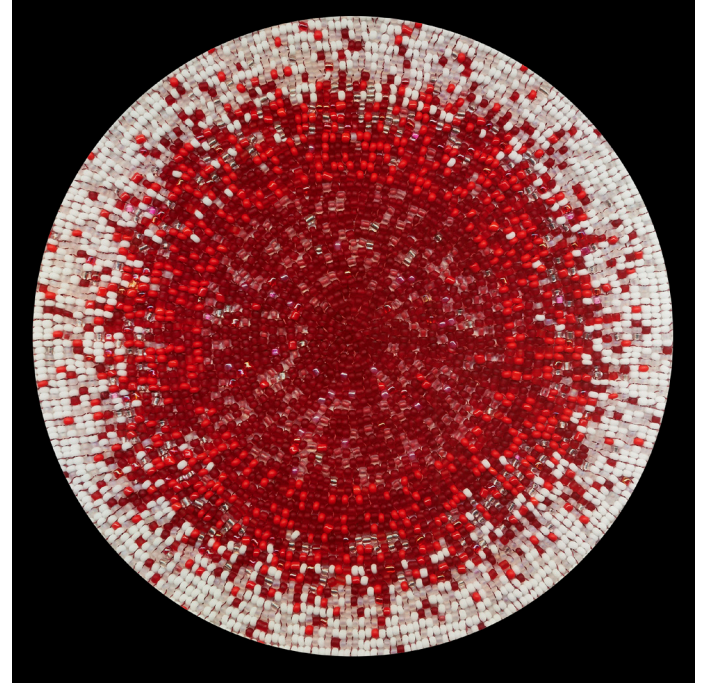
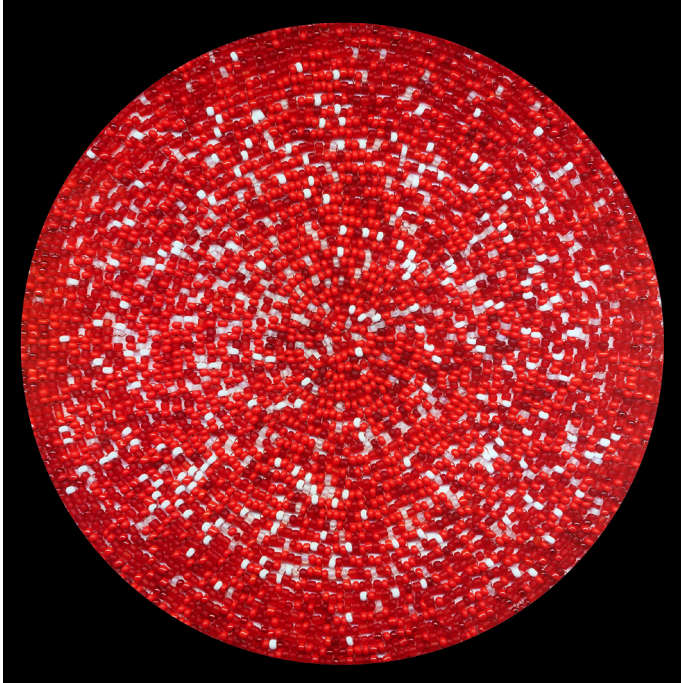


Barry Pottle, Inuit
Awareness 1 & 2, 2009 – 2010
Digital photograph on paper
Framed (each): 74.3 x 74.2 cm;
overall: 74.3 x 148.4 cm; unframed
(each): 63.5 x 61 cm

Barry Pottle is an Inuk artist from Nunatsiavut in Labrador (Rigolet), who now resides in Ottawa, ON. He is an emerging photographer who documents and works closely with and for the Ontario Indigenous arts community. Pottle has said of his artistic practice that it documents and explores contemporary issues and realities facing Urban Inuit populations, highlighting Inuit culture, identity, tradition, and lifeways.

In the *Awareness* series, photographer Barry Pottle confronts the Eskimo Identification Tag system implemented by the Canadian government. Between 1944 to 1969 every Inuk in the Western and Eastern Arctic was required to carry on their person a small disc with an identification number signifying their region, community and a unique numerical identifier. The practice was borne out of cultural insensitivity and bureaucratic laziness in response to the complexities of Inuit naming traditions. Federal agents deemed Inuit names to be too long, difficult to spell and frustrating to pronounce. Despite this dehumanizing practice, Pottle's object-study reveals simple gestures of personalization like writing a name, in English or Inuktitut, alongside the number.

NADIA MYRE



Nadia Myre, Algonquin
(left) *Meditations on Red 5*, 2013
(right) *Meditations on Red 2*, 2013
Digital print on plexi glass
121.9 cm diameter

Born in Montreal, [Nadia Myre](http://www.nadiamyre.net) is a First Nations artist who employs collaborative processes as a strategy for engaging in conversations about identity, resilience and politics of belonging. Nadia Myre's multi-disciplinary practice has been inspired by participant involvement as well as recurring themes of longing and loss, identity and language.

Nadia Myre's *Meditations on Red* series investigates Native identity and official status through blood composition. Using the language of science, her beaded "portraits" reflect varying degrees of racial purity or hybridity between "red" and "white." The series highlights the ongoing debate of who can claim Native identity in the eyes of Federal law, particularly Indigenous women who, until the passing of Bill C-31 in 1985, would lose their status if they married a non-native.

Nadia Myre

<http://www.nadiamyre.net>

DANA CLAXTON



Dana Claxton, a member of the Lakota Nation, is a curator, artist and Assistant Professor in the University of British Columbia Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory. Claxton works in film, photography, single and multi-channel video installation and performance art. Her practice investigates beauty, the body, the socio-political and the spiritual. She has received numerous awards including the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation VIVA Award for the Visual Arts and the Eiteljorg Fellowship.

Dana Claxton's *Tatanka Wanbli Chekpa Wicincala* deals with Western perception of Indigenous culture and the commodification of cultural symbols. The photographic series consists of five images where the two outermost photos are close-up views of a buffalo hide and an eagle feather. Between these, twin sisters each hold a stuffed toy version of these animals, contrasting the real and the manufactured. The buffalo and eagle are symbols of power and trust in Lakota culture, however their presentation as children's toys drains them of their symbolic meaning.

Dana Claxton, Lakota / Sioux
Tatanka Wanbli Chekpa Wicincala, 2006
C-print on archival board
Framed (each): 79 x 104 cm; overall: 79 x 520 cm;
unframed (each): 76.2 x 101.5 cm

SONNY ASSU



Sonny Assu, Ligwilda'xw
(left) *Illegal Song*, 2010
(right) *Illegal Dance*, 2010
Acrylic on hide
50.8 cm diameter

"The potlatch ban was a law that affected everyone from my great-great-grandparents to my grandparents — three generations of my family, forbidden to practice their culture." – Sonny Assu³

Sonny Assu is a Ligwilda'xw (Kwakwaka'wakw) contemporary artist. Through paintings, sculptures, prints and installations, Assu merges the aesthetics of his nation's iconography with a pop art sensibility to address Indigenous issues and rights. His work often deals with the loss of language, cultural resources and the effects of colonization. Assu received the British Columbia Creative Achievement Award in First Nations art in 2011 and was long-listed for the Sobey Art Award in 2012, 2013 and 2015.

