ABORIGINAL DIGITAL ACCESS PROJECT

VTAPE'S ABORIGINAL DIGITAL ACCESS PROJECT

A couple of years ago, Vtape's administrative duo of Deirdre Logue and Chris Gehman saw a need – how to use new on-line delivery technologies to make the work of Indigenous media artists more widely available - and then they hatched a plan to address that gap. The plan was to digitize approximately 500 Canadian Aboriginal artworks and documentaries in the Vtape holdings in order to make them conveniently available to programmers, librarians, buyers and curators.

With this, the Vtape Aboriginal Digital Access Project (ADAP) came into being. The aim of this special project, funded in part by the Canada Council for the Arts Initiatives Programme, is to actively increase the public profile of Indigenous Canadian artists. To date, over 300 titles by Indigenous artists produced from 1978 right up to the current year have been entered onto the Vtape preview website. Curators and programmers and other potential users of this content can request a password to allow access to this website in order to view titles on-line, thus increasing the outreach capacity of Vtape's legendary user-friendly on-site research centre. For the first time, programmers in Australia or Taiwan or Vancouver can have access to full-length versions of Aboriginal titles in the Vtape collection on their own computers, giving them the same privilege that visitors to the Vtape offices in Toronto have enjoyed for three decades – service where it counts!

This programme – *Unsettling Sex* – is the first public outcome of ADAP. This summer, I invited emerging curator John G. Hampton, recently of Regina's Neutral Ground and current Masters of Visual Studies in Curatorial Studies student at the University of Toronto, to construct a programme of his choice selected from the on-line previews available through Vtape's ADAP. The results of his research, I would offer, are exemplary.

Eschewing the shallows of thematics or stylistic analyses, John Hampton has gone into deep water. *Unsettling Sex* offers a bracing – and often challenging – view of Indigenous sexualities, in all multiplicities.

Like many of our efforts, most of the Vtape staff are implicated in one way or another in this exciting project. Initially, Chris and Deirdre developed the overall plan but the project itself was expertly executed by Vtape's Archivist and the ADAP's Digitization Project Manager, Kristie MacDonald. Utilizing her pre-existing knowledge of video formats, migration, and condition assessment, Kristie worked independently to contact artists, patch the racks, upload content and distribute press releases. Kristie's contribution has generated a substantial web presence for the Aboriginal artists represented by Vtape and we thank her for her dedication.

Kristie's work would not have been possible if it were not for the technical contributions of her project support team, Mark Pellegrino and Kim Tomczak. The project also relied on key support from Erik Martinson, Wanda Vanderstoop and Kaherawaks Thompson, who continue to ensure that information about the Aboriginal Digital Access Project is widely disseminated.

I extend my personal appreciation to everyone at imagineNATIVE but especially to Jason Ryle, Executive Director for the commitment to the on-going partnership between iN and Vtape. And many, many thanks to Daniel Northway-Frank for all his help with this program. Finally, I thank John Hampton for his creative curatorial investigation that provokes a thorny subject in all the right ways.

Lisa Steele
Creative Director Vtape

UNSETTLING SEX   JOHN G. HAMPTON

Unsettling. To bother, upset, unfix, or loosen; to force out of a fixed condition; to deprive of fixity or quiet in institutions or beliefs; to clear of settlers.[1] The state of sexuality in Indigenous communities has never been fully settled, never fully static or colonized, although attempts have been repeatedly made to give it that appearance. From pristine untouched utopia, to perverse abomination oppressed for its own good, Aboriginal sexuality is a fluid, contested, and sensitive topic. Histories of sexual violence indoctrinated into communities as a means for purging projections of primitive sexual sins, have left wounds not easily healed, and not lightly probed. But this history, after repeated attempts at erasure through neo-puritanical shame, has come out of hiding and has begun to lose the kind of specificity that only silence can contain.

