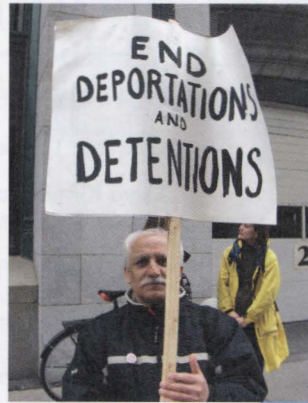


# FUSE

30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue



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Migrant Justice  
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p.7



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## Cultural Change In Real Terms >

Conversations on the state of the present with Zainab Amadahy, Marcia Crosby, Andrea Fatona, Janna Graham, Mostafah Henaway, Michelle Jacques, Punam Khosla, Anthony Kiendl, Steve Loft, Nandita Sharma, Jaggi Singh, Aruna Srivastava, Rinaldo Walcott, Harsha Walia and Rafeef Ziadah. > Artist projects by Diyan Achjadi, Brendan Fernandes, Freda Guttman, Terrence Houle, David Poolman, Mark Schilling and Z'otz\* Collective.>>



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# ARTC

AUGUST 30 – OCTOBER 13, 2007

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Artist Talk: Thursday, August 30 @ 8:00pm

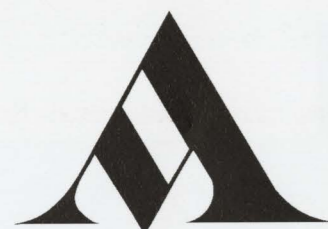
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Doug Smith, *Transatlantic Tracks* (detail), 2007, graphite on paper

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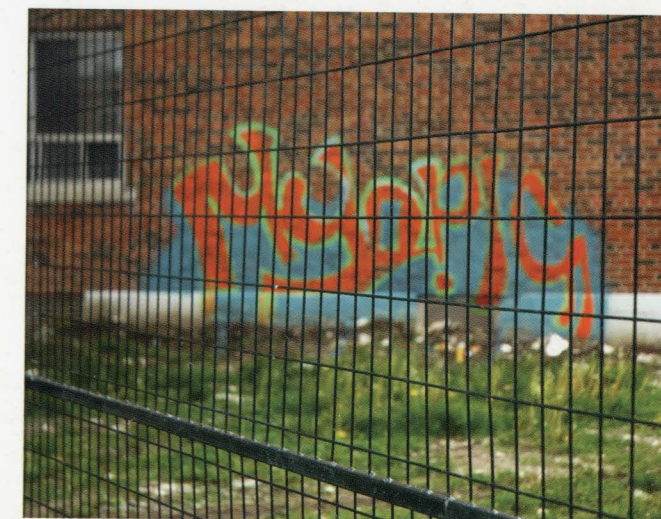
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Art, Media, Politics  
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**ERRATA:**  
The back cover of issue 30:3 excluded a  
logo for Heineken, a sponsor for Nuit  
Blanche.

In issue 30:3, the article Whose  
Disability Culture? by Rachel Gorman  
contained the following errors:

In the second paragraph, Geoff  
McMurphy was changed to Geoff  
Church; in the fourth last paragraph,  
Alan Shain was changed to Alan Shaun;  
in footnote 4, Augusto Boal was changed  
to Augusta Bola; and in footnote 11,  
Mary Duffy was changed to Mary Duff.

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Canada

### EDITORIAL

# CULTURAL CHANGE IN REAL TERMS

When we set out to produce this 30<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary issue, we had in mind to offer  
an assessment of the present through a  
series of conversations that would high-  
light the dialogic nature of social change  
and stand as testament to the conditions  
that Canada's diverse communities strug-  
gle within, to our critical responses and  
our ideas for creating alternatives for the  
future. Engaging a large and diverse group  
of artists, activists and academics as con-  
tributors, this issue of FUSE surveys the  
ground for action, contributes to critical  
analysis and reflects on much of the  
organizing that people are engaged in  
across the country and internationally.  
This issue also introduces a redesign that  
gives FUSE a visual clarity in dialogue  
with our aesthetic engagements and polit-  
ical visions.