Illegal Song and *Illegal Dance* are two elk-hide drums painted with abstract Northwest Coast symbols. The titles make reference to the Indian Act, which in 1885 was revised to ban Indigenous cultural activities such as the potlatch. The potlatch was the core of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural practice, where singing, dancing and traditional ceremonies took place. The ban was one of the government's most oppressive legislative efforts to eliminate the customs, languages and beliefs of Indigenous peoples.

Sonny Assu

<http://www.sonnyassu.com>

3 "An Interview with Sonny Assu" in *National Gallery of Canada Magazine* (2015). <http://www.ngcmagazine.ca/artists/an-interview-with-sonny-assu>

TANIA WILLARD



Tania Willard, Secwepemc
Be a Good Girl, 2008
Handcoloured woodcut
Framed: 81 x 96 x 3 cm;
overall: 66.5 x 87 cm

[Tania Willard](#), Secwepemc Nation, works within the shifting ideas of contemporary and traditional as it relates to cultural arts and production. Often working with bodies of knowledge and skills that are conceptually linked to her interest in intersections between Aboriginal and other cultures. Willard has worked as a curator in residence with grunt gallery and Kamloops Art Gallery. Willard's curatorial work includes *Beat Nation: Art Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture*, a national touring exhibition first presented at Vancouver Art Gallery in 2011.

"*Be a Good Girl* is a reflection on the gendered work expectations and training of women in the 1950s. I have explored this topic by looking at Indian residential schools, and the ways in which young Native women were trained in an effort to transform them into good working-class wives and workers. The Indian residential school system had a half-day labour program for girls, which was abolished in 1952 out of concern that children were not receiving an education, but were only serving the financial needs of the school. Residential schools forbade Native children from speaking their languages or practicing their culture in an attempt to mold them, for their 'salvation,' into productive members of white, capitalist society. The residential schools were part of a dark history of racism and genocide in Canada and continue to have negative effects. This sort of gendered work training, however, was not reserved for the assimilation of Natives; training schools like the Ontario Training School for Girls rehabilitated young women with 'loose' morals and other traits that were not tolerated in the '50s. Both white working class and Native girls attended these training schools. This piece is about the conflicts, spiritual paradoxes, and societal expectations of young women in the '50s.'" – Tania Willard

BREAKING BARRIERS/LEGACIES

“Artists have freedom to experiment with genres and styles that issue both from our traditions, from our collective experiences, as well as from Western art forms. Artists grasp, without cultural shame, all of the tools and techniques available to them.” – Ryan Rice⁴

The 33 artists in raise a flag are part of a creative legacy of Indigenous artwork created and collected against all odds – a legacy that endures well into the age of reconciliation and confederation recognition. The notable artists and art forms featured in this section survived and flourished despite residue of cultural prejudice and erasure sanctioned by Canada’s Indian Act policy. They exemplify a continuation of artistic tradition that prioritizes nuances of Indigeneity while incorporating the influence of Western art practices.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTWORKS

The following research suggestions will aid in situating the notable Indigenous artists featured in this section amongst their peers:

Consider Carl Beam’s suite of prints:

- Research notable Indigenous figures and silkscreen their portraits.
- Do the figures you’ve chosen have a particular theme? e.g.: water protectors, revolutionaries, etc.
- What challenges did they overcome?

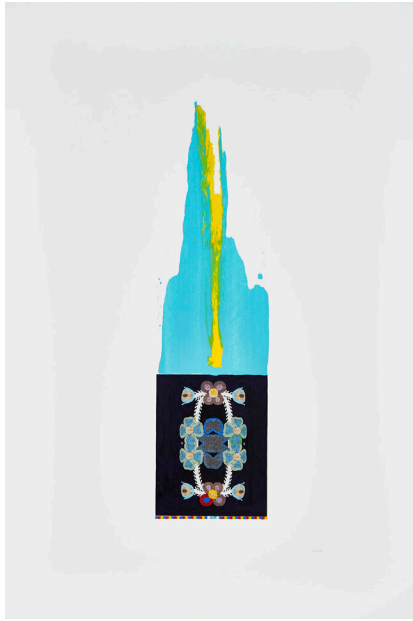
Research a notable Indigenous artist from each of Canada’s regions.

- What contributions have they made?
- Are their works in any major collections?

Research an emerging Indigenous artist and write a proposal or rationale nominating one of their artworks for inclusion in a major collection. Consider the collection’s mission and mandate as well as how your nomination complements other works in the collection.

⁴ Ryan Rice, “Presence and Absence: Indian Art in the 1990s” in *Definitions of Visual Culture V: Globalisation and Post-Colonialism*, (Montreal: Musee d’art contemporain, 2002).

BEAD WORK

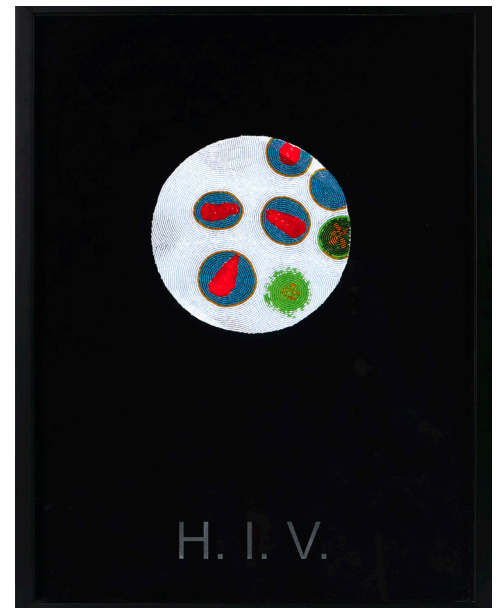


Barry Ace, Christi Belcourt, Ruth Cuthand, Rachelle Lafond and Nadia Myre are at the forefront of a movement that has reclaimed beadwork as contemporary art.

In *Beaded Abstraction*, Ace brings his expertise in beading powwow regalia to the surface of a painting. He employs the mirror symmetry found in classic floral beadwork. Executed in the appliqué stitch, Ace tacks strings of beads onto a surface with tiny stitches laid between every two or three beads. In *Hepatitis C* and *H. I. V.* from the *Surviving* series, Ruth Cuthand uses the same technique to paint deadly viruses in exacting detail. Research and experience lie under each beaded surface. *H. I. V.* was created during a residency at Aids Saskatchewan, where Cuthand organized a Feast for the Dead with Indigenous clients. Rachelle Lafond recreates an iconic 1939 photograph on the unforgiving grid of a beading loom. The stark economy of shape and colour used in *Maahn Nookoom* (*There's My Grandmother*) emphasizes the hierarchy of residential schools.

Nadia Myre's *Meditations on Red 2* and *5* are large photographs of circular beaded forms created "off the needle" – a single needle and thread weaving beads to create shapes. Translating beadwork to large photographs and paintings, both Myre and Christi Belcourt use scale to great effect, forcing viewers to take beads seriously. Belcourt's *So Much Depends Upon Who Holds the Shovel* replaces rhythmic stitches with the repetitive gesture of individually applied dots of paint. Each artist uses beadwork's durational process to tether meaning with every stitch.

