

CURRENT TERRAIN

**Bruno Canadien, Brenda Draney, Jessie Ray Short,
Adrian Stimson, Alberta Rose W.**

Curated by Ociciwan Contemporary Art Collective

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Bruno Canadien, *Fancy That, #1 Northern Canadian Wilderness*, 2018,
Acrylic, flagging tape, hardware, satin ribbon on board.

Reception Tuesday September 18 from 6 - 8 pm

Performance by Adrian Stimson Tuesday September 18 at 6:30 pm

Curator & Artist Talk Friday October 19 at 6:30 pm

Proudly presented by A Space Gallery and imagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival

Sponsored by Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council,
Toronto Arts Council, Vtape, and Native Women in the Arts

Curatorial Statement

Artists living on the land now known as Alberta continue to contribute to conversations of contemporary art both nationally and internationally. The province has a rich history of Indigenous artists leading the way, making connections between territory and site through the materiality and criticality of their diverse practices. This exhibition investigates a range of works by Indigenous artists currently living in Alberta demonstrating the vitality of contemporary art in the province.

Each of the artists' work activates Alberta's variable territories and geographies from the boreal forest, the great plains, the vast array of mountain ranges from the foothills to the badlands, all connected by extensive bodies of water. While some artists consider site and relationship of land to family, others explore the ways in which the landscape has been altered by colonialism, capitalism and resource extraction. Overall, this exhibition considers the intersection of land, ecology, and relationality to and within Alberta.

Rolling Hills of Prairie Grasses as Exquisite as Rainforest

By Nicole Kelly Westman

A fiery hue settles in as a sooty sun sets, creating a light similar to that of a sodium vapour street lamp. The apocalyptic light bathes everyone in a flattering glow while a basic question is proposed to a group of peers: "Is fire bad?" The binary presumed in this positioning seems abruptly inadequate. I refrain from answering but think to myself "For whom is fire bad?"

For humans the billowing smoke, poor air quality, and loss of property results in a palpable concern for a future smothered by smoulder. Yet these burns are necessary for the shedding of canopies and create a potential for new growth and robust biodiversity in the wooded areas of the subarctic and boreal forests native to Alberta. The lodgepole pine requires combustion in order for their overly durable cones to burst open and expel seeds. After the flames are extinct these budding coniferous trees share space with berry shrubs, willows, grasses, mycelia and leafy deciduous trees to naturally alter the context of the forest.

We too should look to the potentialities within the naturally occurring cleanse of the forest floor as a metaphor for rejuvenation that makes space for a more delicate presence rather than certain permanence. To reject colonial dispositions of conquering and to listen to the histories surrounding us. To find new feminized voices that are both humble and confident in order to reclaim our positionings in this place. This is not



Jessie Ray Short, still from *Sweet Night*, 2016



Brenda Draney, *Cutline*, 2018, watercolour on paper scrolls

to disavow the challenges within the chaos of fire but for us to reposition ourselves so that we may hear the needs of our land and slow the pace of our reactions in order to analyze our emotionally derived responses in the face of what we claim as disaster.

We need to listen to the land in order to destabilize our paternalized positionings. In the ways we have removed our responsibilities and disconnected from our understandings of the cyclical changes unique to this land. A pristine example of this lies in the prestige of the national park for which we must idly obey the imposed rules which frame us as spectators. Banff National Park was established two decades prior to Alberta's entrance into Confederation and holds the prominence of being Canada's first national park. With the privilege of being the first comes the expectation of setting precedent, and through the guise of the rulings designated upon this place humans are no longer incorporated as carers, cultivators or harvesters. In the legislation upheld by the park authority there exists an erasure of Indigenous epistemologies that hold particular intimacies to the specifics of place. Through the segregation of park boundaries we have, innocently or not, cordoned off a section of land to designate as a sanctuary. But can there be solace on the Crown Land leased to industry for extraction or in the commodification of our watersheds or in the desecration of our natural prairie grasses?

I am unsettled by the finite boundaries we have claimed to protect. Again an oversimplification exists in the binary division of land we deem

sacred and the land we deem ripe for sacrifice. In the space between the marsh and the tailings pond is there a knowledge that we cannot access because the ego induced by the anthropocene has equipped us with enough academically derived promises of progress to relieve our guilty burden. There is an insufficiency in the designation of these taxonomies, in the water we protect and the fresh water we blast into the earth to frack. Are we listening to the land's trembling response as she quivers with instability in the face of our greed induced exploitations? How do we adapt to a stance of reciprocity so that we can hold care for the knowledge embedded in the geological history of oil? If capitalism were not seduced by oil would the tar sands have been considered a site of ancestral knowledge of such significance that they too could be tended for by the policies of governing bodies? Can we be so bold as to question our aesthetic bias when designating sites of significance?

