

passionate
determined
hunter
impatient
quiet
powerful
listen
daydreamer
lover
broken
cranky
beautiful
healing

Indiginesse

An Exhibition of Works by
Contemporary Native Women

May 7 - June 28, 2014 | Aurora Cultural Centre

Curatorial Statement

sqaw

injun

colonial

taxes

treaties

soul

issues

traditions

ambassadors

pride

These artists have not been immune to the events stemming from colonial settlement. Nor have they been exempt from the sensational presentations in popular media or public perceptions over the course of their lives. The artists whose work is included in this show have all presented and demonstrated their work across the geographic area we call Canada, some in the US and others internationally.

Labels have power and when words like savage and squaw* become part of the tax-paying settler's common vernacular, when money is being spent on those very people (incidentally, whose land and children are being taken), the power of these labels becomes very apparent. The very notion of what constitutes the concept of civilization or the value of one group of people over another is shaped by these misnomers. Squaw was a very appealing hook that was used repeatedly in speaking of Indigenous women. Even women with mixed blood could distance themselves enough to laugh at the mere idea of being in the same class as the lowly Injun, no matter her position in settler society.

Colonial history books, politics and Hollywood movie scripts placed each of these artists in a well-crafted environment comprised of vast quantities of reserve land and free money without the burden of work and taxes. These artists not only had to overcome the unrealistic notions of what it means to be First Nations or Métis but also had to create artwork of a certain calibre and communicate their artwork to Native and non-Natives alike. Tall orders! These artists have become ambassadors for indigenous women in Canada and the US.

What interested me the most, as curator and a Métis who only learned about my own Native blood ties as an adult, was who my peers really are. It would be very sophisticated to include the popular version of critically-acclaimed imagery in the chosen artwork but this exhibition isn't just about bright colours and cool designs. I've chosen artists that speak from their soul, who are not afraid to confront real issues or share what it means to be whom they are. I chose well.

* "Squaw is an English language loan-word, used as a noun or adjective, whose present meaning is an indigenous woman of North America. It is derived from the eastern Algonquian morpheme meaning 'woman' that appears in numerous Algonquian languages variously spelled squa, skwa, esqua, sqeh, skwe, que, kwa, ikwe, exkwew, xkwe, etc. At present, the term is often held to be offensive." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squaw>



Canada is redolent with Native artists working within various mediums, exploring traditional imagery in contemporary ways. Women were responsible for keeping traditions alive and they continue to do so today. I chose from the best. Shelley Niro paves the way for other Native women to forge ahead on their own journeys. Christi Belcourt's 8-foot *This Painting Is a Mirror* (on loan from the federal government) reflect's the beauty within each of us when we connect to the Earth. LauraLee K Harris takes us deeper into Mother Earth. Kayeri Akweks compares woman's ability to have a voice in white society vs. her own Haudenosaunee society. Lee Claremont shares spiritual views on life, love, family and motherhood. Lee Deranger plays with political fire from within her oil sands community. Maria Hupfield creates new conversations by placing herself at intersections between Western and non-Western view points. Raven Davis explores the world of 2-spiritedness and female sexuality. Janice Toulouse presents us with *The Massacre Painting*, which, in her words is "a truth painting that non-Native people might not want seen." Lita Fontaine explores kinship among indigenous women in an indigenous feminist framework. Nadya Kwandibens juxtaposes tradition and contemporary, urban life in her *Concrete Indians* series. Tanya Lunkin Linklater's *unspoken-ness* researches specific history in relation to the present. Last but not least, Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuck's performance on violin and viola tell stories from different grandmothers in her Métis family tree.

Audience members visiting this exhibition will not only receive a professionally scripted sense of indigenous women artists. They will gain a better understanding of what it means to be a Native woman. They will have some of their beliefs put to the test, opening up important dialogue that has largely been left out of Canadian history. It has been a pleasure to work with the artists participating in Indigenesse and to place their work in this exhibition. I thank them and the wonderful staff at the Aurora Cultural Centre for the privilege.