- Sherry Farrell Racette



Of Métis heritage, Sherry Farrell Racette is a member of the Timiskaming First Nation (Quebec). Her research interests include First Nations and Métis women's history, art history, museum collections, First Nations and Métis traditional arts, issues of self-representation and Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy.

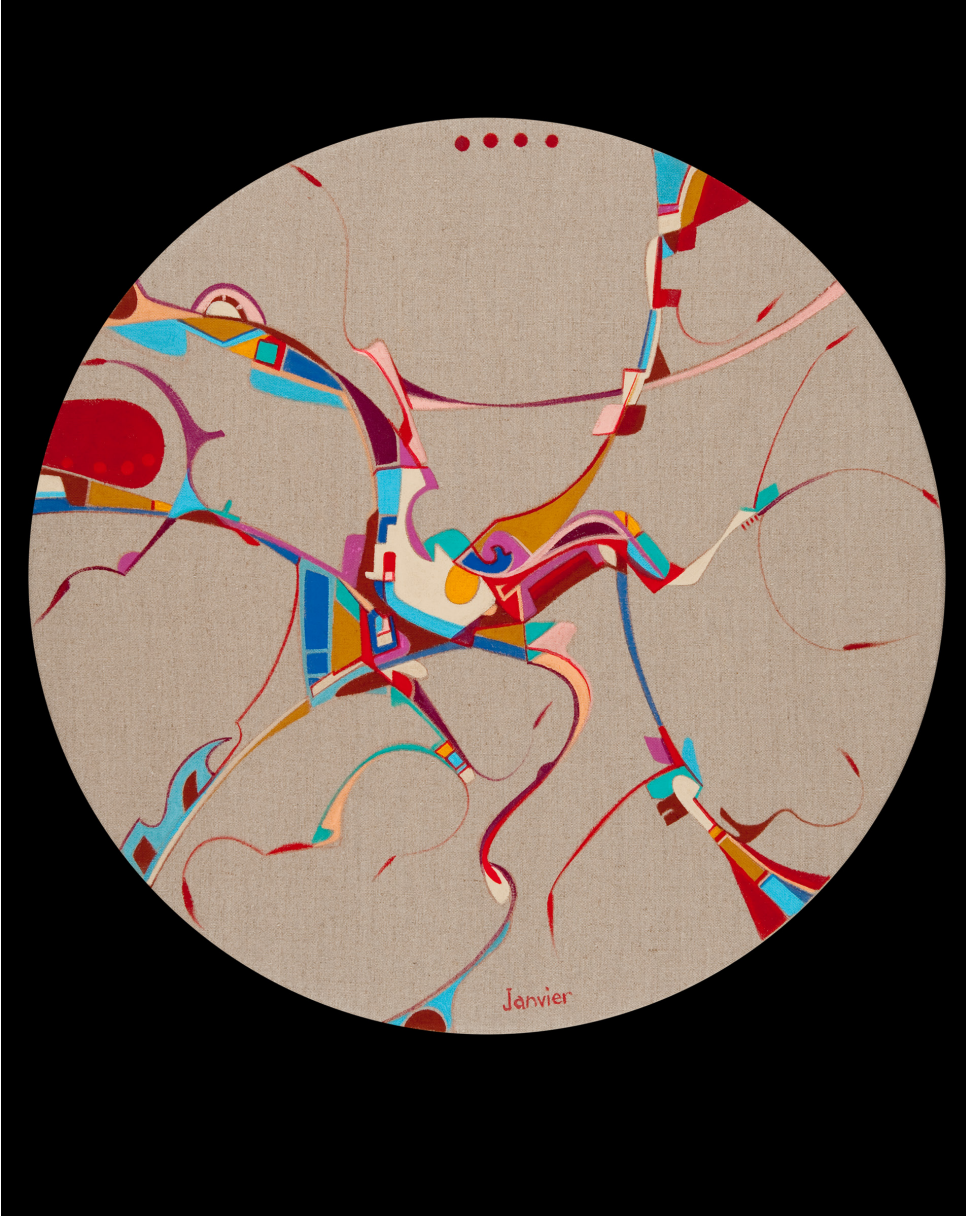
Left to right:

Barry Ace, *Beaded Abstraction*, 2014, mixed media on paper, 150 x 127 cm;

Rachelle Lafond, *Maahn Nookoom "There's my Grandmother"*, 2012, beads and thread, overall: 17.8 x 7.6 cm;

Ruth Cuthand, *Surviving ... H.I.V.*, 2011 – 2012, mixed media on fabric, 61 x 45.7 cm diameter.

ALEX JANVIER, Cm, RCA, LLD Hon



Alex Janvier, Denesuline Saulteaux
Four Spots, 2011
Acrylic on linen
61 cm diameter

Four Spots is symbolic of the sacredness of the number four to North American Indigenous culture – four directions, four seasons, four life stages, four areas of health, four elements and the four worlds of spirit, people, animals, and nature.

“Celebrated Denesuline and Saulteux artist Alex Janvier Cm, RCA, LLD Hon (b. 1935) from Cold Lake First Nations, Alberta, has made an incredible contribution to the arts in the field locating Indigenous and Canadian Art simultaneously. Janvier has come into to his own with his unique pictorial modernist style, a synthesis of his exposure to European schools of abstract drawing and painting (Kandinsky, Klee and Miro) and traditional narrative

forms of Indigenous object and image making practices. He is a national treasure who has received significant accolades throughout his career including the Governor General Award in Visual and Media Arts, National Aboriginal Lifetime Achievement and membership to the Order of Canada and the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts. In addition, he holds Honorary Doctorate Degrees from the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and OCAD University. Alex Janvier was active in facilitating positive change for

Indigenous peoples through his unremitting involvement in the arts and politics. In the 1960s, and into the 1970s, Alex was a member of an important art alliance named the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. (PINAI) who made history by demanding recognition for Indigenous artists within the mainstream art world. The groundbreaking work of the ‘Indian Group of Seven’ alliance with Daphne Odjig, Norval Morrisseau, Joseph Sanchez, Jackson Beardy, Carl Ray and Eddy Cobiness

continues to be honoured today for the significant change and recognition they created for Indigenous art and artists. He taught art through the University of Alberta Extension Program and was an adviser in the development of cultural policy with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