The artists' projects in this issue include  
seven posters that, as part of our anniver-  
sary project, will be printed full size in  
limited edition and sold separately. The  
posters respond to the themes that all of  
our contributors took up: identity and  
politics, the struggles of migrants and  
indigenous peoples, the relations of art and  
institutions, social and economic precarity  
and war. This issue is illustrative of our  
commitment over the last 30 years to pro-  
viding coverage and analysis of political  
issues, linking art practices to the commu-  
nities they happen in and engaging in dia-  
logue that bridges artists, activists and  
community organizers who look beyond  
the market to imagine other forms of col-  
lectivity. Through the conversations that  
take place here, we look for interconnec-  
tions and points of entry around those  
pressing situations that call for immediate  
political organizing and action.

The violence of war is documented  
through four one-page reports that tell  
the situations in Afghanistan, Central  
America, Somalia and Six Nations  
Caledonia. In her discussion, *Indigenous  
Sovereignty and the Role of Artists*, Zainab  
Amadahy asserts that we must understand  
indigenous struggles as going well beyond  
the contestation of land, treaty rights or  
resources. While many assume that the  
land claim struggle is about getting a  
piece of the colonial pie, she argues that it  
must be taken as a call to everyone on  
Turtle Island, indigenous or not, to shift  
their ideological frameworks, values and  
conceptual understanding of how humans  
relate to one another, the land and natural  
resources. In a parallel conversation titled  
*Radical Indigineity: Claiming Cultural Space*,  
Steve Loft and Marcia Crosby consider  
the different ways in which indigenous  
artists and communities are claiming cul-  
tural space by creating shared conceptual  
frameworks informed by histories of lived  
experience.

Punam Khosla articulates the intercon-  
nections between economic precarity,  
identity and culture in her article  
*Precarious Life, Political Possibility: Talking  
Across Tightening Urban Borders in New York  
and Toronto*. Examining the ways in which  
government, Big Art and Big Money are  
complicit with one another, she argues  
that on the flipside of the new corpora-  
tized indie culture are competitive, neo-  
liberal global cities that care little for the  
standard of living of the people who build  
and inhabit them.

This shift in government agendas from  
social to corporate welfare has meant that  
many of our not-for-profit and cultural

institutions along with our essential public  
services are eroded by funding cuts and  
market logic, creating conditions and cul-  
tures that are increasingly open to corpo-  
rate greed and difficult to work and live  
within. These realities, Janna Graham  
argues in conversation with Michelle  
Jacques and Anthony Kiendl in *Inhabiting  
Culture at a Time of Rapid De-Publicization*,  
can be challenged by recuperating the  
public-ness of culture and looking to the  
ways in which artists are self-organizing  
around education —  
creating shared grounds and reclaiming  
spaces for experimental thought, action  
and play across and in the cracks between  
institutions.

The processes of transformation that all of  
this issue's contributors are concerned  
with call for a unity across our differences  
— not, as Harsha Walia points out in  
*Organizing for Migrant Justice and Self  
Determination*, a simple unity that ignores  
differences of power and privilege, but an  
alliance built upon the recognition of our  
specific struggles and identities as "places  
of connection rather than exclusion" and  
reconfiguration of "our kinship solidarities  
based on shared experiences and visions."  
Our struggles, as Rinaldo Walcott writes  
in conversation with Aruna Srivastava and  
Andrea Fatona in *Bring it Back: Thinking  
the Ethno-Politics of Identity Again*, must  
be concerned with social and economic  
change in real terms, a politics of redistri-  
bution and equality that is simultaneously  
local, national and international and that  
takes into account the casualties of our  
colonial present.