And so I ask you to slow your pace and confront your bias and, as a political action, to refuse positionalities of blame. To consider the care put forth by these artists to defend the places they claim as home. To recognize the emotional and invisible labours of Indigenous bodies to protect the places that government has not. To claim your own responsibilities and refrain from the ease of pointing fingers with accusations of blame. In this time when Indigenous voices are uprising to fight for a decolonized future how do we all recognize the actions of our discourse and symbiotically support each other to find potential ways to secure less destructive futures? Can we trigger our minds to reconsider rolling hills of prairie grasses as exquisite as rainforests rather than barren plots? Can we consider the courage of the buffalo as it finds its footing in a place that is both foreign and familiar while it gently reclaims an area to which its histories are abundant? With the complications imposed by these questions we must look forward to an unclear path of missteps and fumbles as we collate collective voices to move forward with both an expectation for timely unity and confrontation. We dedicated too much time between oscillating perspectives of vilifying and victimizing this land but now is the time for us to refrain from asserting our assumptions and listen to the land so that we may in turn look to her anew.

Nicole Kelly Westman is a visual artist of Métis and Icelandic descent. Existing beyond the binary definitive of a specific medium, Nicole Kelly Westman has had the pleasure and privilege to be curated into exhibitions by remarkable females including: Peta Rake, Kristy Trinier, and cheyanne turions. Westman holds a BFA from Emily Carr University.



Adrian Stimson, *Bison Heart III*, 2007, Oil on canvas

**ayâpatinawa paskwâwaskosiya
miyonâkwanwa tâpiskôc misisakâwa**

By Nicole Kelly Westman

Translated to Plains Cree by Dorothy Thunder

ehiskotewi–itasinâsot pîsim kâpahkisimok, wâsenâkwan tâpiskôc pimohceskanâs kâwâsaskotenikan. pikwâwiyahk kihkâyâsiwak ekakwecimihcik peyakwaya ayisiniyiwak: “iskotew cî mâyâtan?” kahisinîswasteki namoya tâp’ we kwayask. namwâc ninaskomon mâka omisinititeyihten “awîna ohci iskotew emâyâtahk?”

ayisiyiniwak wâneyihtamihikowak kâmisikaskâptâtehk, namoya kakîmiyoyehetotamihk iyikohk ekaskâpâtehk. mâka keyâpic nitaweyicikâtew ohci wanaskwatanaskwa kamiyo–ohpikiki ekwa kamaskawâskosicik ita kâhohpikicik kâsakâwaskâhk kîwetinohk ekwa mistikwâskweyâhk Alberta. oskâhcakowak piko kasaskahohcik waskwetoya katawipayicik ekwa kamanipayicik kistikâcikanak. kâkîsisaskitepayik ôki sâkipakâwimîtosak ohpikiwak ita kâhohpikiki mînis nîpisewahtikosa, nîpisiya, maskosiya, ita ewasaskwetiwahk ekwa kânîpîwicik mîtosak pîtos isinâkwan kâsakâhk.

Kîstanaw piko kakiskisimitotamahk kesimeskoci–ohpikik kâsakâhk ispî kâmiyohohpikiki iyikohk wiya tepiyâ kakiscâyâhk. ekâ pikwîsi kesipanâcihtâhk kapimitisahamahk kayâs kâkîpehispayik ita kâhayâyahk. kamamisihtotâcik iskwewak kapîkiskwestamâkoyahkik tân’si ôma kiyânaw kesisohkikâpawiyahk. namoya kapîweyihtamahk kâhâyimahk kâmisikwâkotehk mâka kanâkateyihtamahk kitaskînaw ekâ pikwîsi kesihcikeyahk namoya semâk kapimakocineyahk ispî kâhiteyihtamahk kâmayipayik.