In 1999, Lee-Ann Martin and Morgan Wood curated the landmark exhibition *Exposed: Aesthetics of Aboriginal Erotic Art* in response to an "insufficiency of dialogue on sexuality, intimacy and sexual imagery in the Aboriginal community."[2] In the thirteen years since this exhibition, artists such as Thirza Cuthand, Kent Monkman, Adrian Stimson and Terrance Houle have brought the discourse surrounding sexuality in Aboriginal communities out of the smokehouse. With this revelation has come increased awareness of indigenous two-spiritedness, the berdache, and the unsettling force of indigenous gender politics. As this dialog continues and

expands, it has begun to include young artists moving to speak outside assertions of personal identity. In kinship with the subjectless critique of queer theory and its unfixed identity structures, artists such as James Diamond, Marnie Parrell, and Ariel Smith are using new strategies to deconstruct systems of institutionalized subjugation, domination and colonization. Their politics move away from counter-identification (the assertion of personal identity to protest settler dominance) towards an interior infiltration of these structures. Their subject of inquiry is not strictly Indigenous sexuality. They use a synthesis of the sympathetic projects of queer theory and Native studies in an examination of the impact of colonial sexuality.[3]

Operating in a space that is neither assimilationist nor counter-identificatory, these artists intertwine settler and Indigenous fates, implicitly showing the impacts of colonial legacy on not only Indigenous communities, but also on all involved. By moving outside of the politics of opposition through personal affirmation, they reach beyond familiar communities, towards an inclusionary dialogue that critiques the institutional structures in which they are embedded, rather than defining themselves in opposition to them. But the shortage of explicitly identifiable Aboriginal content within this work is less a departure from the decolonization movement than it is a shifting of strategy.

In "Home of the Brave" celebrated critic and curator Paul Chaat

Smith has argued that "silence about our own complicated histories supports the colonizer's idea that the only real Indians are full-blooded, come from a reservation and speak the language and practice the religion of their ancestors.... too much Indian art remains within the predictable images of ecology, protest, anger and easy celebration. Rather than challenging or reshaping the prescribed myths and stereotypes, it settles for comforting pastoral mythologies."[4]

While Aboriginal identity still remains a fruitful and under-developed area of artistic exploration, it is significant that this dialogue is expanding outside of exclusively studying its own history. The trap of self-othering can all too often reify colonial power by confirming the opposition between First Peoples and settlers rather than embracing a correlated existence of mutual ancestors and shared experience. In "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke)" Chris Finley suggests that a "purposeful deconstruction of the logics of power rather than an explosion of identity politics is a more fruitful strategy for ending the colonial domination for Native peoples."[5]

Colonial oppression does not only enforce itself through direct attacks on Indigeneity. The cultural genocide enacted by the North American settler project often relied on assimilationist tactics that require an internalization of the structures propping up colonial powers. One of these support-structures was the male-dominated hierarchy required to maintain the patrilineal inheritance model that is so crucial to retaining ownership over conquered lands. In order for

Native communities to accept colonial domination, colonists needed to impose upon them an acceptance of patriarchal social structures, replete with normalized gender-binary structures and hierarchy.[6] These prerequisites for colonial sexuality were not only used on Aboriginal people however. Successful colonization does not create new rules for each invaded territory, but seeks to expand the systems of legislation used on their own people to envelop new groups. The logics of power used to attack Aboriginal identities were extensions of the repressive colonial logics enacted on settlers themselves. As Scott Lauria Morgensen so eloquently states in the opening sentence to his 2011 book *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*, "We are caught up in one another, we who live in settler societies, and our interrelationships inform all that these societies touch."[7]

In response to their attempted erasure, Aboriginal peoples have been compelled to represent themselves in academia, art and politics in order to gain recognition, but this has diverted attention away from defining the terms of discourse itself.[8] This ghettoization of Indigenous knowledge does a disservice to colonial studies and citizens within colonial states who could benefit from a sustained investigation into the sado-masochistic rituals of colonial sexuality. In her exploration of the "heteronormativity of colonialism," cultural theorist Andrea Smith argues that:

When we no longer have to carry the burden of political and cultural purity, we can be more flexible and creative in engaging multiple strategies and creating a plethora of alliances

