

# MONA

Museum of Northwest Art



**Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:**

**Honoring Our Stolen Sisters**

October 22, 2022 - February 5, 2023

**Curators:** 

*Patricia Christine Aqimuk Paul, Esq. & Candice Wilson ~ Quatz'tenaut*



**The Museum of Northwest Art presents**  
***Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:***  
***Honoring Our Stolen Sisters***

To remember, honor and bring awareness to the thousands of Native women and girls who go missing or are murdered each year. The exhibition draws attention to crimes perpetrated against native women in the US. Like other earlier projects, among which is the “REDress Project” started in Winnipeg, Canada in 2011 by artist and Métis Nation member Jaime Black, *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Honoring Our Stolen Sisters* calls attention to the lack of reporting, data, and justice for Indigenous women.

*Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* is a human rights crisis. *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* is a national tragedy. This exhibition draws from the experiences of families and communities who have lost a loved one. The *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* were mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, cousins and grandmothers. Native women face murder rates more than 10 times the national average. Homicide is the third leading cause of death among native girls and women aged 10 to 24; and the fifth leading cause of death for native women aged 25 to 34. This ongoing tragedy affects all Indigenous women and girls from all walks of life and throughout many communities and cities. For the most part, the endeavors of families to locate their loved ones have been grassroots efforts. There have been organized searches and campaigns of awareness on social media. The messages read, “Have you seen this child?” Families are told their loved one literally vanished, without warning. Long victims of violence, native women and their families will no longer be silent. Their stories are being told. The art in this exhibition is to raise awareness of the murder rates. This art is to provide hope to return our stolen sisters. This art reflects the strength, resilience, and determination of our *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* survivors and their families.

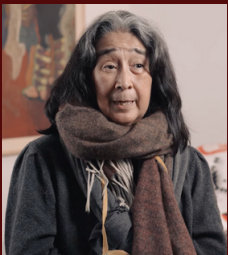
*"In the canoe, we pray for everyone but ourselves, so that those who need it can hear our prayers." - Coast Salish Tradition*



Image Credit: Still from the *Missing and Murdered Women and Girls* film

The exhibition features art from a range of local Indigenous artists, including a film titled: *Missing and Murdered Women and Girls*, with music composed by Antone George (Lummi) for the West Shore Canoe Family, directed by Mark Nichols, and produced by Children of the Setting Sun Lummi Nation, 2019. This catalog includes images of the artwork, as well as the artists' biographies and artist statements. The final pages include information and writing excerpts from three Indigenous poets, who participated in a Poetry Symposium planned in conjunction with the exhibition during Native American Heritage Month.

### **About the Curators:**



The Honorable Patricia Paul is Kikiktagruk Inupiat (northern Alaskan Eskimo). She received her Bachelor of Arts in 1993 from Antioch University, Seattle, Washington. She completed her law degree in 1998, earning a Juris Doctorate from Seattle University School of Law. She completed post-graduate studies at the JFK School of Government, at Harvard University in 2005.



Candice Wilson Quatz'tenaut is a member of the Lummi Nation and a communality builder, well-versed in bringing together tribal and public partnerships through cultural interfaces. Her background in tribal and public policy provides a commendable service for the community. Her many accolades point in the direction of helping people become better people.

# Amanda Smith

## Nooksack

Amanda Smith is from the Nooksack Tribe. Her grandma, Betty Jimmy, taught her how to weave. Her first basket was a twined basket. She enjoys new challenges in weaving, whether it be trying something new or a different style. She likes to make cedar bark hats, bracelets, baskets and cedar bark rose earrings. She believes it is important to weave while one is happy, so she goes for a jog before she weaves; or maintains a healthy work out schedule.



Amanda Smith, *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Basket*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh





Detail of cedar roses. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

*All are connected. When we gather cedar and we thank god for allowing us to gather the cedar. We thank god for giving us the tools to not only survive, but thrive. We also don't take more than what is needed. When we gather cedar we only take a small strip of the tree so the tree can still heal. When you go in the forest you can see that there are trees that have healed. This has been our way of life since time immemorial. Weaving and cedar has been part of our culture since the beginning of time. I know we call cedar trees people. They are sensitive to our emotions, and our feelings; so it is really important to work with a good mind and mood. It is important to pray before doing cedar work. Just a short prayer is good. When you think about how cedar work is well preserved you want to do your best. A basket can last longer than your lifetime because someone will preserve it. It is a part of our rich history. Just like women are. Women are sacred and birth our future generations. The fact that native American women are endangered because of how we are prioritized in society tells me that assimilation is still imminent and a major threat to our people.*

# Cindy Chischilly

Diné

Cindy Chischilly is Diné (Navajo) and is based on Duwamish Territory in Seattle, where she works as a graphic designer, business owner, illustrator, and educator. From her start at an international design firm to her work as co-founder of White Canyon Design, Cindy brings over twenty years of experience in brand design for retail, entertainment, packaging, and web to a diverse base of clients. She has worked as an adjunct professor, teaching branding and design at Cornish College of Design. Cindy is community-driven, bringing awareness of Indigenous issues to the forefront of her work. She believes good design can change our world.