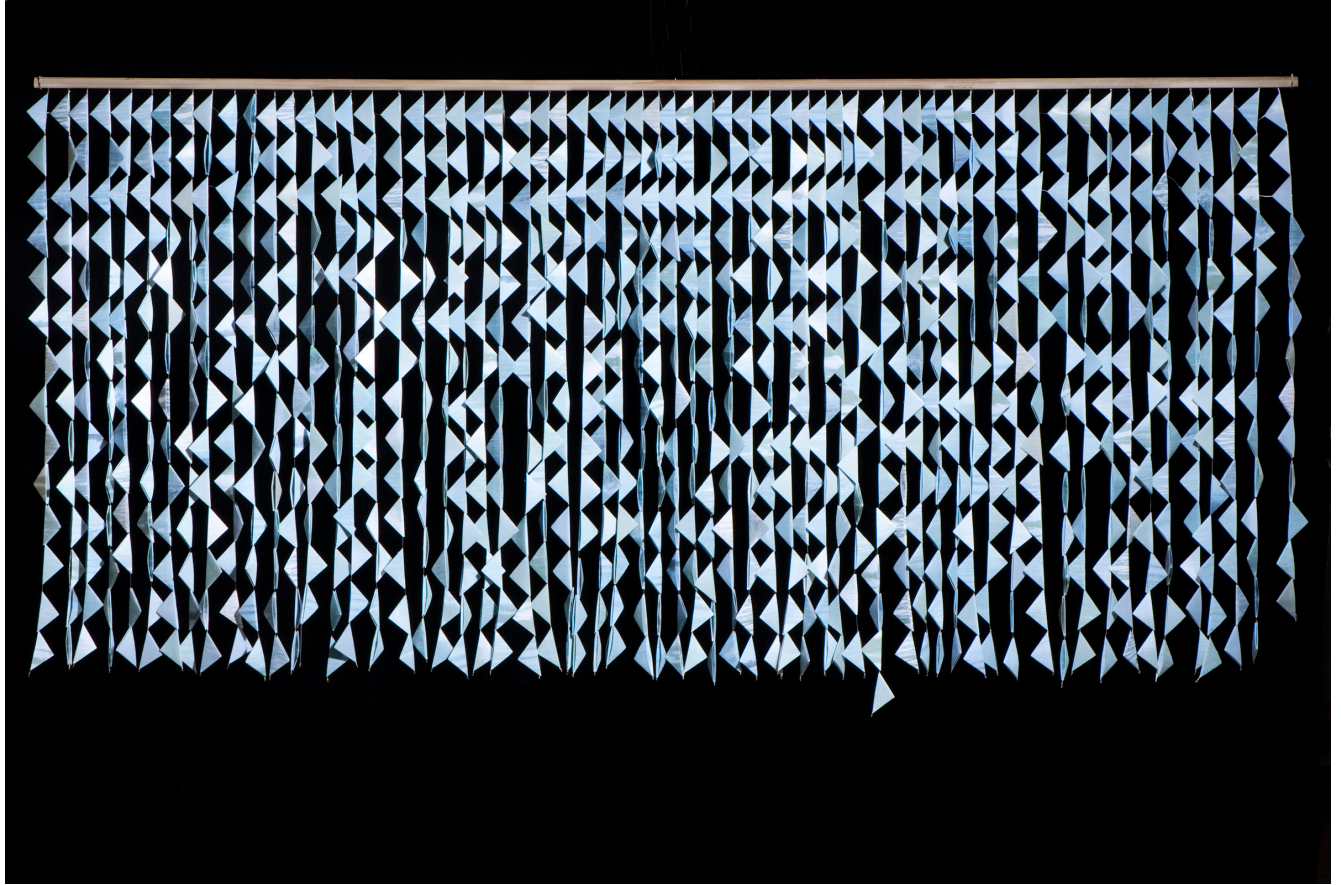
A catalyst for change, Janvier's career acknowledges a call upon persistent recognition for the visual sovereignty he maintained through cultural and political inspiration and expression. His work has been exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions across Canada and internationally." – Ryan Rice, OCAD University Convocation 2016.

Unlike many Indigenous artists of his time, Alex Janvier was able to receive formal art training. After experiencing and surviving the Blue Quills Indian Residential School in St. Paul, AB from the age of eight through his teens, Janvier applied to study at the Ontario College of Art and was accepted. Due to circumstances beyond his control (Canadian legislature and actions of oppression), Janvier did not receive permission from the government appointed Indian Agent to leave his Reserve and attend O.C.A. as he desired. That didn't stop him from becoming one of Canada's most renowned artists after graduating with honours from the Alberta College of Art in 1960. In 2016, Alex Janvier received the distinguished recognition of an Honorary Doctorate from OCAD University.



Alex Janvier, Denesuline Saulteaux
Life's Oasis, 2013
Watercolour on paper
54 cm diameter

FAYE HEAVYSHIELD



Faye HeavyShield, a member of the Kainai First Nation and fluent Blackfoot speaker, lives and works on the Blood Reserve in the southern Alberta foothills where she was born and raised. Since the mid-1980s, her work has been exhibited throughout Canada and the US and is held in public and private collections throughout North America. Her multidisciplinary artwork, which sometimes includes literal or metaphorical references to blood, is driven and inspired by her personal memories, her family and her community. The artist acknowledges the many influences and blessings of language, land, community and family.

Faye HeavyShield, *Kainawa slivers*, 2010
Mixed media installation
107 x 274 cm

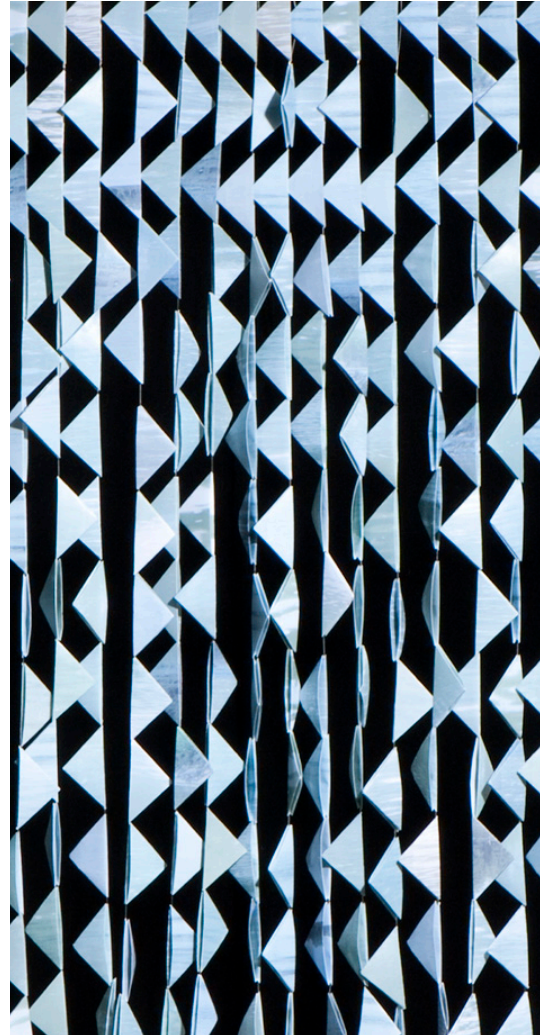
"Faye HeavyShield's works speak to a multi-sensory, multi-disciplinary art practice. It is about stories - listening and hearing; it is about aesthetics - the physical and conceptual processes of building up and scaling back. Born and raised in southern Alberta, HeavyShield's childhood homes were near rivers: the Oldman River and the Belly River. Since 2004, she has involved herself in site-specific art projects that address the natural, cultural, and historical contexts of rivers throughout Canada.

In *slivers* (2010), Faye HeavyShield celebrates the intrinsic value of rivers as agents of well-being and respect. She travelled throughout the country photographing surface waters of multiple rivers - the Oldman River, the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, the Fraser River and the Ottawa River, among others. The curtain of water for *slivers* is created from hundreds of these tiny digital images, individually and methodically folded to resemble arrowheads. The work's lightness and mobility creates a gentle rippling effect that evokes both the strength and fragility of rivers.