[1] From the Oxford English Dictionary, Second edition, 1989; online version June 2012. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/217786>; accessed 04 September 2012. Earlier version first published in New English Dictionary, 1926.
[2] Morgan Wood in Wood, Morgan and Lee-Ann Martin, *EXPOSED: Aesthetics of Aboriginal Erotic Art*, Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1999.
[3] "Colonial sexuality" is used here to describe forms of sexuality that reinforce hierarchies of race, gender and class. These constructions are expanded upon in McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

[4] Chaat Smith, Paul. "Home of the brave" *C Magazine* 42, 1994. pg 30-42.
[5] Finley, Chris. "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke)" *Queer Indigenous Studies*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. pg. 34
[6] Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, Cambridge: South End Press, 2005.
[7] Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between us: queer settler colonialism and indigenous decolonization*, Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2011
[8] Expanded upon in: Smith, Andrea. "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism" *Queer Indigenous Studies*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011. pg. 58-60

that can enable us to use the logics of settler colonialism against itself...

A subjectless critique helps demonstrate that Native studies is an intellectual project that has broad applicability not only for Native peoples but for everyone. It also requires us to challenge the normalizing logics of academia rather than simply articulate a politics of Indigenous inclusion within the colonial academy.[9]

In *Unsettling Sex*, we follow recent attempts to help decolonize our bodies, minds and bedrooms. Kent Monkman sets the backdrop on which the other artists define themselves, showing the complicated interweaving of cultures and international interests in the construction and preservation of a mythical authentic Aboriginal. James Diamond's work then charts a multi-narrative movement from introspective investigation towards cultural interconnectedness. Within the lingering unease left by Diamond's *Art Scene*, Marnie Parrell explores the rhetorics of desire, conflating and contrasting material and sexual symbols of extravagance, parodying their promotional pitches. And finally, Ariel Smith follows this sensual script, sending us on a dejected, camp-infused decent into horrific and hyperbolically gendered dramas of conflict and consent in colonial contexts of patriarchal power. By negotiating heteropatriarchy outside of alignments with exclusionary groupings and by moving outside expectations of cultural presentation, Smith, Parrell, Diamond and Monkman dismantle the coercive powers that underlie the settler and heteropatriarchal colonization of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous bodies.

KENT MONKMAN

In *Dance to Miss Chief* (2010), Kent Monkman's infamous alter-ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle performs in a music video for Dwayne Minard's remix of Byron Wong's diva house track of the same name. In this intercultural drag pop mashup, Monkman remixes footage from German westerns from the sixties with his own unique brand of Native couture. The video features an on screen romance between two fictitious chiefs, Monkman's Miss Chief Eagle Testickle and Karl Friedrich May's Winnetou. The time-warped romantic connection between classic German Indian stereotypes and the contemporary Canadian Aboriginal artists has been bubbling for half a decade now, most notably in an earlier screening presented by Vtape for imagineNATIVE, *Culture Shock*. Curated by Steve Loft in 2010, *Culture Shock* featured four contemporary artists (Darryl Nepinak, Keesic Douglas, Bonnie Devine and Bear Witness) commissioned to respond to films from both East and West Germany that depict a sensationalized and fetishized

image of Native peoples. Although these films curtailed the Hollywood tendency to villainize Native peoples, preferring positive portrayals reminiscent of the 'Noble Savage', they still perpetuated stereotypes "that place Aboriginal people as victims and leave the cultural revisionists as arbiters and authors of the 'real.'"[10]