piko kwayask kanâkateyihtamahk askiy namoya tâpiskôc kayâs kâkîhisipimpayihcikehk. namoya kwayask kinâkatohkâtenaw ekwa namoya kitâhkameyihtenaw kahisinisitohtamahk kesimeskwacipayik ôma askiy. mâmemôc tâpiskôc ôma kâhispihteyihtahkwak ewako ôma paskohkopâw ayâwin piko katipitôtamak wiyasiwewinisa kâpaminikoyahk kiyânaw okanawâpahkwak. Banff National Park ekîhosihcikâtehk nîso mitinawa pâmayes Alberta kapihtokwahiht mâmawinitowinihk ekwa ekospî mistahi kîhispihteyihtâkwan ekweyâc kâhayâmakahk ôta kânatahk nistam ita pisiskiw kanaweyicikewin. ekosi osâm ewako mâmawacinistam ehayâmakahk ekosi kapimitisahikâtew, kâhitasteki ôhi wiyasiwewinisa kapimitisahamihk namoya ayiwâk ayisiyiniwak katipeyihtamwak,

kasikwahcahikecik ahpô kakistikâtahkik. wiyasiwewinihk kâpimitisahahkik kâpaminahkihk pisiskiw kanaweyicikewin namoya pimitisahamwak iyiniw kiskeyihtamowina ôta ohci ayâwin. tânisi ehisitipahaskahtamihk. kesitipahaskatamihk kâkanaweyicikâteki pisiskiw kanaweyicikewin, kweyask ahpô ekâya, kipayikâtawa ita ekâ awiyak takîpihtokwet. ekosi cî kinaheyihtenaw ispî kihci-okimânahk kâhawihiwecik askiy kôtinamihk ekota ohci pimiya ahpô kâmeskotôniket kinipîminaw ahpô ispî kâpiscipotât iyinto paskwâwaskosiya?

namoya ninaheyihten kesitipahaskâtamihk askiy ehitweyahk enâkateyhtamahk. kiwaninisitohtenaw tânima kehcinâ askiy ehispiehteyhtakwahk ekwa ita emiywâsik ohci pakitinâsowin. tastawayik ita paskwaskekak ekwa sâkahikanis ita kâwepinamihk pimiya kîkway cî ekâ ekîhohcikiskeyihtamahk ayisiyiniw ehisihciket tâpiskôc enakacihtâyahk ekosi ekâ kapihkweyihtamîkoyahk. namoya kitepinisitohtenaw kehcinâ, nipiya kânâkateyhtamahk ekwa nipiya kâhâpacihtâyahk kâpasahcipayitâyahk askiy. kinâkateyhtenaw cî kikâwînow askiy ispî kâpiscipohtâyahk ita ayisiyiniw esôniyahkâtahk? tân'si kesinaskomâyahk kesinâkateyhtamahk kiskeyihtamowin pehcînâway kâkîhastehk kanakacihtâhk pimiya. kîspin namoya kasôniyahkâtamihk pimiya askîwipimiya cî kâhâpacihtâniwîw ohci aniskac wahkotowin kiskeyihtamowin ekwa mîna kakwekanaweyihtahkik kapimitisahahkik wiyasiwewinisa? kâkîhahkotonamonaw cî konta isi kesimayisihcikeyahk ita kahayâki ekotwa ihtwâwina ehispiehteyhtâkwahki?



Adrian Stimson, *Nih duuk koo pii/The Real Water*, performance. Image courtesy of the artist.



Alberta Rose W., *Reclaimed Landscape*, 2016, acrylic and vinyl on canvas

ekosi kiwihtamâtin wehtinâ kesihcikâtaman tan'si kâkakwehisihcikeyan, kânîkânapiyan wiyasiwewinihk, ekâya kîkway otâmeyihtamowin. tân'si ôki kehcinâ kâkakwenâkateyihtahkik ôhi ayâwina ita kâwîkicik. kanistawinaman tân'si ehitamahcihocik iyiniwak kâkakwenâkateyihtahkik ekâ kihci-okimânâhk ekosi kâhitôtahkik. kâwe kanâkateyihtaman ekâ awiyak kahatâmeyimat. ispî iyiniw epasikôt epîkiskwestamâsot kweyask kamînonamihk kâwe nîkânihk kasihtoskâtoyahk kesimiyopayik ôte ekâ kîkway kesiwanišicikeyahk nîkânihk? kâwe cî ekosi kâkîhisimâmitoneyihtenaw paskwaw-askosiya kesimiywâsiki tâpiskôc sakâwa iyikohk wiya pakwataskamik? kâkîkihceyimânaw kesisohkeyimot paskwâwimostos kâwe kakîwetotahk ita kâkîwîkit pîtos ayâwin ita emihcetiki pehcinâway kâkîpehispahikocik? kâhîšihâyimahki ekosi ôhi kwehîkemowina piko kamâmitoneyihtamihk ôte nîkânihk kwayask kakwemâmînonamahk kesimiyopayik miyowihcetowin ekwa mayiwihcetowin. osâm kihawema kipakitinenaw ekâ kwayask etâpeyihtamahk ekwâni ekwa ohîcipayin ekâ ekosi kesîyîniyihkâtamahk ekwa kanâkateyihtamahk kikâwînow askiy kâwe kesimiyokanawâpamâyahk.