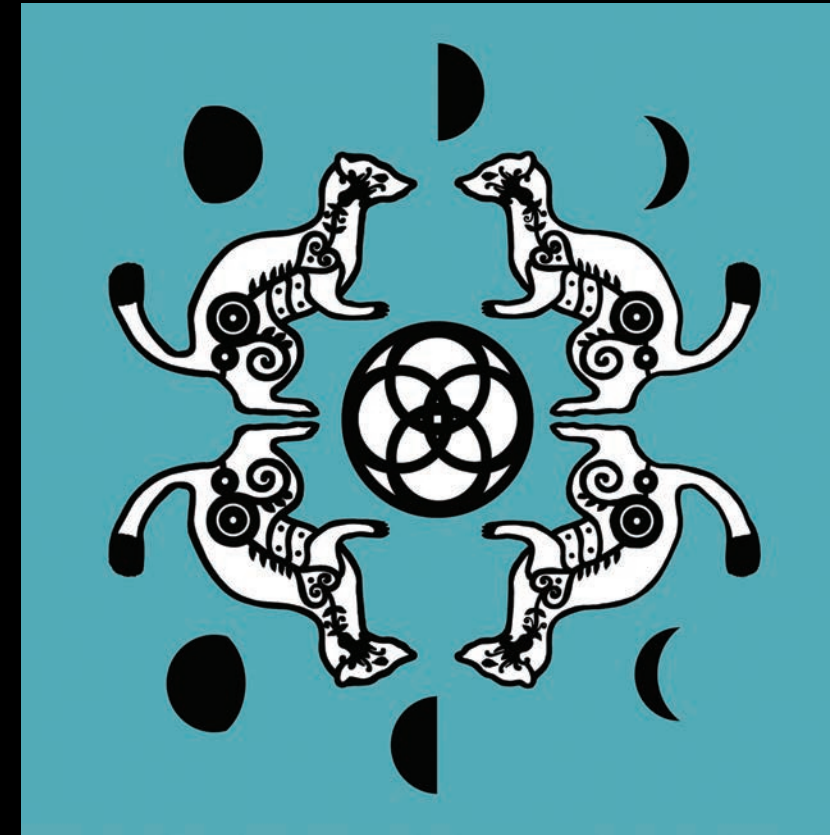
Nathalie Bertin Métis
Artist & Curator

Kaie:ri Nikawera:ke Four Directions of the Winds
Ononhkwa'shon:'a Herb Medicine
Okwire'shon:'a Trees
Otsi'ten'okon:'a Birds
Kontirio Wild Animals
Satahon'satat Listen

Kayeri Akweks Mohawk

Bio: Kayeri Akweks is an enrolled member of the Upper Mohawk, Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, Canada. She lives and works in Lawrence, Kansas, home of Haskell All Indian Nations University. A wide range of cultural and environmental experiences and principles inspire Kayeri Akweks' drawings, paintings, and prints. She draws upon Haudenosaunee environmental values; historical, archetypal, personal symbols; and transitional life moments. She researches historic and current NE Woodlands art forms to inform her own art making. Kayeri actively participates with Native artists communities in the US and Canada.

Statement: "I recognize that there are two cores of identity within me and at their fundamental, both have direct internal attachment to and beliefs in the land as a constant spiritual force. Indigenous people know things – the land gives authentic direction about how to live. The Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) view some of these natural laws as Original Instructions."



Gift to the Weasel Sisters, 6" x 6", Print

"In my experience, I've consistently found that plants will communicate concerning their healing properties, that lying directly next to the earth will comfort you and send love into your pain, that there is strengthening power in constantly expressing gratitude, that self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others is about cleaning one's own soul. Lately, I have added these: that love can and does heal anything and everything, that asking the Source in humility for forgiveness of daily missteps makes more love, clarity, and cleans the earth - and somehow helps ancestors who in turn are more available to assist me.

I was told by a Longhouse Faithkeeper to convey the principles. That is what I am trying to do."

Niiwaabandis I'm looking at a mirror image of myself / looking at myself
Gaaneniigaaniyaat Ones that have gone ahead / ancestors
Manitou Spirit

Christi Belcourt Métis

Bio: Christi Belcourt is a Métis (Otipemisiwak) visual artist with a deep respect for the traditions and knowledge of our people. She is the daughter of Métis rights leader Tony Belcourt and Judith Pierce Martin. She is a self-taught artist whose early interest in the floral beadwork patterns of Métis and First Nations women has led her on a journey of exploration into traditional beaded art, history, environmental concerns and contemporary issues encountered by Indigenous Peoples in modern times. The majority of her work explores and celebrates the beauty of the natural world and traditional Indigenous world-views on spirituality and natural medicines. Christi is a past recipient of awards from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Chalmers Family Fund and the Métis Nation of Ontario. Her stained glass piece "Giniigaaniimenaaning" was recently installed in Centre Block in Parliament Hill. Currently she is organizing the community based project Walking With Our Sisters to honour murdered or missing Indigenous women and girls.