It seems ironic that these geographically, politically and temporarily removed depictions of Indians have become a site of investigation for 'real Indianness.' What is it about these films that makes it possible to even consider them as arbiters of Aboriginal authenticity? Based on novels written over one hundred years ago from the other side of the earth, they should be the furthest things from our minds when considering authentic Aboriginal identity. But there is something attractive about their naïve appreciation for Aboriginal cultures they had no firsthand knowledge of. Perhaps the physical, intellectual and spiritual distance between these German admirers and our Aboriginal ancestors is relatable to contemporary Aboriginal peoples who are separated by vast temporal and cultural distances from pre-contact 'authentic' traditional life. First Peoples such as myself, who were raised in urban and mixed-blood environments, embedded within a colonial state, might feel particularly sympathetic to May. His well-intentioned parody is all too relatable to the self-doubt imposed by legacies of assimilation that leave many hesitant to embrace their own cultural history for fear of appropriating their own culture. But the light-hearted satire of these appropriating gestures removes their power, much as when the word "queer" was redefined by activists to provide a retroactive reversal of meaning.[11]

In *Dance to Miss Chief* the racist, heterosexist history of the cultural and sexual domination of First Peoples is reclaimed through the politics of desire—embracing May's infectious Indigenous fetishization and glamorous cultural appropriation, directing it right back to its source. This reclamation of the power of fetishization throws shade at legacies of negative appropriation, and stereotypical identity generation, paving the way for the decentering of identity with Miss Chief's cross-cultural, gender-warping, time-traveling call to the decolonizing dance floor.

[9] ibid
[10] Loft, Steve. *Culture Shock*, imagineNATIVE Program. Accessed September 2nd, 2012: http://www.imagin-enative.org/program.php?id=45
[11] Butler, Judith. *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex."* New York: Routledge, 1993.

JAMES DIAMOND

"Opposites distract and the peripheral rule is born"[12]

James Diamond's *Mars Womb-Man* (2006) opens with Diamond sitting in the front row of a makeshift theatre, watching one of his early videos, *The Man from Venus* (1999). Diamond's positioning as audience to his own work eloquently reflects his working process, which is often fiercely introspective and self-critical, articulated through hauntingly honest steam of consciousness monologues. In *The Man from Venus* Diamond articulates a fraught relationship with his own body, but in *Mars Womb-Man's* subsequent revisiting of this work, he has found a sense of peace with that bodily relationship. Diamond's growing comfort with his body unexpectedly comes from his experience of becoming pregnant.

Diamond recalls asking his mom, as a small child, what the difference between a man and woman was. "A woman is a man with a womb," she replies. "OK, that's cool," returns James, while his body, still inscribed with the projection of *The Man from Venus*, reads "Spare change for a sex change." In *Mars Womb-man*, the womb is articulated both as a site for differentiation and harmonious union of the sexes, expressing integrative individuality of queer identity. "I don't believe in the notion

of opposites. In essence we are all male and female," Diamond says. He fashions identity as a circular arrangement where we are all "staring directly at each other." Diamond both disavows and capitalizes on the ethnographic presumption of his automatic access to a social transformative alterity,[13] using it to grant access to the viewer and those not perceived as socially or culturally othered by brushing off dichotomies, stating simply that "we need each-other to feel real."

The "peripheral rule" introduced in *Mars Womb-Man* becomes an assaultive co-implication in *I am the art scene starring Woman Polanski* (2010). Described by Diamond as a "high-art private service announcement," *I am the art scene* brings a self-critical lens to progressive conceit in the liberal arts. The central action in the video consists of Diamond writing "RAPE ME" across his naked body, while a tragic acoustic cover of Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire" plays on the sound track. This gesture of self-aggression and call to sadism is bookended by Diamond's confrontational gaze being directed at the viewer. Diamond's aggressive gaze accompanied by the words "fuck you" implicates the viewer in this act of textual violence. As the 'star' of the film, Diamond plays the multiple roles of a queered Roman Polanski, his sexual assault victims, and the placating art scene, while simultaneously casting the audience in each role as well.