*I start by conceptualizing bold graphic sketches, usually quick pencil drawings. Then I use paint and ink to bring the piece to life. Once the painting is done, I scan it, bringing the image into my computer where I digitize it and add color.*

*I create my work to bring awareness to Indigenous issues. To bring that awareness to the forefront. As an Indigenous woman, I use my voice to amplify the MMIWG movement and honor our stolen sisters.*



# HONORING OUR STOLEN SISTERS



#MMIW

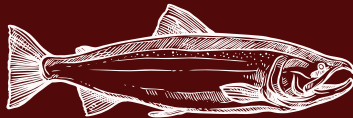


Cindy Chischilly, *Honoring Our Stolen Sisters*

# Qataliña Jackie Schaeffer

Iñupiaq

Qataliña Jackie Schaeffer, an Iñupiaq from Kotzebue, Alaska, is a mother of six and a grandmother of eight. Raised in a traditional Iñupiaq family, Qataliña uses that worldview to maneuver in the world today. This worldview flow focuses on community: family, self vs. the western worldview of self, family, community, allowing the inter-connection of our ancestors to today.



*During the creation of this atiqluk, her thoughts drifted to all the lost and stolen sisters. Using the guidance of her ancestors to honor and acknowledge all the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. Each cut, stitch and fold of the red fabric, carries the pain and loss, but also love and prayers are woven into the outcome. The Inuit trim reflects the ancient marking of our Arctic women. These tattoos were woven in time from grandmother to granddaughter – creating a bond through time. The fringe represents the grass blowing in the wind. The caribou button represents our interconnectivity to all living things. May the spirits of our sisters fly and may we never stop honoring and acknowledging them in all we do.*



Jackie Qataliña Schaeffer, *Honoring Sisters*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

# Jonathan Labillois

Mi'gmaq from Listuguj Quebec

A member of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation Band in Gaspé Quebec, Jonathan's talent was recognized early in childhood and further nurtured by attending Dawson College Fine Art Program. He also attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design where he majored in print making and painting.

His art has been on display throughout Canada and is on permanent display at the Gallery of Fine Art in Halifax, NS. His cultural heritage and strong focus on his art draw together a sense of colour and style distinctive in method and view. Emphasizing aboriginal stereotypes and native art in modern culture, his art attempts to examine where native art fits into society, in addition to where a native artist fits into the art world. His larger than life depictions of indigenous peoples speak to his passion for both art and his native heritage.

Jonathan Labillois currently resides in Victoria BC, Canada where he continues to expand his body of work and subject matter.

*The title of the painting is "Still Dancing." The idea for the title came from my little sister: "Dancers dance for those who cannot, the sick, the elders, and those who are gone. It's like all those women are still dancing through her."*

*I was overwhelmed and very humbled (and honoured) to have so many share this piece of art on Facebook. I used my friend Berta KaKinoosit as the model for this, I tried not to make it look too much like her but people recognized her anyways.*

*I decided to donate this to the Montreal Native Women's Shelter to raise awareness of missing and murdered women in Canada. I hoped sharing it with others would bring this issue to minds of many people, and hope that none of our sisters, mothers, aunts or daughters will ever be forgotten. Thank you.*





Jonathan Labillois, *Still Dancing*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

# Kevin Paul

## Swinomish Indian Tribal Community



Kevin Paul, MMIW. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

"Wah lee hub" Kevin Paul (born 1960), enrolled tribal member, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; resident of Swinomish and La Conner, Washington, USA. Kevin is a master carver of contemporary and traditional Native American carvings. Kevin taught his artistic craft in the La Conner School District from 1994 until Covid. He has taught at the Museum of Northwest Art. He currently teaches native design, painting, drum-making and carving at Didgwalic Wellness Center in Anacortes, Washington. Kevin and his art have been featured on KCTS 9/Seattle. A second documentary on his work was shown on Lynette Jennings Design/Discovery Channel, which aired in 27 countries for nine years. His local art is prominently collected and viewable at the Town of La Conner, the La Conner School District, and the La Conner Boys and Girls Club. Art shows are numerous, including a retrospective show in 2013 at the Skagit County Historical Museum. His work is included in locally published books: "The Barn Shows" and the "In the Valley of Mystic Light." Recent works include an 18 foot, old-growth, red cedar story pole for the La Conner Swinomish Library, completed with his apprentice, Camas Logue.