BIOGRAPHIES

Bruno Canadien is a member of the Deh Gah Got'íé Kóé First Nation, a Deh Cho Region member of the Dene Nation. Bruno graduated from ACAD's Painting Department in 1993 and currently resides in the Calgary area. Bruno's work has been included recently in *Culture Shift – 3rd Native Biennial* hosted by Art Mur in Montreal (2016) and at *INSURGENCE/RESURGENCE* (2018) at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. His work may be found in public and private collections, including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Glenbow Museum, Red Deer Museum, and the Indigenous Art Centre in Ottawa.

Brenda Draney is Cree from Sawridge First Nation, Treaty 8, with a strong connection to Slave Lake. Draney's work is collected and shown across Canada including the National Gallery of Canada. She won 2014's Eldon and Anne Foote Visual Arts Prize in Edmonton and was short listed for the 2016 Sobey Art Award at the National Gallery of Canada. Draney's work visually represents the moment when vulnerability is exposed, while encouraging the viewer to reject the notion to dominate the void where horror, poignancy, or powerful moments exist. Draney encourages her viewer to face this void head on, but as an empath. She provides enough tools for the viewer to place their own narrative within her typical imaginary spaces.

Jessie Ray Short is an artist, filmmaker and independent curator whose cross-disciplinary practice involves memory, visual culture and Métis history. She has exhibited work nationally and internationally at venues including M:ST Performative Arts Festival, Calgary, and at the Wairoa Māori Film Festival in Wairoa, Aotearoa (NZ). She has recently curated *Jade Nasogaluak Carpenter: Mourn* at City of Calgary Open Spaces Gallery. She currently holds the positions of program coordinator for TRUCK Contemporary Art in Calgary, and Adjunct Curator of Indigenous Art for the Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton. Jessie holds an MA degree from Brock University with a focus on contemporary Métis visual culture.

Adrian Stimson is a member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation. He has a BFA with distinction from ACAD and MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. He considers himself as an interdisciplinary artist. The British Museum recently acquired two paintings for their North American Indigenous collection. His performance art looks at identity construction, specifically the hybridization of the Indian, the cowboy, the shaman and Two Spirit being. He was awarded the Blackfoot Visual Arts Award in 2009, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003, the Alberta Centennial Media in 2005, the REVEAL Indigenous Arts Award – Hnatyshyn Foundation, and in 2018 the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts.

Alberta Rose W. (Ingnuak) Born and raised in Treaty 7 Territory near to the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley bands of the Nakoda nation, Alberta finds passion in art, food, politics, and social issues. These interests are expressed through artwork as well as engagement with community organizations and events. As an Inuvialuit person growing up in a predominantly white community, she has often felt a sense of displacement; but found connection to her culture through her mother and traditional practices. Alberta graduated from ACAD in the spring of 2016, and recently completed a prepatatorial practicum at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.



A Space Gallery has played a significant role in the evolution of contemporary art in Canada. We are committed to critical engagement through the presentation of interdisciplinary programs including exhibitions, performances, collaborations, and discussions. We are open to local and international proposals from individual artists as well as curatorial propositions, thematic interests, and research trajectories.

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The imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival is the world's largest festival showcasing film, video, audio, and digital & interactive media made by Indigenous screen-content creators. The Festival presents compelling and distinctive works from Canada and around the globe, reflecting the diversity of Indigenous nations and illustrating the vitality and dynamism of Indigenous arts, perspectives, and cultures in contemporary media.

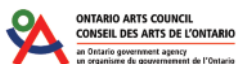
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Ociciwan Contemporary Art Collective supports Indigenous contemporary art, experimental creative practices, and innovative research. Based in the region of Edmonton, Alberta, Ociciwan supports the work of Indigenous contemporary artists and designers and engages in contemporary critical dialogue. We value artistic collaboration and foster the awareness of Indigenous contemporary art practices. Core Collective members include Tiffany Shaw-Collinge (Métis), Erin Sutherland (Métis), Becca Taylor (Cree), and Kristy Trinier.

www.ociciwan.ca

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