



SPACE

September 25 to October 31, 2015

GALLERY

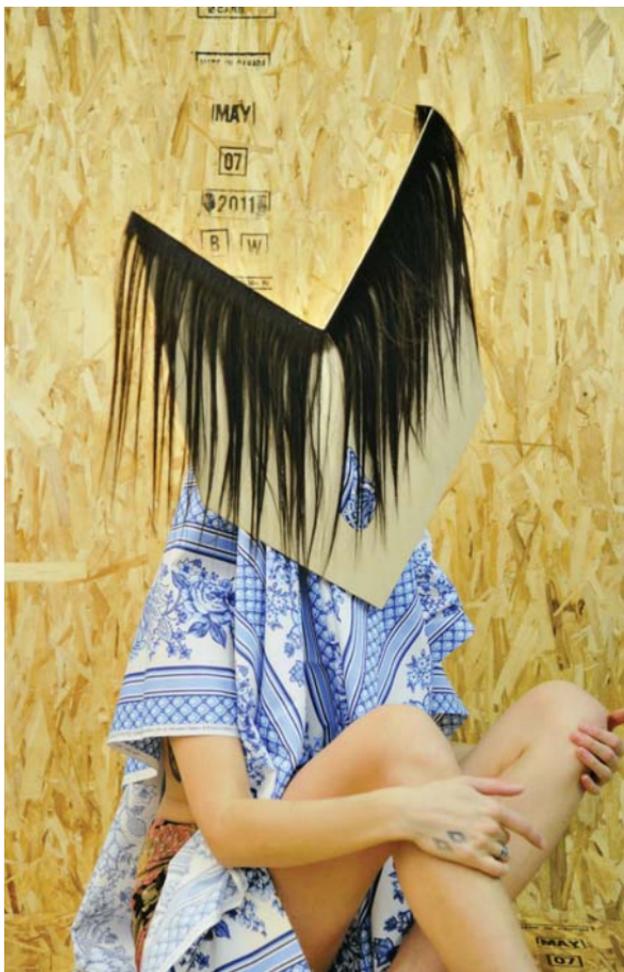


original. indigenous

Material Experiments

**Lance Belanger, Michael Belmore, Wally Dion,
Maria Hupfield, madeskimo, Kevin McKenzie,
Shirley Moorhouse, Jeneen Frei Njootli**

Curated by Danielle Printup



Contemporary Spirit Regalia: Shift, Jeneen Frei Njootli, 2013, 300 dpi (7"x11"), digital image (JPEG)

Reception & Curator Talk, Friday, October 16th, 5:30-7:30

Presented by A Space Gallery and imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival
In Partnership with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Co-Presented by Aboriginal Curatorial Collective

A SPACE GALLERY . 401 RICHMOND STREET WEST . SUITE 110

Biographies

Lance Belanger is a Maliseet artist and member of the Tobique Band in New Brunswick. He has worked in the visual arts for twenty-five years exhibiting widely in solo and group exhibitions across the planet. Belanger has collaborated with artist Kitty Mykka, creating site-specific temporal works in nature in North America, Central America, North Africa and Europe.

Michael Belmore is an Anishnaabe artist from Upsala, Ontario. He graduated in Sculpture/Installation from the Ontario College of Art in 1994. As an artist Belmore utilizes a variety of media in his practice to explore the use of technology and how it has affected our relationship with nature. His work has been exhibited across Canada and features in numerous permanent and private collections.

Wally Dion (Salteaux) is a visual artist living and working in Binghamton, New York. He is a member of Yellow Quill First Nation. 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.