Kevin Paul, *The Journey*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

*An age old teaching is woven into this carving. Protect your mother, protect the earth. Women are sacred. Women are the bearers of our culture, our way of life. In our native society, women can be warriors. Genocide occurs when one group or people try to obliterate another people, by murder. Just a few generations back, the settlers across the Swinomish Slough would paddle across, in the darkness of night. Whether at the hand of one or more, men murdered members of my family, while they slept. A woman and a child. This hostility towards natives, our family has experienced, even during my school years in La Conner. It is known that non-native men would attack and hurt our women and go unpunished until the Violence Against Women Act was passed by the US Congress. You know the adage, "be good to yourself"; I will add, "be good to our women."*

# Nikanot Sylvia Tatshama Peasley

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation



Nikanot Sylvia Tatshama Peasley, *Say Her Name*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

Nikanot Sylvia Tatshama Peasley is descended from Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce, Moses Columbia, Umatilla, San Poil. Born in Nespelem, WA, Peasley is a 64-year-old mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Retired after 43 years, she is a traditional cultural plant, history, and archaeology specialist. She has spent the majority of her life drawing, painting, and now working with deer hide.





Nikanot Sylvia Tatshama Peasley, *her red dress*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh

*I pondered on what to paint on the knife case, to emote the feelings that erupt when a loved one becomes missing or murdered. Pretty powerful pain. So I began to sketch, a woman sobbing into a red dress (the red dress is a symbol of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls movement) and as I painted I had to stop for a bit because the tears came as all those old painful feelings surfaced ... "say her name"... I miss you Jolene all the time I'm so sad that you were murdered so horribly... but my voice is for you and all the others who are missing or murdered.*

# Safiuchi

Nooksack 306



Safiuchi, *Washed Away*. Photo Credit: Tim Mickleburgh



Entrepreneur, artist, author, mother and Executive Director of "Heal Indigenous" non-profit, with a mission to help the indigenous youth community. Born in Bellingham, WA, she was raised on an indian reserve. She is also a Nooksack 306. Art has been an imperative part of her life. Her own anxiety and depression, together with past trauma, became the turning stone that allowed her to recognize the horrible consequences as well as ever-lasting wounds: expressing, comforting, and apprising the community through the gift of art. She affirms: "Living for others is the real living."



*This piece was created with a series I have done for Missing and Murdered Women and Girls. I find this medium of abstract expressionism very symbolic to my artworks. This is a story-telling piece that I would hope would reach an audience who is unfamiliar with missing and murdered women and girls, but familiar to ones who support and stand for justice! We remember the missing, the murdered and the disappeared, we fight for the living.*

*My symbolic paintings are a strong source to soothe broken-hearted, depressed individuals coping with trauma, including dejected individuals living in distress and bringing awareness to the people through causes and humanity in the indigenous community.*

# NE,ENTENOT Elliott

Tsartlip First Nation

NE,ENTENOT Elliott (she/her) is a radical queer artist of W SÁNEĆ and mixed white ancestry and a member of the Tsartlip First Nation. Raised on her traditional territory on so-called Vancouver Island, NE,ENTENOT has lived in so-called Seattle since 2013. NE,ENTENOT co-facilitated the Writing Warriors Indigenous writing group from 2013-2019.



*I write with a voice that has been shaped by Indian School Survivors, single moms, healing and trauma; medicine, spirit and salt water. The shadow of Residential Schools has been wide. Our loved ones have gone missing in so many different ways. I write tears and I write salve to honour and connect with so much that has been lost.*





## Grief/ These waves

These waves

These waves crashing like the wake of a ferry boat

And then calm quiet stillness - normalcy

Nothing - forgetting

And then guilt

They always ask "were you close?"

As though the way I answer is a test

A test to rate how much sympathy I deserve

Or

A test to determine how sad and fucked up I am allowed to feel

And then these waves

These waves that make me feel like I need to explain my entire family history

All the trauma, all the heartache, the pain

all the shame and the loss, the doubt

And then the love, the healing

The joy and the pride

These waves

These waves that make me wonder

Don't they know that I missed out on it all?

All the closeness

And don't they know about the schools?

About all of it? The land? The animals? The camas meadows?