Statement: "In the 1800's Métis began creating in large quantities of beaded items to support their families and because of this, we became known as "the flower beadwork people." Flower beadwork is one of the artistic legacies left for us by our ancestors. What began in 1993 as a simple attempt to transfer beadwork aesthetics onto canvas with paint has now become the artistic journey I've been on since. This journey has led me into the depths of understanding my own culture, our worldview, and spirituality as it relates to the natural world. This painting is called "This Painting is a Mirror" because it reflects back to the viewer all the beauty that is already within them. We are not separate from anything, we are born connected to the earth, with the capacity to love, to be kind, to be generous, to be gentle. As Odawa Elder Wilfred Peltier taught, "Everything we need to know is already inside of us."

christibelcourt.com



This Painting is a Mirror, 8' x 5', Acrylic

kijizonôgos-i passionnée | passionate
kijêniindam résolue | determined
anökite chasserresse | hunter
wakekitâs-âzo impatiente | impatient
kâwin silencieuse | quiet

Nathalie Bertin Métis

Bio: Nathalie Bertin (1969) originally hails from Toronto, Ontario, Canada. After working as a graphic designer for several years, Bertin began showing her art publicly in 2009. Bertin's style is often described as luminescent, energetic, bold and colourful. She is also fond of strong shapes and textures. She incorporates elements of her French and Algonquin heritage, such as symbols, beads or furs, in concepts that blend her two cultures. A consistent theme includes the Canadian fur trade culture and her role within it as a subsistence hunter.

Bertin's most recent projects are inspired from traditional storytelling and folk tales, some of which have been replicated by the Royal Canadian Mint onto collector coins for release in 2013, 2014 and 2015. In June 2010, Bertin was selected as an artist ambassador for the G20 Summit in Toronto, a volunteer position that garnered global media attention for Canadian artists from Muskoka. Her work can be found in collections of the Government of Manitoba, Government of Alberta, Métis Nation of Ontario, corporate organizations and private collectors across Canada, the US, Europe and Africa.

Indiginesse is Bertin's second curatorial concept and effort. Her first was a 2012 exhibition entitled *This Is My Song* at The Art Space in Huntsville, ON.

nathaliebertin.com



Empowerment, 40" x 30", acrylic on canvas. Received "Award of Merit" at the 2013 Juried Group Exhibition "Undefined", curator: Chantale Lavigne, Georgina Arts Centre, Sutton, ON

Statement: "My art is influenced as much from the environment around me as it is from my heritage. As an artist with European and First Nations roots, I am inspired by the art of my divergent cultures. My goal is to bring these cultural styles together into a cohesive visual language that is my own. One of the ways I fulfill this is through the use of the flowers as seen in some of the works. They are inspired by the floral beadwork that the young Métis and Native girls created as a means to participate in the fur trade economy. But they also serve the dual purpose of allegory in much the same way artists have used flowers for meaning throughout art history – only obvious to those in the know or those who ask questions."

Kanyen'keha Mohawk
'Nihstena Mother
Akhsosha Grandmother
My art is my language.

Lee Claremont Mohawk

Bio: "I am a visual storyteller. My work takes me on a spiritual journey that opens a door into the mysteries of creation. I love to play with colour in my work and I believe that colour is a great healer."

Lee Claremont is a Mohawk and Irish artist from the Grand River Six Nations territory in Oshweken, Ontario. Lee received her BFA (Honours) from the University of British Columbia and now resides in the Okanagan Valley in BC.

Lee's work is continually evolving and is an exploration of the traditions of her First Nations world view and the modern world. Lee Claremont's genre cannot be boxed or specifically, categorized. Her playful dance with colour and her imagery are fresh and alive. While her Mohawk ancestry is strongly evident it never supersedes her universality.

Lee Claremont's career has now spanned over three decades and within that time she has gained much respect and recognition. She has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally and her paintings can be found in many government, corporate and private collections. Lee has received many awards and the one she is most proud of is the Distinguished Alumni Award from Okanagan College where she first started her journey into the world of art. Recently she was commissioned to represent Canada with her art work for the Pan/Am Games 2015 in Toronto. She has been featured in a Bravo documentary "From the Spirit" and her work has been published in several magazine articles.

leeclaremont.com

Statement: "My work is an exploration of my relationship between my traditional First Nations heritage and the modern world. I think as an artist I have the opportunity and the responsibility to create works of art that speak to this issue.

My New Berry Picking Shoes is a statement about the stereotype images of Indigenous women that are still very much a part of today's society. We no longer are willing to accept the role of the 'Indian Princess' or despairing victims of troubled lives. We are more than that. We are doctors, lawyers, musicians, artists, writers, activists, scholars and much more. We are contemporary Indigenous women who will spend the weekend at a berry picking camp and on Monday we will be back at work in our various professions in today's world. We can thrive and keep ourselves balanced in our traditional cultures and then step into the contemporary world with all its challenges."