HeavyShield's practice involves seemingly laborious, repetitious actions that produce thoughtful and elegant architectural installations. The multiple elements reflect the meditative process of her artmaking that often leads to exploration and creation beyond the original concepts.

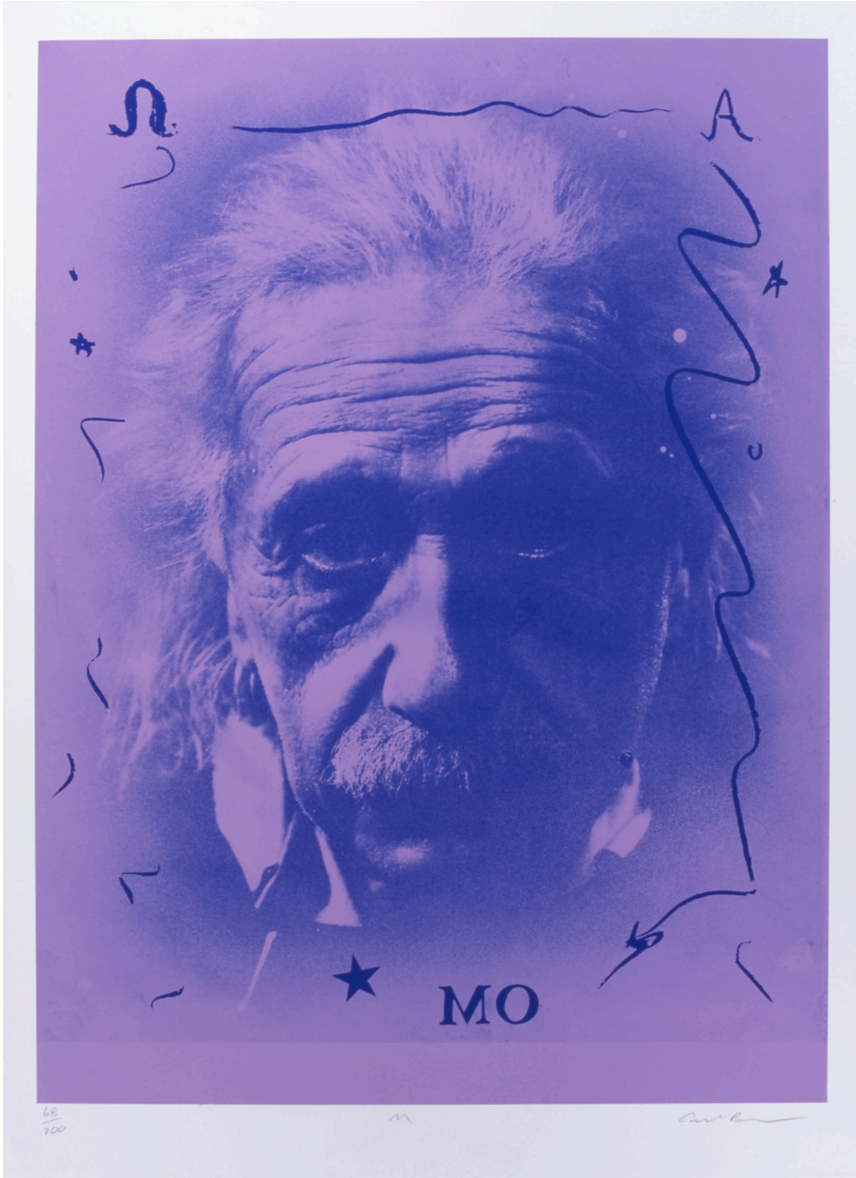
HeavyShield's deceptively spare sculptures carry with them the power of understatement and engagement. She addresses the complexities of her imagination and the diverse concepts and processes that are important to her. Fluid and timeless, HeavyShield's works reward close attention with layers of meaning, both familiar and mysterious."

– **Lee-Ann Martin**



Lee-Ann Martin is an independent curator and writer living in Ottawa. She is the former Curator of Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau and former Head Curator of the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina. Martin has curated, written and lectured extensively on contemporary Indigenous art both nationally and internationally over the past thirty years.

CARL BEAM RCA (1943 – 2005)



"If things that affect me as a microcosm affect others, then I, as an artist in society, must give away my vision of the order of things. To do this I must be the master of not only visual phenomena but also of the effect they exert on the mind, on the conscious and unconscious. Art as resolution, art as exorcism, art as power, art as medicine."

– Carl Beam

Carl Beam, Anishnaabe
Einstein M. O., 2000
Serigraph on paper
Framed: 92 x 73.5 cm;
overall: 76.3 x 56 cm

Carl Beam was born in 1943 in M'Chigeeng First Nation, in the Manitoulin District of Ontario. He worked in various photographic media, mixed media, oil, acrylic, text, works on paper, Plexiglas, stone, cement, wood, handmade ceramic pottery and found objects, as well as lithography, etching and screen printing. In 2000, Carl Beam was inducted into the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts. He was awarded the Governor General's award in Visual and Media Arts shortly before his death in 2005.

Carl Beam is renowned for working in an aesthetic style more akin to Pop Art than the traditional forms of the Anishinaabek Woodland School. However, Beam's art engages his Anishinaabek traditions through a juxtaposition of images that explore the space between Indigenous and other cultural views. Beam often used collaged and silkscreened images from popular culture to act as symbolic codes that refer to larger societal issues – these images act as puzzles for the viewer to interpret. Beam's themes included different approaches to knowledge and spirituality, our alienation from the natural world, the consequences of colonialism, and the cult of celebrity. The suite of serigraphs on display

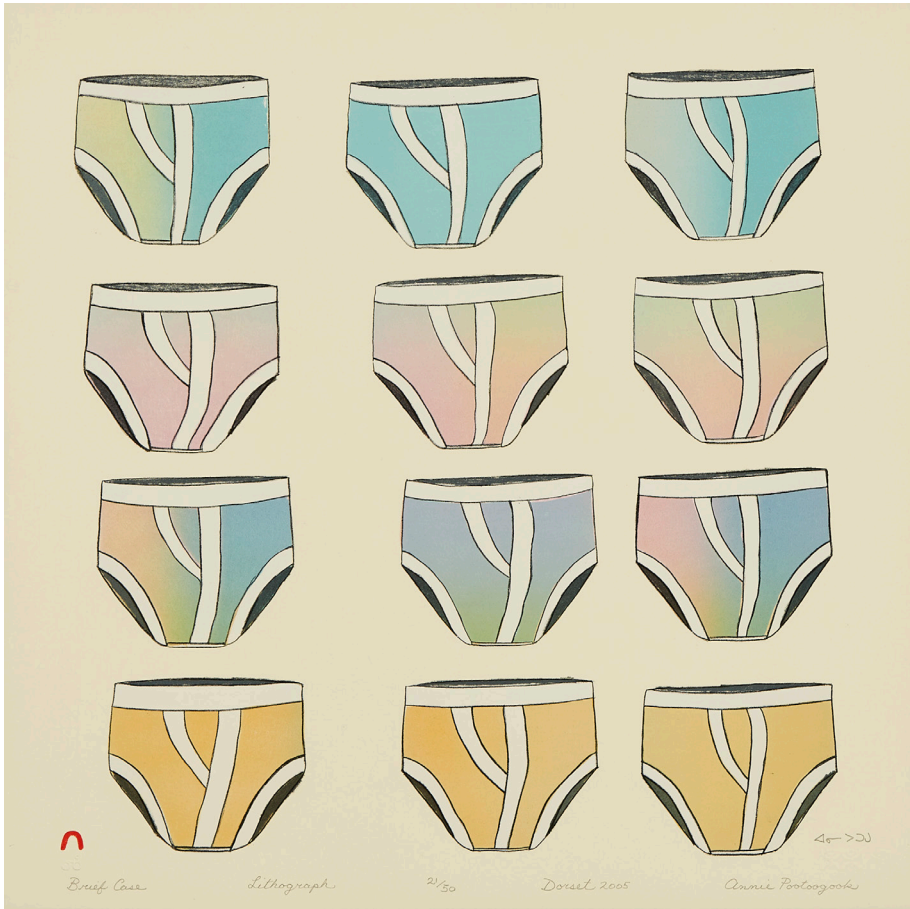
in raise a flag include such notable figures as Albert Einstein, Céline Dion, Madonna, John Lennon, Elvis Presley, Keith Richards, Barbra Streisand, and Cher. These portraits are devoid of Anishinaabek symbols nor are there any notable Indigenous figures present. Yet, their absence here is a telling reminder of who occupies the space of the wider cultural consciousness.