— Izida Zorde

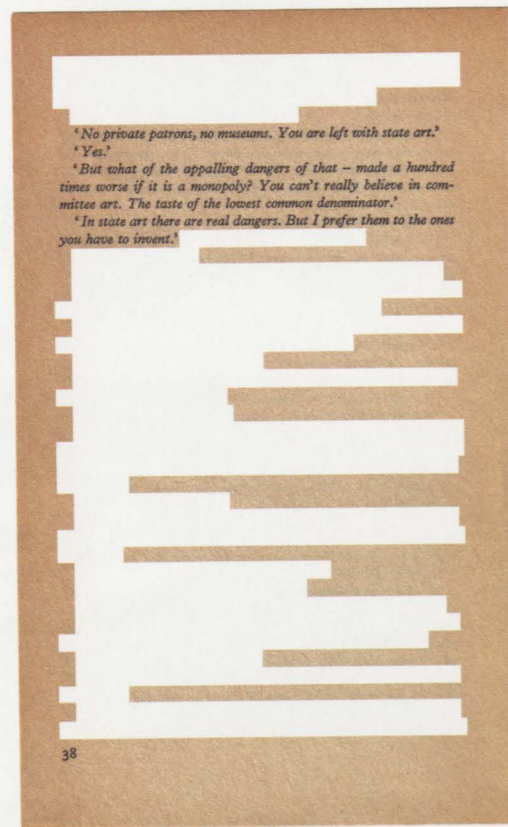
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Z'otz\* Collective.  
The Crown's Harvest, 2007.  
FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project



Brendan Fernandes.  
Fear Not, 2007.  
FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project



Mark Schilling.  
 Untitled (Page 38), 2007.  
 FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project

DIALOGUE

# INHABITING CULTURE AT A OF TIME RAPID DE-PUBLICIZATION

—A conversation between  
 Janna Graham, Michelle Jacques  
 and Anthony Kiendl

— Michelle Jacques:

As FUSE prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary, it seems important to revisit the context and conditions for those of us working with institutionally based arts practices in Canada. Janna, you have noted that cultural institutions have been changing rapidly of late and that a kind of split personality has resulted from their transition from “public” to what you have called “neo-liberal conceptualizations of culture.” Can you elaborate on what you mean by this?

— Janna Graham:

This process was already underway when I began working in the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) education department in the late 1990s. Many of us were, and still are, invested in the idea of our work enacting a kind of public space, or at least public service or platform for experimentation with different modes of public participation inspired by the important practices and theories that feminism and other anti-oppression struggles brought to art and museums. However, we were and are living through a period in which the proportions of funding, staff expertise, board members, programming and audience articulations are shifting dramatically. Very tangible agendas like public/private partnership, the precarization of labour, the growth of management and of corporate management discourses within culture and the transition from service provision to the sale of experiences have been introduced.



R. William Hill.  
 Meeting Ground: Great  
 Lakes and Eastern  
 Woodlands Region, 1600-  
 1845, 2003. Courtesy:  
 Art Gallery of Ontario.

One moment we are asked to write a business plan, the next facilitating politicized projects with young people or community groups. We are constantly shifting personas.

These conform to the checklist that Foucault cited in his discussions of neo-liberalism. We're often tempted to narrate this moment as a rupture with our public past and we experience this "new" neo-liberal order, often as a kind of flip-flopping sensation in the pit of our stomachs, at the same time that we are developing initiatives that activate the critical, public function of the museum. Hence the feeling of split personality — one moment asked to write a business plan, the next facilitating politicized projects with young people or community groups. We are constantly shifting personas.

In Clive Robertson's new book on cultural policy, he reminds us that the consolidation of the power of the wealthy classes that now serves the interests of transnational capitalism and what Sharon Zukin calls the "artistic mode of production," is based upon inherited colonial and elitist mechanisms. In our current context, the term "public" encompasses a strange mix of enlightenment rhetoric of personal growth, ambitions for a more critical, even radical participation and the desire to sell the "transformative" experiences, described by James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine in *The Experience Economy* (and seen in the way that many cultural institutions use Walt Disney World as a model for imagining visitors' desires).

Anthony, it seems that The Banff Centre was a prototypical institution for this kind of splitting.