Rhythm of the Woodland People, 40"x30", Acrylic on gallery canvas

Bgoji Bzhiki Mishkiki Buffalo Medicine
Niizh Manidoowag Two Spirited
Bazgim Lover
Mzinbiigewnini Artist
Gwaashkwezid Full of Energy
Ngodoode Family
Dgwaagig Autumn

Raven Davis Ojibway

Bio: Raven Davis is an Anishanwbe (Ojibway) Aboriginal artist whose lineage stems from the Saulteaux Ojibway Nation in Manitoba. Their heritage also includes and Scottish and Irish blood attributed from their father. Raven is a multimedia and mixed media artist, traditional dancer and drummer. Recently her preferred visual art mediums has been gouache, acrylic, photography and a blend of dance, body exploration and natural materials. She is a trained new media/graphic designer, which is often reflected in her work. Raven's inspiration is derived from traditional Aboriginal folk art, craft, wildlife, artifacts, topography, cultural and political studies including gender and sexuality and people.

Raven has sat on boards that support the growth of art, crafts and cultural awareness and has assisted many Aboriginal artists in marketing and management of their artwork. In 2009 Raven was the recipient of the first ever industry voted award for an Aboriginal Tourism product in the cruise ship industry in Atlantic Canada, which included performance dance, art, history and culture. The following year, Raven was also nominated for an Aboriginal Business award for the Cape Breton Partnership. Raven's artwork can be found in corporate and private collections, and has been published in a wide range of print media.

ravensneststudio@gmail.com

A Captured Statistic, Photography



Statement: "Art is a medicine, a survival tool, a form of transferring traditional knowledge and stories. Art is our identity, our place and a nomadic sign of our presence on this earth. It is medicine as it helps healing others and ones self."

Art can communicate in any language and rarely demands full explanation. It just is. Art is for the people and speaks to the deepest, most inner consciousness of oneself and exploration. It evokes feelings and memories and induces emotional responses that remind us of our perceptions about beauty and what art means to each of us. Art and what makes it beautiful is not only in the eyes beholder, but also in the spirit and heart.

Art is something I create, heal from, promote in others and a way of living I have committed to. Art is what makes me appreciate this earth and its creation and what I'd like to share with you."

Mémère Grandmother
Nenookaasi Hummingbird
Oohpikihawaashoo Motherhood
La paarantii kaayash ooshchi Ancestors
Nihtawakiw Birth
Aykishchiitaymoot Pride
Katawashishiw Beautiful
Notay wahpatamik Adventure

Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk Métis

Bio: Alyssa was born in Winnipeg and is the eldest of four siblings. At age three, she began her musical studies on the violin where her passion for music started to unfold. She continued her studies at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, where she discovered her love for the viola. Alyssa received her bachelor's and her masters in viola performance from the Conservatoire de Lausanne, Switzerland. Her classical training led her to explore the fiddle music of her Métis heritage. Her mentorship with Ojibwe elder fiddler Lawrence 'Teddy Boy' Houle, lead her to collaborate with his brother James Flett in creating Oméigwessi, Reel Métis: A Tribute to Walter Flett, which won Best Fiddle and Best Instrumental Album at the 2008 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. Along with her brothers, Alyssa performs in her family group the Métis Fiddler Quartet. Their first album release, North West Voyage Nord Ouest reflects the beauty and diversity of the Indigenous fiddle traditions of Canada, received Best Traditional Album at the 2012 Canadian Folk Music Awards. Currently based in Toronto, Alyssa is a doctoral student of Music Interpretation at the Université de Montreal with Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot.

metisfiddlerquartet.com

Mémère le colibri

Statement: Able to fly both forwards and backwards, the Hummingbird symbolizes the cohesive, simultaneous nature of our past melanging with our future. *Memère le colibri* is an exploration of generational memory through music, song and theatre. A collaboration with director and performer, Jess Salgueiro as well as visual artist Jacinthe Roy, this solo performance work will be a celebration of the strong women of my Red River ancestry. A time when perseverance, ingenuity and a deep respect for country and community created the conditions for our nation's naissance. When the duties of motherhood did not exist purely in the confines of a home but instead were as expansive and far-reaching as our northern terrain. Stories will be of the various impressive habitants which fostered an incredibly thriving settlement, including that of Marie Anne Gaboury, the grandmother of Louis Riel and the first white woman to arrive in the west.



Photo credit: Kyle Burton

Doᓃąsı ıghą tles k'enats'edı horelyu nók'é bet'á dēne ıą dadathēą
hası thilé tth'ú, ıeyer dé nuhēdele tı'es dēlé hası.

The breakneck pace of tar sands development and the practice of fracking are making sacrifices of ordinary people, and we all bleed oil now.

(The artist would like to acknowledge Dene Elder Allan Adam for the translations.)