Carl Beam made Canadian art history as the first Indigenous artist have his work purchased by the National Gallery of Canada as Contemporary Art. His painting *The North American Iceberg* (1985) was acquired in 1986, thus breaking the barrier for Indigenous art's acceptance into the Canadian art canon and opening the door for a new generation of Indigenous artists to enter.



Carl Beam, Anishnaabe
Céline, 2000
Serigraph on paper
Framed: 92 x 73.5 cm;
overall: 76.3 x 56 cm

ANNIE POOTOOGOOK (1969 – 2016)



Annie Pootoogook, Inuit
Brief Case, 2005
Lithograph on paper
Framed: 60 x 60 cm;
overall: 43.5 x 43 cm

Annie Pootoogook was a third generation Inuit artist from Cape Dorset who was at the forefront of the new wave of contemporary Inuit artistic expression. She is the daughter of graphic artist Napachie Pootoogook and printmaker and carver Eegyvudluk Pootoogook, and is the granddaughter of Pitseolak Ashoona. Winner of the Sobey Art Award in 2006 and included in prestigious international exhibitions such as Documenta in Kassel, Germany, and in collections such as the National Gallery of Canada, Annie Pootoogook is considered one of the leading contemporary Inuit graphic artists of her generation.

Annie began drawing in 1997 under the encouragement of West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative Ltd. and throughout her career, her chosen medium involved drawing with pen and coloured pencils. Pootoogook's drawings challenged conventional expectations of "Inuit art" by depicting raw, straightforward and honest scenes of domestic life. Pootoogook drew public housing, the frozen-food aisle at the grocery store, current events on television, Playboy-style eroticism, alcoholism and spousal abuse. Her images reflect her experience as a contemporary female artist living and working in the changing milieu of Canada's far North. By inviting the viewer into both her public and private worlds, her artwork managed to transcend cultural boundaries and present the details of her everyday life in an engaging way.

**"I didn't see any igloos in my life. Only Skidoo, Honda, the house, things inside the house."
– Annie Pootoogook**

INUIT ART, PRINTMAKING AND IMPACT

Historically, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has had a long and intricate relationship with the development of contemporary Inuit art. The association evolved out of the federal government's desire to establish viable economic activities for newly resettled Inuit during the 1950s, through the promotion of sculpture, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, textiles and other arts. Experimentation with printmaking in the North began in 1957 in Cape Dorset (Kinngait) at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd. (WBEC). This successful initiative led to the establishment of printmaking programs in co-ops and studios in other communities, including: Puvirnituq, Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake), Nunavik (Arctic Quebec), Panniqtuuq (Pangnirtung) and Kanngiqtuqaapik (Clyde River). Each of these places produced graphic work reflecting their own distinct characteristics and style. WBEC remains the longest, continuously running print shop in Canada.

raise a flag highlights acquisitions from annual print collections from Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung and Baker Lake from 2005 to 2010. Annual print collections provide the opportunity for studios to showcase a selection of their most exciting and innovative work. As a group, these prints largely reflect significant changes in artistic methods and subject matter. Over the years, additional printmaking techniques, such as stonecut, stencil, lithography, as well as etching and aquatint have been mastered by Inuit artists and have allowed them more independence in the printmaking process. This most striking distinction among this selection of prints is the increasing depiction of contemporary themes and issues. Through these works, artists are confronting stereotypes and emphasizing significant changes to the way of life in the North for a new generation of Inuit artists.

- **Linda Grussani**

Linda Grussani is a member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, born and raised in the Ottawa area. A curator and art historian, she presently holds the title of Curator, Aboriginal Art at the Canadian Museum of History and was previously the Director of the Indigenous Art Centre from 2012 to 2016. Linda is currently working on a PHD in Cultural Studies at Queen's University. Her research focuses on the history of Indigenous art and artistic expression, with an emphasis on contemporary materials.



Ohtaq Mikkigak, Inuit
Qamutaujaq (Snowmobile),
2006

Lithograph on paper
Framed: 94 x 74 cm;
overall: 76.5 x 56.5 cm



Myra Kukiiyaut, Inuit
*Shopping for Pilot Biscuits,
 Flour, Salt, Groceries*, 2008
 Stonecut and stencil on paper
 Framed: 74.2 x 103.8 cm



Qavavau Manumie, Inuit
Lucky Man, 2013
 Stonecut and stencil on paper
 Framed: 72 x 53 cm;
 overall: 62 x 41 cm

These prints depict contemporary life for Inuit living on settlements in the far North. *Qamutaujaq (Snowmobile)* by Ohtaq Mikkigak makes reference to the common usage of snowmobiles, replacing the traditional use of dog and sled teams, Myra Kukiiyaut's *Shopping for Pilot Biscuits*,

Flour, Salt, Groceries shows the how grocery stores have replaced hunting as a primary source for food essentials, and Qavavau Manumie's *Lucky Man* wryly suggests that money can be a burden to a people who once thrived outside a market economy.

SURVIVANCE

In the face of genocide, erasure and loss, Indigenous cultural expressions continue to exhibit a spirit of endurance and resilience. Described as survivance by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, the term is the antonym of victimry and imbued with more empowerment than mere survival. The -ance suffix implies action, such that survivance refers to an active presence in the face of absence. Within the context of colonialism, Indigenous self-expressions in whatever medium, are all acts of survivance.

ENGAGING WITH THE ARTWORKS

The following prompts will aid in deeper engagement with the themes and concerns addressed by the artworks in this section:

Research and discuss UNsettling Canada 150:

- Consider the quote by Arthur Manuel on UNsettling Canada 150 posters: “Indigenous Peoples and Canadians who believe in human rights need look at Canada’s 150th Birthday Party as period to undertake a commitment to decolonize Canada and recognize the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination.” What does he mean by “decolonize”?
- Follow the hashtags #UNsettleCanada150 #SupportIndigenousSelfDetermination #Resist150, etc. to gain some background and see what people are saying. Participate in the discussion.
- How do the artworks in raise a flag complicate Canada 150 celebrations? Who gets to celebrate and on whose detriment?
- Consider the title of the exhibition in relation to Canada 150? Why is raise a flag NOT capitalized? What do you think the curator and the artworks are trying to suggest?