By occupying the bodies of aggressor, victim and passive witness, Diamond expresses the sometimes contradictory voices one speaks with

in creative production. This is reflected with his rendition of Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire" which is often considered Lewis' greatest song, but which provided a source for personal turmoil because of its blasphemous use of Christian passages. The fact that Lewis' ethical turmoil revolved around his artistic production, rather than his pedophilia, highlights the potential for tunnel vision when artistic production becomes the pinnacle of existence. This sentiment is echoed by Whoopi Goldberg's infamous, yet popularly shared defense of Polanski's rape charge as not really "rape rape." Polanski fans who were unable to untangle their equivocation of creative and moral identity unwittingly became rape apologists, and Diamond further complicates this representation by interweaving multiple citations that make singling out any definite moral reaction to his video extremely difficult. Concluding the video with identification as the "ex ex ex gay movement," Diamond displays an identity that bounces between two oppositional statements until it drifts laterally into a site without clear allegiance. The triple "ex" renders this complex and multi-faceted expression of sexual identity into a pornographic display of hyperbolic desire and voyeuristic non-identities. However, the normalization of healthy non-normative identities is complicated when they are intermingled with criminal ones. Diamond's complex multi-faceted expressions of sexual identity and desire become questions of sexual agency in both personal and social interactions when he sings the words, "You broke my will, oh what a thrill."
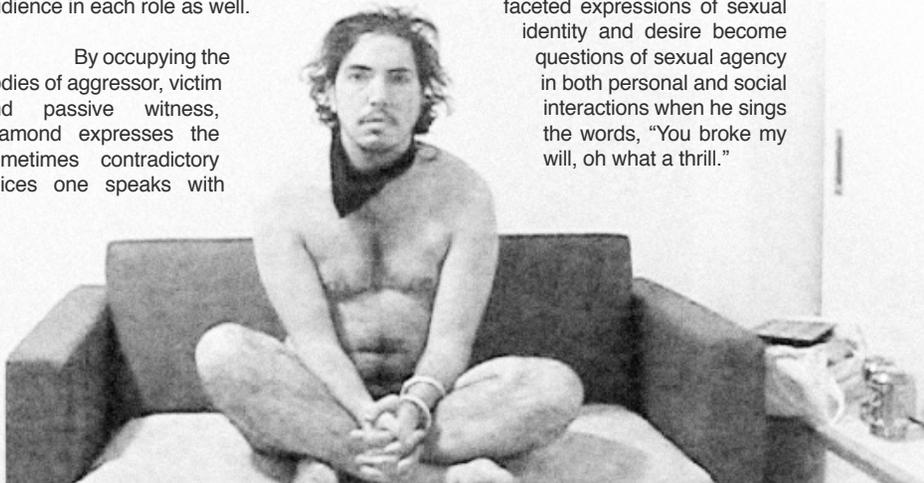
MARNIE PARRELL

In *About Town* (2006), Marnie Parrell transfigures hardcore mainstream pornography into a charming, parochial real-estate listing. Using found footage from multiple films (*No Holes Unfilled*, *Gina's Black Attack*, and *Black Reign 2* and *5*), all shot in the same lavishly tacky dream home, Parrell creates a cable access style fantasy real estate listing. Parrell (who has a background in semiotics) edits the footage to reveal repetitions in form, structure and content in the films, while a voice-over blithely highlights similar syntactical strategies used in the architecture of the home. The penetrating and penetrated, supplicative and domineering actors obscure the content addressed by the voice-over. Instead the architectural features are pointed to with comically exaggerated arrows and football inspired freeze-frame circling. The traditional site of interest for mainstream heterosexual pornography—penetration—is also obscured, but by the cheesecake cable access special effects; glitter conceals hard cock, like Adam's postlapsarian leaf, while the penetrated vagina becomes an orgiastic burst of multicolored fireworks. The overlapping tacky fantasies also suggest multiple repeated histories of potential pornographic parallel universes, where the past (or potential) lives of the building seep up through the floorboards.

Avoiding morality tales or didactic deconstructions, Parrell provides us with a humorous re-presentation of the pornography industry and its relationship to advertisement, capital, and lavish domestic banality. Parrell explores the rhetorics of desire, conflating and contrasting material and sexual symbols of extravagance, parodying their promotional pitches. Her critique does not rely upon a personal statement of counter-identification but on the generic appropriation and comical exaggeration of systems of oppression we often willingly collude in. The inevitable politics of the gendered gaze and of racial representation is softened by the humor of miscast real-estate footage, nipples censored by digital eyes, and the naïvely self-parodying titles like "Black Reign 5."
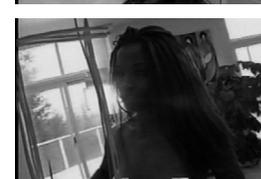
[12] James Diamond from his artist statement for *Mars Womb-Man*.