Lee Deranger Anishnabe

Bio: Lee Deranger was born and raised in Toronto, and has spent most of her adult life in Alberta. Her Anishnabe heritage is an important part of her daily life and is reflected in her work including porcupine quillwork or other traditional art forms along with her paintings. She was fortunate to have been mentored and taught to paint by the late Don Nixon throughout her childhood well into her teen years. Deranger currently resides in Calgary where she often teaches traditional art forms. She donates art work to charitable causes and speaks out through her art about environmental issues, especially those affecting the water. Her husband is Dene from Fort Chipewyan, the community downstream from the oil sands.

Statement: “50 years ago, you couldn't criticize churches, and you pretty much had to belong to one. Today in Canada, we are not allowed to criticize the oil industry. It appears to be the new religion. I dreamed this piece... it is a reflection on what we are worshipping in our society and how we are allowing the Oil Companies to sacrifice all of us. The cross appears to be made from 4" well casing. The figure on the cross is bleeding oil from his wounds and the cross has \$66.60 in Canadian currency attached to it, to get that whole “666” thing going on. He wears a white plastic bag (oil by-product) and a crown of barbed wire. There are 30 teardrop shaped black crystals dripping from the wounds, representing the 30 pieces of silver for the betrayal. The whole piece is framed by what appears to be a piece of 42" steel pipeline.”

kokumlee@shaw.ca | 403-271-9024



Photo credit: Metis photographer Jody Marie Read

Lita Fontaine

Dakota, Anishinaabe & Métis

Bio: Fontaine is a Mother, sundancer, sister, arts educator and visual artist. Her mother Rose Anne Fontaine's band affiliation is Long Plain, her father's, Sagkeeng First Nation. Fontaine was born in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and grew up in Winnipeg's North End. Ever since childhood, Fontaine always enjoyed the act of creation like drawing, building, sewing and collecting recyclables.

During Fontaine's late twenties, the creative urge to become an artist became quite strong. Being a single mother at the time she decided to return to school and enrolled in the University of Manitoba's School of Art in the Diploma program where she developed and hone her skills and abilities in drawing and black and white photography. She later pursued an higher education at the University of Regina, Visual Arts Faculty where she attained a Master of Fine Arts, (M.F.A.) specializing in Inter-media and, as some may know as Mixed-media.

Fontaine has exhibited her art in several solo and group exhibitions and her work can be found on murals in Winnipeg, Manitoba and in personal art collections. professional art practice. Fontaine's practice is predominately studio based and her methodology in the area of arts education is hands on, where creative processes play an integral role in learning. Fontaine believes the visual arts acts as a catharsis that nourishes emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual growth while making art.

mikinaakikwe@yahoo.ca

Statement: "Ever since my girlhood days and going to powwows with my family, I always became so captivated by the dresses I saw during these celebratory ceremonies. The Plains Women Traditional Cloth Dress, the colors, the intricate beadwork, the designs and motifs captured my girlhood imagination. I too have prayed for such a dress. Most of all I think of the honor and responsibility attached for owning such a vessel. For me the Traditional Plains Cloth Dress encompasses a protective mantle to whomever wears it. I also envision its shapes of a tipi of the great northern plains, the polka dot - the stars. My artwork carries cultural symbols from my Dakota/Anishinaabe cultural connections."



Star Dress One, Cotton Fabric /Thread / Bias Tape, 2014

Niwaabamidiz I seek myself (my life journey, inwardness)
Mitig Tree (my connection to mother to me to universe)
Mush kawizi Strong
Mino ikwe Good Woman
Miiguan Feather (spirit connector)
Ma'iingan Wolf (my clan; family and kin)
Ninga Mother
Mishomis Grandmother

LauraLee K Harris Oji-Cree

Bio: Toronto born artist LauraLee K. Harris is of mixed blood Anishinaabe ancestry, Ojibwe, Dakota and Cree, Chipewyan, Montagnais, Assiniboine, Métis, French, Irish and English. Harris studied at OCAD, has exhibited her work nationally and internationally in over a hundred shows. Selectively: Tom Thomson Gallery, Woodland Cultural Museum, Soho N.Y., Hatathli Museum Dine College in Arizona, Period Gallery in Nebraska. Her work has won Honours and Awards including *Award of Excellence* in Omaha, Nebraska. Her life and works have been studied in Catholic Secondary schools as Canadian content raising awareness to a white washed history through her book of paintings and poetry entitled *Spoken Trees*. Her work has been studied nationally and internationally in universities, and used in literacy programs in the Nanaimo Correctional Centre. Harris was commissioned to create 3 wood pieces to be transferred onto glass for the Buffalo Fort Erie Peace Bridge Authority Building. The Six Nation's *Peace Maker* became the welcome windows into Canada from the US border, raising awareness to the original peoples of that land and the teaching of peace. A documentary of her life and work was produced by Earth Magic Media, a dene production company, that aired on BRAVO and APTN. Her recent work *'Nibi Anishinaabe kwewag ~ Water and the Women* brings awareness of and was dedicated to the missing and murdered Anishinaabe women in 2010, where it was honoured with the support of the Chiefs of Ontario at the Tom Thomson Gallery. Harris' work seeks truth for the earth and her occupants connecting through the tree nation and Mother Earth.

lauraleekharris.com



Anishinaabe Kwe, 12" x 6", acrylic on wood

Mamatowisowin The capacity to connect to the life force that makes anything possible.