Maria Hupfield (Anishnaabekwe) is based in Brooklyn, New York and is a member of Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario. She has exhibited and performed at numerous galleries and festivals worldwide. Maria recently travelled to Venice, Italy to perform her latest project *Jiimaan/Canoe* as part of the exhibition *Ga na tha*. Maria Hupfield performs with the collective Social Health Performance Art Club in Brooklyn.

madeskimo, a.k.a. Geronimo Inutiq, is an Inuk electronic artist, music producer and DJ. His practice draws on the use of instruments, digital and analogue synthesizers as well as the remixing and processing of samples from a large variety of sources including traditional Inuit, Aboriginal, modern electronic and urban music in order to create an experimental platform. His multimedia works have been shown in group exhibitions across Canada and internationally.

Kevin McKenzie is a Cree/Métis artist from Regina, Saskatchewan. In 2003 he produced a series of buffalo skulls cast in polyurethane resin that received international attention. Kevin currently is living and working in Regina, where his multi-disciplinary art practice is constantly evolving.

Shirley Moorhouse (Inuk) is a visual artist from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. In her paintings, drawings, wall hangings and installation art she explores boundaries, both real and imagined, on the flexibility and strength of women and family, the environment and citizenship. Her textile works often combine traditional techniques (embroidery, beadwork and tufting) and materials with more contemporary found objects.

Jeneen Frei Njootli is a Vuntut Gwitchin artist, currently pursuing her Masters of Fine Art as an uninvited guest on unceded Musqueam territory at the University of British Columbia. Her work has exhibited in galleries, casinos, bars, the bush, cultural centres and museums internationally.

Danielle Printup is an Algonquin and Onondaga curator from Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg. She received a Bachelor of Honours with a major in Art History from the University of Guelph in 2012. Danielle interned at the National Gallery of Canada before completing the Aboriginal Training Program in Museum Practices at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. Danielle has worked at Galerie SAW Gallery and is a member of the Available Light Screening Collective. She is currently based in Ottawa and works at the Aboriginal Art Centre.

Special thank you and appreciation to Lee-Ann Martin, who served as Curatorial Advisor to Danielle Printup.

Material Experiments

Essay by Danielle Printup

Innovation. Adaptation. Experimentation.

These concepts have been inherent in Indigenous worldviews since beyond memory or record. Indigenous cultures have been able to move through time and space with the adaptation of new materials encountered through land migration and colonization. These encounters presented Indigenous peoples with different ways of thinking and creating. The inspired experimentation resulted in advanced forms that portrayed the dynamic and ever-evolving cultures of Turtle Island (North America). *Material Experiments* explores these forms through selected works of art which are housed at the Aboriginal Art Centre (ACC) at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in Gatineau, Quebec. The artists presented in this exhibition have challenged themselves by utilizing new materials, techniques and processes. Through this experimentation these artists have created innovative and thought provoking works that demonstrate that Indigenous art is not static, but evolves and continues to adapt with its people.

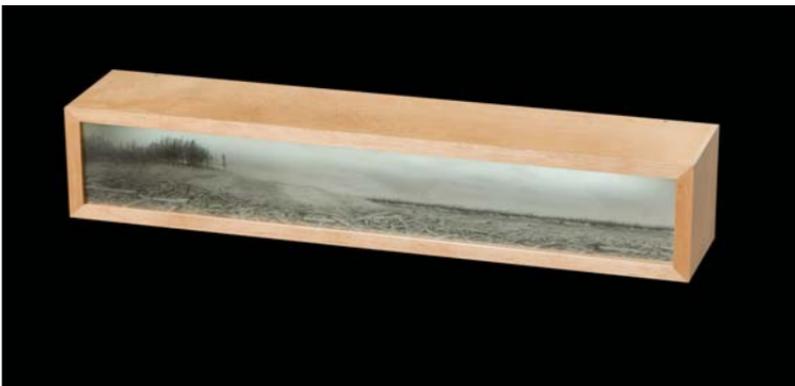
Contemporary Spirit Regalia: Shift and *White Swan* are a part of a larger body of work by **Jeneen Frei Njootli** that looks at the current complexities of Indigeneity in Canada. Her practice is an on-going investigation into how textiles and technologies are navigated in Indigenous livelihoods. Her work contemplates the relationship Indigenous peoples make with these materials and explores how these relationships continue to bend, fold, and shift.