Encourage wordplay inspired by portmanteaus like “survivance” and “UNsettling”:

- Draw a mindmap of all the words and ideas suggested by these portmanteaus
- Create your own portmanteau, neologism, or hashtag based on an issue you believe in.

Consider Jim Logan’s *This is Our Time*. Research and discuss the Idle No More movement:

- What are the main goals of Idle No More?
- Compare it to historical protest movements like the Oka crisis.
- Compare it to other grassroots movements like Black Lives Matter, LGBT rights, women’s issues, civil rights, etc.
- Consider the role that social media plays in all of these social justice movements.
- What is an ally? Are you an ally?

MARK IGLOLIORTE



Mark Igloliorte, Inuit
Untitled, 2008
Oil on canvas
91.5 x 396 cm

"Suicide has no form in itself. Its figurelessness is also wrapped in taboo for the sake of hurt loved ones that live in absence of those gone." – Mark Igloliorte

Mark Igloliorte is an Inuk artist and educator from Happy Valley–Goose Bay, Labrador. His artistic work is primarily painting and drawing while working as well in sculpture and performance. In the summer of 2008 and 2009 Igloliorte worked with Inuit youth groups delivering painting and drawing workshops funded in part by The National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy through the Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development.

Igloliorte's painting, *Untitled*, captures unresolved complex feelings of emotional distress caused by the alarmingly high rate of suicides among the Innu, Inuit and Métis peoples of Labrador. Through a repetition of images, Igloliorte uses a cinematic device to stretch a singular moment of time into the past present and future. He creates a space for the viewer to look deeper into recurrent patterns and statistics of suicide to consider the immediacy and irreversibility of death, the persistence of memory and lived experience of communal grief.

REBECCA BELMORE



Rebecca Belmore, Anishnaabekwe
Fringe, 2013
Digital print
60 x 183 cm

Born in Upsala, Ontario, Rebecca Belmore is an artist currently living in Montreal, Quebec. She is internationally recognized for her performance and installation art. Since 1987, her multi-disciplinary work has addressed history, place and identity through sculpture, installation, video and performance. Belmore was Canada's official representative at the 2005 Venice Biennale.

The bloodied scar across an Indigenous woman's back is the central focus of Rebecca Belmore's *Fringe*. By denying the subject's face and sexuality, Belmore subverts the reclining nude common to Western Art. Instead, she confronts the viewer with the weight of the colonial burden First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities continue to bear.



I will never forget driving along Montreal streets to La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, a local arts hub, and catching sight of a billboard that made me turn around and go back to see it again. I knew it was not an ad, I thought, but the work of Rebecca Belmore. It was the whiteness of the sheets which made the red beads that hung down the back of a First Nations woman stand out.

It was the casualness of the pose of a woman bearing a massive deep scar along her back stitched and adorned with a fringe of beads. The beauty of Belmore's work lies in the bareness of the image – a complex thought stripped to its essentials. Her images are never cluttered with the unnecessary. They are not history lessons but experiences and provocations. I wanted to look forever but it's a billboard and we were driving. I recognized the way the beads hung as a symbol of First Nations clothing, a sign of tradition but also of change and endurance. The scar was

disturbing but the woman was not a victim. You could feel that she was something more than this scar. Her back was turned to us; she refused to be an object of our gaze, or pity. I have felt like her many times – some of us wear our scars on the surface which can make us targets and some of us are so good at hiding them that people forget what we have been through. Someone's loving hands, like many Indigenous women's hands before, had helped heal this woman's scars. I thought of all Indigenous women's scars that come from being relegated to the fringes of society – even there we make community and we beautify our world as much as we can.

Note: Rebecca Belmore's *Fringe*, was on Duke Street in Old Montreal and was included in the 2007 edition of *Mois de la Photo*. The billboard was exhibited until 2011.

- **Wanda Nanibush**

Rebecca Belmore
<http://www.rebeccabelmore.com>

Wanda Nanibush is an Anishinaabe-kwe image and word warrior, curator and community organizer from Beausoleil First Nation. Nanibush is the first curator of Indigenous art at the Art Gallery of Ontario and teaches graduate courses at OISE, University of Toronto.

WALLY DION



Wally Dion, b.1976
Saskatoon Saskatchewan,
is a visual artist living and
working in Binghamton,
New York. He is a member of Yellow Quill First Nation
(Saulteaux). Throughout much of his career, Dion's work
has contributed to a broad conversation in the art world
about identity and power, and can be interpreted as part
of a much larger pan-American struggle by Indigenous
peoples to be recognized culturally, economically,
and politically, by settler societies. Utilizing large
scale portraiture, found object sculpture, site specific
installation and kinetic sculpture Dion has expanded upon
this practice to include themes of personal history and
spirituality.

Wally Dion, Saulteaux
Shield Wall, 2008
Mixed media installation
157.5 x 345.5 x 96 cm

Wally Dion's *Shield Wall* speaks to growing tensions in Canada and the world at large, where non-violence and community action are essential in resolving conflict. Constructed with circuitry boards arranged in patterns that reference plains First Nations designs on traditional quilts and blankets, *Shield Wall* creates a protective barrier spanning over three meters. Composed of six star shields that resemble riot shields, when taken together the installation asserts mobility and empowerment through communication, knowledge, education and unity.

The piece was created in response to the protests and counter protests surrounding the untimely death of Matthew Shepard, a gay youth who was targeted, robbed and beaten to death. When anti-gay members of the Westboro Baptist church picketed Shepard's funeral and the trial of his attackers, Shepard's friends created a protective barrier between the protesters and Shepard's family by constructing large "angel" wings made from white sheets.

JIM LOGAN



Jim Logan, Cree Sioux Métis
This Is Our Time, 2013
Acrylic on board
91.5 x 61 cm

Jim Logan began his art career by painting social statement pieces from his own experience as a lay minister in Kwanlun Dunn Village on the outskirts of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Most recently he has been interested in art history and comparing it to Aboriginal art history as well as adding computer art to the many mediums he practices. Jim Logan is a founding member and captain of the Métis Art Council, former co-chair of the Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry (SCNA) and a recipient of the British Columbia Aboriginal Arts Award and two Canada Council Awards.