Statement: "The land as mother, the moon as grandmother, the heart-in-mind-of-family is the soul of women, mothers and grandmothers. We are one, with respect to the earth, water, women, the places of Creation, we are the work of many. Our creation stories speak from that place of governance in which all contributed. Our hierarchal paternalistic world we live in today, seems imbalanced as we watch dictator government and corporation poison and destroy life in waters, wars, gmo foods and resource profiteering. The men's gifts of protection and providing are overpowering our mother earth while the women's gifts of heart, insights and her voice are sadly missing and desperately needed. I have dedicated this series to those Stolen Sisters, our mothers, daughters, grandmothers who have been murdered or missing and to their families who wait for resolve.

English words don't adequately describe this art practice. Willie Ermine, Cree elder and scholar comes closest with; "mamatowisowin defines the methodology used in a quest for vision, where the seeker/artist begins to explore his/her own existence subjectively. By placing ones self into a direct stream of consciousness, the seeker/ the knower / the artist will begin to unfold a greater, inherent understanding of self, by utilizing the methodologies of mamatowisowin. The creative life force connecting all of creation and the human capacity to tap into that force by using the mind, the senses, and the body". The Circle Unfolds - First Nations Education in Canada."

Boodawedaa Lets build a fire
Anishinaabemowin Ojibway language
Dadibaajimo She tells a story
Bimaadiziwin The good life

Maria Hupfield Ojibway

Bio: Based in Brooklyn New York Maria Hupfield is Canadian and a member of Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario. Hupfield is a 2014 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painting and Sculpture Grant and the AIM residency at the Bronx Museum. Her performance "Contain That Force: 7 Solo Acts" was presented by the National Gallery of Canada for the exhibition "Sakahan: International Indigenous Art", with SAW Video and Media Arts, Ottawa Canada. She performed "All is Moving" in response to the paintings of Artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith at Accola Griefen Gallery, Chelsea NY and participated in *A Conversation on Performance Art: Women Redrawing/Performance*, organized by The Feminist Art Project at SOHO20 Chelsea NY. She has shown at the Museum of Arts and Design New York, Toronto Power Plant, and 7a*11d International Performance Festival. Her project "An Artist Tour Guide" was commissioned by The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, New York. She is currently completing a traveling solo exhibition funded by the Canada Council of the Arts.

mariahupfield.wordpress.com

Statement: "I want to be more present in my body. It is through my work that I insert myself into new conversations with objects functioning as tools; jingle boots track body rhythms, silver bones quantify cultural memory and fringe gloves embody grace through movement. Working across disciplines I create human-scale sculptures to locate the body in relationship to self, object and place. These sculptures are based on everyday objects that I modify or hand-make and frequently activate in performance, photography and video installation. My work is informed by Anishinaabe (Ojibway) philosophy, artistic practice, and culture. By reexamining the items we carry on our person historically and in the recent past I seek a deeper understanding of the objects in use today and how they reflect our values of one-another and our place in the cosmos."



Counterpoint: Fountain. C-print, 20" x 30", 2007

Onizhishiwin Beauty
Mashkawaatiziwin Strength
Zhiibinewiziwin Resiliency
Baapiwin Laughter

Nadya Kwandibens Anishinaabe

Bio: Nadya Kwandibens is Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) from the Northwest Angle #37 First Nation in Ontario. She is a self-taught, dynamic, touring photographer, specializing in natural light portraiture.

In October 2008, she founded Red Works and in the same year began photographing a series entitled Concrete Indians. Since then, Nadya has travelled extensively, photographing people and events throughout Canada and U.S.A. She has worked for numerous groups and organizations including: Indspire, First Nations Health Authority, Full Circle First Nations Performance, imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Native Earth Performing Arts, Centre for Indigenous Theatre, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Big Soul Productions Inc.; and several individual artists, actors, musicians and role models.

Her photography is featured in numerous publications, websites, and media including CBC's 8th Fire documentary series. Nadya was an invited artist-in-residence for the Native American Indigenous Cinema & Arts online exhibition, and has exhibited in group and solo shows in: Toronto and Thunder Bay ON, Edmonton and Calgary AB, Seattle WA, Cleveland OH, Boulder CO, St. Charles, Chicago, Aurora and Evanston IL.