— Anthony Kiendl:

Yes, these modes coexist at The Banff Centre in its institutional structure, with divisions in Arts, Leadership Development and Mountain Culture, as well as the Conferences division, which is really selling the former three as a kind of experience one can, at least momentarily, come into contact with. Increasingly (historically speaking), arts have not been so much the



William Pope.L.,  
Historic Building,  
2007. Photo: Tara  
Nicholson. Courtesy:  
The Banff Centre.

H.G. Glyde and art  
students, 1947.  
Courtesy: The Banff  
Centre, Library &  
Archives.



primary focus of the Centre and more than ever serve as a resource and backdrop to current management discourse and practices (Ève Chiapello and Luc Boltanski suggest such examples in *Spirit of Capitalism*). The corporate climate in Alberta weighs heavily. And yes, there was — at least informally — by some management a look at Disneyland for ideas around packaging and producing experiences.

What is of greater concern to me right now is that there is also a squeeze happening that tends to prioritize either training of emerging artists at a relatively basic level or on the contrary, an adoption of senior, generally internationally celebrated art and artists. These are good things in and of themselves, but the squeeze tends to occur for the mid-career artists, whose work does not fall under a kind of universalized idea of training the young as social good, or else the already sanctioned and therefore safe adoption of national treasures. The sometimes uncertain work of practicing mid-career artists is confusing to corporate management culture.

I think participation in culture can be a Disneyland experience, both in terms of production and consumption, without necessarily being damaging to arts education and institutions all the time. Artists are always smarter, and aware of their location and terms within institutions. (Despite all the problems associated with Disney's creations, he also created CalArts, which arguably has been one of the great arts education institutions in North America.) What is more dangerous is the real challenge to a range and diversity of cultural workers having the capacity to continue their work in various contexts, as institutions narrow their priorities.

DISORDERING THE MUSEUM ORDER

It seems increasingly important to create moments in which we can use the overlapping of agendas to produce opportunities to destabilize old paradigms of production and presentation. Can you think of any outcomes of cultural workers taking this time of destabilization as an opportunity to challenge the limitations of institutions?

This is a really important question in light of Anthony's comment about the diversity of work opportunities (with which I totally agree — and if you ask me, there is a direct link between the use of Disney as a model and the streamlining of jobs). If what is happening is a shrinkage

— Michelle Jacques:

— Janna Graham:

Over the last several years we have seen a profusion of artists and collectives producing artworks that in various ways emulate, parody, critique or adopt the art school model as a means to reinvest art.

in the practices that can be sustained in this model, what we need is an index of radically divergent practices and practitioners that *are* occurring in this moment.

In this case, producing situations that are increasingly difficult to integrate seems very important. I learned a great deal about this from Manitoulin-Island-based theatre group, Debajehmujig when they were artists-in-residence at the AGO. As an extension of their anti-colonial work, they were very clear that their inhabitation of the gallery be a process of radical relationship making. In a theatre set in the gallery and through a series of workshops, they transversally connected a number of spaces and constituencies — from people living on Manitoulin Island to students in Toronto schools to museum visitors and volunteers. In this they re-ordered (albeit very temporarily) political alignments, but also the inter-personal and professional relationships of staff at the gallery — security guards became inhabitants, visitors became bodies fed, actors and curators became caregivers.

— Anthony Kiendl:

In a similar way, there is a real interest in the production and theorization of art, and related institutional apparatuses (for example, art schools and collectives), particularly as a means to challenging the static apparatus of the presentation of art (museums and galleries). The art school is challenging to the model and role of the traditional museum. This is something we are investigating very seriously in my work at Plug In ICA in Winnipeg.

Generally speaking, over the last several years we have seen a profusion of artists and collectives producing artworks that in various ways emulate, parody, critique or adopt the art school model as a means to reinvest art. This variously includes drawing attention again to process over product (as the art market once again heats up), to create a context for collective action and collaboration or to breathe new life into the fatigued practice of institutional critique, which has focused so much on museums. 16 Beaver Group, Toronto School of Creativity and Inquiry, Basecamp or the Mountain School of Art in Los Angeles are just some examples. Historically, I am interested in exploring more about places like Black Mountain, earlier days at The Banff Centre and Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College in the early 1970s as kinds of utopian moments. I think art schools are still potentially utopian and still contend as the most hopeful sites for culture. The last (cancelled) Manifesta is another example of an institution dedicated to presentation ostensibly becoming one dedicated to education or production.