[13] Hal Foster identifies the liberal ethnographic tendency to identify cultural alterity as "the Archimedean point from which the dominant culture will be transformed or at least subverted" in Foster, Hal. *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996. pg. 180

ARIEL SMITH

Dear Diary (2009) ventures into the sexual subconscious of a faceless female figure. Drifting from a monotonous workday full of kitty cat calendars, souvenir snow globes, and compulsively chewed pencils, our protagonist takes a break to slip into the salaciously surreal interiority of her diary. In this masturbatory world of satin, velvet and tulle, she explores the sensuality of self-stimulation. Moving from smooth to striated, silky to scruffy, Smith's textural explorations are overlaid onto sardonically hyperbolic gender signifiers. A car engine revs over top of a close up of a man's burly chest in a wife-beater t-shirt, while he suggestively pets his denim bulge. But when this rugged greaser reaches inside to whip out his cock, he instead pulls out a beautiful bouquet of roses. An unseen audience applauds at this magic trick/ gender resignification. But as the climax has already come, the following cum shot, shooting out of the bouquet, is rendered a redundant performance of masculinity, performed out of convention, with little provocation, almost as an afterthought.
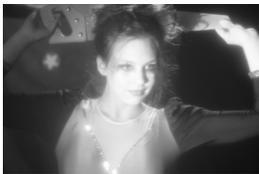
The dejected camp of Smith's hyper feminized and masculinized fantasy then shifts to affected roles of domination and humiliation. The transition is signaled with the cueing of "Laura Palmer's Theme" by Angelo Badalamenti. The song, played regularly throughout David Lynch's television series *Twin Peaks*, has come to signal the violence of the seedy sexual underbelly that lurks behind even the most tranquil, unassuming scenery. Unlike the rawness and lack of agency that Lynch portrays however, the 'switch' power dynamics in Smith's hyper patriarchal BDSM playground of imagination expresses an uneasy lack of clarity. The protagonist wavers between colluding in her own oppression via the internalization of colonial sexual scripts of male dominance, and the empowerment of the 'bottom' in BDSM communities, where they ultimately dictate the boundaries and scenarios acted out.[14]

Smith's blurring of agency and empowerment continues in the tragicomic independence portrayed in *Target Girls* (2012), where she presents a familiar ritualistic sacrifice of the female body in the form of the magician's "lovely assistant." The assistant is caught in a space of longing, presumably waiting for the magician, while sharpening the knives that will inevitably be thrown at her. The carnivalesque story of codependency and heartbreak follows a masochistic formula, subverting climax in favor of suspense. Philosopher Gilles Deleuze credits Leopold von Sacher-Masoch as the first to use suspense as an essential component of romantic fiction, and he parallels this narrative construction with the literal suspension of the masochistic protagonist: hung up, crucified, or in the case of *Target Girls*, suspended as a target for knife throwing.[15] The target in question, as well as Smith's general aesthetic evokes the *mise-en-scène* of madness typical of German expressionism. Smith uses the harsh lighting signature to this genre, which often portrays the "binary struggle of light and dark,"[16] to allegorize gender binaries which are then deconstructed through anti-essentializing parody.

When the assistant splits into three mirror images, one awaiting to be sawed in half while the other two strike poses with their saws on either side of the stage, she plays the role of her own torturer who "freezes into postures that identify her with a statue, a painting or a photograph."[17] This aestheticized freezing and buildup of anticipation parallels the anxiety of the masochist who is trapped indefinitely awaiting pleasure while in intense expectation of pain (whether physical or psychological), but the soundtrack laments a cycle of abuse and abandonment more typical of the sadist.[18] The repetition of the chorus here expresses a cycle of exploitation, abandonment and return, suggesting the assistant's codependence with the absentee magician who has "gotta ramble," but the visual narrative enacts an indefinite suspension of action that undermines the emotional impact of the audio. *Target Girls* displaces narrative, not explicitly illustrating it, but implying it through Smith's citation of filmic convention and *mise-en-scène*, creating the suspense though an unconscious expectation of generic fulfillment. All rising action and no climax, our tense expectations lead to nothing but a disenchanted bubble gum chew.