Nadya continues to tour each year for photo-sessions and to photograph Concrete Indians series portraits and also delivers empowering photography workshops for youth across Canada. She currently resides in Westbank, BC.

redworks.ca



Left: *Concrete Indians, 10 Indigenous Lawyers*, 24" x 36", Photography. Right: *Outtakes, 10 Indigenous Lawyers*, 24" x 36", Photography



Statement: "We, as Indigenous people, are often portrayed in history books as Nations once great; in museums as Nations frozen stoic; in the media as Nations forever troubled. These images can be despairing; however, my goal seeks to steer the positive course. If our history is a shadow, let this moment serve as light. We are musicians, lawyers, doctors, mothers and sons. We are activists, scholars, dreamers, fathers and daughters. Let us claim ourselves now and see that we are, and will always be great, thriving, balanced civilizations capable of carrying ourselves into that bright new day."

Gwi cuumillatstun uswillranka kingumni

I am like my ancestors, my children come after me

Tanya Lukin Linklater Alutiiq

Bio: Tanya Lukin Linklater originates from the Native Villages of Port Lions and Afognak in the Kodiak archipelago of southwestern Alaska. Based in northern Ontario, her practice spans experimental choreography, performance, installation, text, and video. Tanya's works have been performed/exhibited at Images Festival + Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (Toronto), VI Mostra Internacional de Videodanca Sao Carlos (Brasil), Open Space (Victoria), Museum of Contemporary Native Art (Santa Fe), Latitude 53's Visualeyez (Edmonton), grunt gallery (Vancouver), Culver Center of the Arts (California), Expanse Movement Arts Festival (Edmonton), Near North Mobile Media Lab + White Water Gallery (Ontario), and TRIBE (Saskatoon). She studied at University of Alberta (M.Ed. 2003) and Stanford University (A.B. Honours 1998), where she received the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship & Louis Sudler Prize in Creative and Performing Arts. Tanya was awarded the Chalmers Professional Development Grant in 2010. She was nominated for the K.M. Hunter Artist Award in Dance in 2011 and received the K.M. Hunter Artist Award in Literature in 2013. She has collaborated with Duane Linklater on two projects: *grain(s)* in 2013 and *Up River* (2012). Her work has been generously supported by Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. In 2014 she will exhibit at SBC Gallery (Montreal), Urban Shaman (Winnipeg), and at the Museum of Contemporary Art Santiago.

tanyalukinlinklater.com



Statement about *unspoken-ness*: In 2009, the artist began researching specific historical events that affected the Alutiiq peoples of Kodiak Island, Alaska, where she originates from. This research has compelled her to build a body of work (text, performance, experimental choreography) that investigates specific histories in relation to the present moment. In 2012, she developed *In Memoriam*, an experimental short video that becomes a meditative process of locating, excavating and tracing memory in the body. This video was supported by the work of camera operator/editor, Duane Linklater, and dancer/co-choreographer, Carla Soto. *unspoken-ness* builds upon the artist's research and body of work by employing a series of video stills.

Shown above: *unspoken-ness*, 10.1825"x18", Video still mounted to dibond

Yah teyako'ta:'onh Sleep deprived
 Teyakote'nikonhrawnryes Day dreamer (someone's mind travels)
 Yakoshari:ne Obsessive compulsive
 Teyontenonhwera:tons Thankful
 Tyako'nikonratihenthos Curious (it pulls at someone's mind)
 (The artist would like to acknowledge George Doxtater and Brian Maracle for the translations.)

Shelley Niro Mohawk

Bio: Shelley Niro is a member of the Six Nations Reserve, Mohawk, Turtle Clan. Niro was born in Niagara Falls, NY, 1954; currently living in Brantford, Ontario. She graduated from the Ontario College of Art with honours in visual arts and received her MFA from the University of Western Ontario. In 2001, she became an Eiteljorg recipient at the Museum of Western and Indian Arts, Indiana, Indianapolis. She has participated in the Women in The Director's Chair Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts, 2003. In the fall of 2006, Shelley was selected to be a fellow with Women in Film and GM Accelerator Grants. Niro's works of art can be found in the Museum of Civilization, the National Gallery and the Contemporary Photography Museum of Canada and the Portrait Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario. The Rockwell Museum, Coming New York, the University of Seattle, Library and the National Museum of the American Indian. In 2012 Shelley became the Aboriginal Laureate to receive the Aboriginal Arts Award through the Ontario Arts Council.

shelleyniro.ca

Statement about Solace:
 "The last two years have been a time of great contemplation. The issues of The Missing and The Murdered brings such a heavy reality to our existences and especially to the ones we know who live in conflict. The energetic Idle No More movement made everyone know that our combined voices do make a difference. The long cold harsh winter has given me a chance to think about our environment and how can I contribute to make it a better reassuring place.