White Swan, Jeneen Frei Njootli, 2013

In his plexiglass light box, *Acculturated*, **Michael Belmore** examines how we conceptualize the idea of land as well as how we physically live on it. This medium is used to provide an industrialized lens to illustrate how we relate to our changing landscape. His hand drawn graphite images add a personal element to the work, locating him directly inside. Through this, he acknowledges that we are tied to our landscape and as that landscape continues to change, so must we.

Shirley Moorhouse's embroidered wall hanging *Pure Energy* includes imagery from the past, present and future of Inuit cosmology. She reflects on this through the use of both



Acculturated, Michael Belmore, 1996



Pure Energy, Shirley Moorhouse, 2003



Cultural Transition, Lance Belanger, 1989

natural and synthetic materials that she lays down on black woollen cloth. The pieces, although seemingly random in placement, begin to build a narrative. There is an excitement created through this process as each element of beadwork, applique, hide and embroidery come together to guide her understanding of her Inuit ancestry.

Wally Dion creates a shield made of recycled circuit boards with the Morning Star motif in *Shield Wall*. The circuit board pieces are cut, shaped and then pieced together, a difficult process due to the rigidity of the material. For the Plains people the Morning Star is a symbol for the dawning of a new day, signifying a new beginning. It was painted on buffalo hide worn in ceremony prior to European contact. Through colonization the Plains people began to replace traditional materials with imported ones and Plains women began making quilted blankets with the Morning Star motif. The symbol of the Morning Star and the strength this image resonates has transcended through millennia, continuing to take on new forms and thus constantly creating new beginnings.

In his audio-visual work, *MEDIUM*, commissioned for this exhibition, **madeskimo** seeks to captivate the notion of communicating personal and collective identity through both literal and abstract means. Using digitally treated video, archival images, and an electronic audio composition, he finds contemporary courses to carry his language and culture forward. With this work he creates a meeting place where time is fluid. He merges the past with the future in an encounter in the present.

Maria Hupfield continuously integrates new materials and objects into her cross-disciplinary body of work. In *Maria's Measured Value: Marianne Nicholson*, she examines the multiple functions and values embodied in these materials. The work is the result of correspondence between her and Marianne Nicholson over the past few years and investigates different forms

of monetary exchange. Here, industrial felt is met with objects that are imbued with Indigenous history and cultural knowledge.

In *Resurrection*, **Kevin McKenzie** re-introduces the buffalo skull, a spiritual icon for the Plains peoples. Here, the buffalo skull, which has been traditionally used in ceremony becomes juxtaposed with the industrial. This being the first time working in polyurethane resin, he challenges himself by working with a dramatic new medium.



MEDIUM, madeskimo, 2015, video installation. Collection of the artist.



Shield Wall, Wally Dion, 2008



Measured Value: Marianne Nicolson, Maria Hupfield, 1 Jan 2014

The spiritual nature of the buffalo skull is not necessarily lost but instead takes on a new form through this material.

Lance Belanger's mixed media piece, *Cultural Transition*, designates a new interpretation of a 'traditional' material. The sealskin pelt is representative of a natural material deeply rooted in the functionality of Indigenous peoples. He seeks to explore this material beyond its intended purpose in order to find other ways fur can be used and what alternative meanings can be created when exhibited through varying contexts. Here the fur is used alongside computer chip boards presenting two stories of two separate cultures that come together to form a new narrative.

Material Experiments resonates the spirit of innovation and the boundlessness of Indigenous artistic expression. The works presented in this exhibition demonstrate that experimentation has and will always be a part of Indigenous ways of being, as artists will continually find ways to make their worldviews relevant to today's language. Indigenous expression can change, innovate, and adapt. It has no constant form. Yet it exists constantly.



Resurrection, Kevin McKenzie, 2003



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