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[14] At least in "high protocol" and "old guard" communities: "Glossary of BDSM" *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Accessed September 12th 2012

[15] Deleuze, Gilles, and Leopold Sacher-Masoch. *Masochism*. New York: Zone Books, 1989. pg. 33

[16] Powell, Anna. *Deleuze and Horror Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

[17] Deleuze, Gilles, and Leopold Sacher-Masoch. *Masochism*. New York: Zone Books, 1989.

[18] ibid

PROGRAM NOTES

Dance to Miss Chief   Kent Monkman

In a sexy video for her Diva House track, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle presents a playful critique of German fascination with North American "Indians" that is guaranteed to make you want to get up and dance!

2010, Colour, Sound 4:49

Mars-Womb-Man   James Diamond

Mars-Womb-Man is a companion to Diamond's earlier film, The Man From Venus. In this film the artist finds answers for some of his old questions as he explodes binary concepts of man, woman, mother, and father.

2006, Colour, Sound 14:00

I am the art scene starring Woman Polanski   James Diamond

James Diamond's I am the art scene which he describes as a "high-art private service announcement," dismantles faux liberal conceit by addressing difficult subjects in sexual discourse.

2010, Colour, Sound 3:06

About Town   Marnie Parrell

In About Town, Marnie Parell transfigures hardcore mainstream pornography into a charming, parochial real estate listing.

2006, Colour, Sound 5:00

Dear Diary   Ariel Smith

One woman's boredom, loneliness, and active imagination make for a sardonic, surrealist tale of longing and sensual escapism.

2009, Black and White, Sound 3:45

Target Girls   Ariel Smith

Ariel Smith`s Target Girls presents a familiar ritualistic sacrifice of the female body in the form of the magician`s "lovely assistant." Target Girls recycles the aesthetics of film noir, vaudeville and German expressionism, recasting them as a tragicomic rebellion against Hollywood glamour and submission.

2012, Black and White, Sound 6:31

BIOGRAPHIES

James Diamond connects the audience to his experience in an intimate but unpredictable way. His award winning works have been called 'a lexicon of dispossession' and 'spliced from within'. Born in Montreal and raised all over Turtle Island, he is currently based in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territory.

Born in Preeceville, Saskatchewan, **Marnie Parrell** is a Métis filmmaker, writer and artist. Since the first screening of her work in 1991, her films and videos have been screened both nationally and internationally and she has received numerous grants and festival awards. Her art practice explores the creative integration of craft and new technologies. Based in Toronto, she is currently working on interactive database filmmaking and creating small objects and books that combine her filmmaking and craft based practices.

Kent Monkman is an artist of Cree ancestry who works in a variety of media including painting, film/video, performance and installation. Monkman has exhibited widely within Canada, and is well represented in numerous private and public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. He is represented by Galerie Florent Tosin in Berlin, Trepanier Baer Gallery in Calgary, and Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain in Montreal.

Ariel Smith (Cree/Ojibway/Roma/Jewish) is an award-winning filmmaker and video artist who has been creating independent works since 2001. She has shown at festivals and galleries both in Canada and internationally, including imagineNATIVE. Her work is disturbing, darkly humorous, visceral and unapologetically feminist. Ariel currently sits as an Ontario Regional Director of the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA).

John G. Hampton is an artist and curator from Regina, Saskatchewan. He is a member of the artist collective Turner Prize* and the Chickasaw nation and is the curator at large for Neutral Ground Contemporary Art Forum. He currently lives in Toronto where he is pursuing his Masters in Visual Studies: Curatorial Studies from the University of Toronto.