Asking myself these questions, my creative mind redirects itself to wanting to making pieces that someone will look at finding peacefulness and solace. "



Selected images from Solace shown left to right: *Beauty*, *Living Water*, *Hiding Place*, 62"x24" (unframed), Photography

Mshkooziwin Powerful
Nsidaawendam Sorrowful
Maashse Broken
Maamiikwaabminaagwad Beautiful
Noojimo-win Healing

Janice Toulouse Ojibwe

Bio: Painter, Instructor, Public Speaker. Anishinabe kwe from northern Ontario, divides her time between Canada and France. Exhibitions and International public collections in Canada, United States, and Europe. Awarded Smithsonian residency in 2002, exhibited this work in New York in 2006. Graduate 1979, Emily Carr College of Art, Vancouver. Master of Fine Arts 1985, Concordia University, Montreal. Former instructor at Emily Carr University. Lived in France in the 90's and exhibits there often, was represented by the first Native Art gallery in Paris. Her personal vision combines her experiences as an Indigenous Anishinabe Kwe with the language of modern art and abstract painting.

Statement about The Massacre Painting: “A metaphor of all massacres afflicted on Indigenous people in colonial history. In Paris in 2010 I saw the exhibition Crime et Châtiment (Crime and Punishment) at Musée d'Orsay. I began to reflect on what I knew to be a crime, Genocide. What was the punishment for this crime to my nation, to other nations, to Indigenous people in colonial history in our homelands. Images of the massacre at Wounded Knee came to me, and several films I came across like Little Big Horn, had the same image, a set designed to depict this massacre of women and children in 1890. This image seemed to follow me and I knew I had to paint it. I noticed the film set image did not depict the massacre as being evident that these were women and children that were brutally massacred by the 16th cavalry, I wanted to show this.”

janicetoulouse.weebly.com

The Massacre Painting,
acrylic on canvas, 54"x72", 2012



“I remembered, a woman I met in Pine Ridge, and her words to me before leaving her home was, “I hope you will let the world know of our history here and the poverty we live with today”. In 1998 while traveling on a road trip home that became an art documentation titled The Traveling Alter Native Medicine Show, I was welcomed to spend the night in a tipi at the home of a family on Pine Ridge reservation. I heard the massacre in the thunderstorm that night, the horses galloping, children's cries, women's screams, clashing of metal, guns shooting, and then silence.

This is the image of our history in the Americas that resides in all Indigenous nations, from the woodland Anishinabek, to the plains Lakota, to the west coast rainforest that was once vastly populated. The more Indigenous people become immersed in a global cultural

consciousness, the more prevalent it is that our treaties be upheld and our traditions be continued, from elaborate ceremonies to a silent prayer. It is imperative that we never lose our respect toward mother earth and

our inherent knowledge given to us from our ancestors of this land. The global world that are welcomed here must respect this traditional law, to preserve our humanity and the continued survival of the earth.”

Walking With Our Sisters & The Missing and/or Murdered Indigenous Women Turtle Island

About: Over 800+ native women and girls in Canada have been reported missing or have been murdered in the last 20 years. Many vanished without a trace with inadequate inquiry into their disappearance or murders paid by the media, the general public, politicians and even law enforcement. This is a travesty of justice.

Walking With Our Sisters is by all accounts a massive commemorative art installation comprised of 1,726+ pairs of moccasin vamps (tops) created and donated by hundreds of caring and concerned individuals to draw attention to this injustice. The large collaborative art piece will be made available to the public through selected galleries and locations. The work exists as a floor installation made up of beaded vamps arranged in a winding path formation on fabric and includes cedar boughs. Viewers remove their shoes to walk on a path of cloth alongside the vamps.

Each pair of vamps (or “uppers” as they are also called) represents one missing or murdered Indigenous woman. The unfinished moccasins represent the unfinished lives of the women whose lives were cut short. Together the installation represents all these women; paying respect to their lives and existence on this earth. They are not forgotten. They are sisters, mothers, aunties, daughters, cousins, grandmothers, wives and partners. They have been cared for, they have been loved, they are missing and they are not forgotten.

Indigenesse is dedicated to the missing and/or murdered indigenous women across Canada and the US.

walkingwithoursisters.ca



Walking With Our Sisters installation (detail) in Parry Sound, ON,
Keepers: Christine King and Tracey Pawis
January 2014

Indiginesse

May 7 - June 28, 2014 | Aurora Cultural Centre



The concept for this exhibition was developed and curated by Nathalie Bertin, without the assistance of grants or sponsorships. Special thanks are extended to the staff of the Aurora Cultural Centre for their commitment and enthusiasm for this "labour of love"; without their support this exhibition would not have been possible. Special thanks are also extended to the Town of Aurora for support of the arts in the community.



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Nathalie Bertin

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