"This was painted during the 'Idle No More' heightened demonstrations to bring into awareness the never-ending lists of social/economic and environmental inadequacies toward Aboriginal people by the Harper Government. It refers to our young people; it is their time to stand up and make a difference because it will be them who must endure these inadequacies the longest. There was a major demonstration in Ottawa at Parliament Hill, I was away at the time but I recall it was snowing and I thought about the children there with their parents and how they will remember that day. I thought about the children in Attawapiskat and the children of Kwanlin Dün in Whitehorse and I wanted a simple image addressing complex issues that are generational. The Band-Aid on the child's face can symbolize many things – from bad water on reserves to domestic abuse at home. All in all, it's the children who must survive and react, so this painting is for them, we were all children at one time, we all have suffered from inadequacies I am praying for them to continue the struggle toward equality and for more happiness and prosperity for our people." – Jim Logan

CURRICULUM LINKS

EXPRESSING INDIGENOUS CULTURES

The exhibition raises awareness of the breadth and scope of Indigenous artwork being produced today. Students will analyse connections between art and society and consider the role of contemporary Indigenous artists in shaping societal perceptions of identity, culture and community values. Students will come to appreciate the many

ways art is deployed as a means for promoting dialogue to deepen an understanding of histories that affect Indigenous communities. And, they will be able to identify how new and evolving art forms reclaim, revive, and sustain Indigenous cultures – through material, technique, symbolism and message.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA

Many of the artworks in the exhibition raise awareness of Canadian government policies that have affected Indigenous identity in the twentieth century. Barry Pottle's *Awareness* series addresses the Eskimo Identification Tag system while Nadia Myre's *Meditations on Red* series raises questions about the burden of proof of identity through blood and official status as Native. Tania Willard's *Be a Good Girl* and Rachelle Lafond's *Maahn Nookoom (There's My Grandmother)* speak to the impact of residential schools.

Students will come to understand the impact that technological

developments have had on Indigenous society during the later half of the twentieth century. *Qamutaujaq (Snowmobile)* by Ohtaq Mikkigak makes reference to the common usage of snowmobiles in Inuit communities, replacing the traditional use of dog and sled teams. Elisapee Ishulutaq's *Bridge in Pangnirtung* addresses the challenges of engineering projects in the far North with respect to global warming. Both Barry Ace and Wally Dion integrate computer circuitry and first world waste with traditional patterns and art forms to explore ideas of cultural continuity in a technological age.

INDIGENOUS BELIEFS, VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

The artworks in the exhibition demonstrates how contemporary Indigenous artists are asserting their autonomy through a blend of traditional and modern practices as a foundation for self-determination.

Students will identify examples of artworks that:

- open a dialogue about sovereignty, self-determination and self-government;
- depict a spiritual or emotional link to traditional lands and territories;
- demonstrate how communities respond to technological and environmental changes; and
- arise from models of economic growth and political growth (e.g. Inuit art cooperatives).

CURRENT INDIGENOUS ISSUES IN CANADA

Several of the artworks in raise a flag are made as a response to current events. Students will identify the social, political and economic challenges being addressed by individuals and communities in Canada. Tanya Harnett's *Suite Scarred/Sacred Water* brings attention to contaminated bodies of water on Albertan Reservations; Mark Igloliorte's *Untitled* speaks to the epidemic of suicides among the Innu and Inuit peoples of Labrador as well as First Nations across Canada; and Jim Logan's *This Is Our Time* engenders awareness and solidarity for the Idle No More movement. Students will also be exposed to artworks that reflect the contemporary Indigenous experience informed and influenced by media and popular culture.

RESOURCES

SUGGESTED READING

Arthur Manuel's article "Are You a Canadian?" informs much of the UNsettling Canada 150 campaign:
<http://www.leveller.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/LEVELLER-9.4-Arthur-Manuel-Tribute.pdf>

The Inconvenient Indian: a Curious Account of Native People in North America by Thomas King (2013).

RECOMMENDED VIDEOS

Kanata Flag Day by Greg A. Hill:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nps59gL0YhY>

Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths, directed by Ole Gjerstad and Joeline Sanguya (2010) explores the circumstances around the killing of Inuit sled dogs by the RCMP:
https://www.nfb.ca/film/qimmit-clash_of_two_truths/

Annie Pootogook, directed by Marcia Connolly, is an intimate portrait of Pootogook preparing for her first solo exhibition at The Power Plant Centre for Contemporary Art in Toronto:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80cJqaK-1us>

Documentary film directed by Wayne Peltier on the making of Christi Belcourt's artwork *So Much Depends Upon Who Holds The Shovel*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WL-RB78lfs>

Christi Belcourt names and talks about each of the plants in her painting *My Heart is Beautiful*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwNHNm9dw6Y>

A short documentary about Alex Janvier produced by the Alberta Order of Excellence to commemorate his induction in 2010:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qonM0Pf7OhI>

Aakideh: the art and legacy of Carl Beam, directed by Paul Eichhorn and Robert Waldeck:
<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?R=2789089>

VISUAL AND MEDIA ARTS RESOURCES

The National Gallery of Canada's Aboriginal Art in the Collection of Indigenous Art

<https://www.gallery.ca/collection/collecting-areas/indigenous-art>

The National Gallery of Canada's Collection of Indigenous Art includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit artworks, with an emphasis on contemporary art from 1980 to the present day. The National Gallery of Canada has collected works by Aboriginal artists since the early 20th century.

The Virtual Museum of Métis Art and Culture

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/introduction.php>

"This website is the most comprehensive attempt to chronicle traditional Métis history and culture on the World Wide Web and contains a wealth of primary documents – oral history interviews, photographs and various archival documents – in visual, audio and video files. In addition, many of our proven resources such as Steps in Time and Gabriel Dumont: Métis Legend have also been added to this site. Finally, new material, suitable for general information and for educators, has also been commissioned for The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture."

The Aboriginal Curatorial Collective

<https://www.acc-cca.com/about/>

From the website: "The Aboriginal Curatorial Collective / Collectif des Conservateurs Autochtones (ACC/CCA) supports, promotes and advocates on behalf of First Nations (Indian, Inuit and Métis) art, artists, curators, and representatives of arts and cultural organizations in Canada and internationally."

IsumaTV

www.isuma.tv

From the website: "IsumaTV is a collaborative multimedia platform for Indigenous filmmakers and media organizations. The collective platform currently carries over 6000 videos, and thousands of other images and audio files, in more than 80 different languages, on 800+ user-controlled channels, representing cultures and media organizations from Canada, U.S.A., Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and all over Latin America."

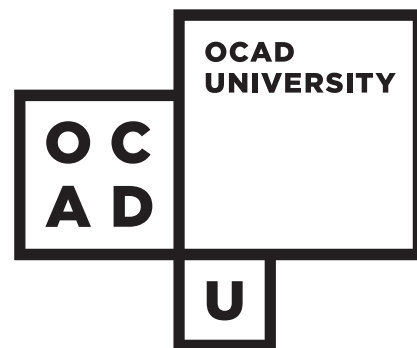
Dorset Fine Arts

<http://www.dorsetfinearts.com/artists/>

From the website: "Since its emergence in the 1950s as a creative hub and cultural incubator, Cape Dorset, Nunavut in Canada's Arctic Circle, has been a source of world class drawings, prints and sculpture. Under the stewardship of the West Baffin Eskimo Co. Ltd. and its marketing division Dorset Fine Arts, Canadian Inuit art has found a place amongst the finest collections, exhibitions and publications worldwide."



**ONSITE
GALLERY**



raise a flag: works from the Indigenous Art Collection (2000 - 2015)

Curated by Ryan Rice, Delaney Chair in Indigenous Visual Culture, OCAD University

September 16 to December 10, 2017

Onsite Gallery
199 Richmond St. W.
Ground Floor
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www.ocadu.ca/onsite
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* with the exception of Jordan Bennett's *Water Weighs* (pg. 6) which is courtesy of the artist.