Do they know these waves feel like a knife

In an old familiar wound

A wound I've known long before this life of mine

These waves

These waves crashing against me

At first they push me closer

But then these waves pull me further and further away

# Gabrielle Joy Dan

## Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Gabrielle Joy Dan or “Gabby” is a writer, actress and a breast cancer survivor. Gabby spent 8 years training under acting coaches & agencies when she got cast to work on a few independent films. While working on camera she found her passion for writing and didn’t stop. After growing up in Hawai’i her whole life, she was able to reconnect with her late mother’s family & moved home to Swinomish in 2019. While going through chemotherapy last year, she had to stay inside a lot. Writing poetry about mother earth helped her to maintain her connection with nature and give her strength. Gabby hopes to provide you with a reflection of our bond with the environment through her poetry & advocate for young breast cancer patients.



*Our indigenous people have notoriously lacked justice. I witnessed this firsthand when I was a stolen sister. Although I was lucky enough to survive, I was inspired to write this poem for my dear relative and sisters who never made it home to us. I hope this poem will help people see the pain our families continue to feel after our sisters are taken from us. Our women and girls are 10x more likely to be murdered than all other ethnicities. Jurisdictional issues make it extremely difficult to start an investigation. Through my poetry I aim to raise awareness for those who are no longer here to advocate for themselves. Our sisters will never be forgotten as long as we continue to raise our voices.*



## Forget me not

Today I visited, your final walk  
Breathing in sqʷəšab, a fog so eerie  
Hemlock keeps you warm, while his medicine grows  
I'm sorry we couldn't save you, from greed that snows  
Your soul held strong, this wasn't the end  
They tried to crush your spirit, but you were stronger than them  
You carried on through the bark of our tallest cedar  
You peek through salal when the sun gives you light  
You speak through the moon, you're a mighty sight  
When I come to the place, they left you distressed  
Čəbid reminds me, you have a place to rest  
For the Douglas-fir held you when no one was near  
A refuge so strong, their darkness stayed clear  
I only wish you were here, to watch your children grow  
To be an aunt and grandmother, I wish time stood slow  
Though I know that's not how our life will go  
Their history of violence, will not stand trial  
So, I will sit here, and lay with you a while  
I will let go of the hate, that runs through these veins  
As I imagine you dance across our camas plains



# Alan “Awohali Egbe” Smith

Cherokee, Lumbee, and Igbo (Nigerian)

Artist, educator, Alan Smith of Cherokee, Lumbee, and Igbo (Nigerian) ancestry with his partner, Jacob of Cherokee ancestry, raised a boy with Peruvian ancestry. He’s visited 47 U.S. States, 23 countries and 7 continents. Holding a bachelor's, 3 master's and finishing a doctorate degree, he’s taught at grade schools and universities.



*I've spent my life nurturing in me and others a passion for peace and justice. My art whether it's writing, drawing, painting or photography reflects my desire to facilitate deep, enduring and equitable connections with people and the planet. A long distance runner, I know the value of patience, perseverance, persistence, and pacing, and use these tools in all endeavors. From tutoring young people in the poverty stricken south Bronx, to directing a summer aquatics camp for persons with disabilities, to helping run a school and soup kitchen and building houses for the Lakota, to taking youth to New Orleans to help clean up after Hurricane Katrina, I treasure the work of empowering the marginalized. I am a passionate advocate for life-long learning. Having taught students from kindergarten to university, my philosophy of education begins with the idea that we are all teachers and learners. Thus, cultivating horizontal relationships rather than hierarchical ones has been my lifelong pursuit. We cannot see eye to eye until we see eye to eye. I seek to follow my father's advice to "Learn to love the unpredictability of life," and my mother's advice to "Leave a place better than you found it."*





## The Voice of an Afro Indigenous Woman/Ode to Audre

The white fathers told us that I think therefore I am me.  
The Afro Indigenous woman in each of us says,  
"I feel therefore I can be free."  
The system tells us that high tech is where we need to be.  
The Afro Indigenous woman in each of us exclaims,  
"Poetry is NOT a luxury!"  
The experts say that art and literature is just conjecture.  
The Afro Indigenous voice says  
"It's our life's skeleton architecture."  
The system compels us to worship conformity,  
But she whispers to us,  
"There's power in diversity."  
The masters demand that we must follow the rules.  
But the Afro Indigenous voice, quietly says,  
"We need new tools."  
The system teaches us that your difference is cause for condemnation.  
But she says,  
"Your youness is a holy consecration."  
She said, we must see that there's power and joy in diversity  
Not a cause for competition and war, but for camaraderie.  
Oh Audre, Oh Audre, Oh Audre.  
Oh Audreeee!  
How much.  
How very much.  
You have taught me.

t'igw'icid  
Thank you!



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sponsorship from the following organizations:*



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