I think there is a moment now where artists are gravitating towards this as something to play with, as other forms of institutional critique of museums seem exhausted. To open up an institution to new tasks is to break down its boundaries as an institution, whether we are discussing institutions that present art or produce art. This is why we are exploring this concept at Plug In ICA.

— Janna Graham:

I have just returned from the Summit of Non-Aligned Education in Berlin, a continuation of a project exploring the conjunction of the university/art school and the museum called Academy that has happened in different European cities over the last couple of years. Having had the opportunity to be involved in both the Summit and Academy, I am extremely excited and a little cautious about the hype around pedagogy in the art world right now. The way in which artists are self-organizing around education is very inspiring and a very generative critical response to cultures of display, the tail chasing game of institutional critique and the limitations of shorter term relational or participatory projects. I think that the kind of play that you are talking about comes from the fact that the museum, the university and the art school (becoming university) are all undergoing similar processes of privatization, in which room for experimentation is shrinking. Pedagogy seems to be a shared ground upon which to reclaim

spaces for experimental thought, action and play that can operate across and in the cracks between these kinds of institutions. I think that the broader political climate is also influencing this interest. Many of us who are fatigued by both the inefficacy of traditional forms of opposition, i.e. the sad realization that no matter how many of us are in the streets, no one seems to hear us, are looking for models that enable us to reflect and act upon the experiences of everyday lives — like those found in histories of feminist collectivity, or the work of Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire, which are engaged in processes of self or participatory education toward some kind of social and political analysis and change.

I become cautious when these initiatives are taken up as themes, e.g. art and politics, art and pedagogy, rather than taken on board as processes of institutional and social transformation.

— Anthony Kiendl:

Right now I am interested in exploring the idea of education in art and radical or alternative pedagogies. That is, not art education as a kind of parochial or “neo-liberal” conception of educating the masses, but perhaps one more akin to the experience of living-in-art. I think, as Janna mentioned, this involves the transformation of institutions away from traditional gallery and museum models, as well as away from traditional educational and art schools models, especially the normative university.

— Michelle Jacques:

CONSTITUENCIES AND INSTITUENCIES

We should likely talk about what we mean by institution. Is it still a useful term?

— Janna Graham:

There is something that Ivan Illich said about institutions that I think is relevant to this question. He said that we often confuse specific organizational instances of schooling with the broader institution of Education as a way of naturalizing our current conditions, of imagining that this is the only way that education can be organized. Similarly, we often conflate specific organizations of culture i.e. the “museum,” with Culture as an institution. At the AGO, we were always calling the place “the institution.” This had the effect of dehumanizing the operations, deferring the micro-political ideological struggles that were happening every day to a higher-order bureaucratic being. It also held in place the idea that there were clear insides and outsides — workers and visitors and clear positions — for and against the institution.

But there aren't such clear lines in the current schizophrenic organization of culture. My question then is not is there an institution, but what are those who work(ed) in them doing?

The young people that were part of the AGO's first Youth Council taught me to re-think galleries not as institutional places engaged in “Outreach,” but points from which to align cultural work with social justice initiatives (in their case against a police force that had launched a full campaign to criminalize youth culture in the city), to use the spaces and processes of the gallery as platforms for broader public speech. In their work, the gallery was exposed as a set of relationships and capacities, points for connection, not an all-consuming glacial entity.

— Michelle Jacques:

The AGO Youth Council is an example of the museum's civic possibilities — and the AGO expansion includes some really remarkable shifts in the institution's potential. The organization has implemented a set of overarching guiding principles that are intended to frame not only programming, but all of the museum's functions. These principles are diversity, relevance, responsiveness, creativity, forum and transparency, and have already resulted in initiatives that signal an important redirection of the AGO's activities. But there is a constant negotiation between this and the inevitable moment when one realizes that the entire context for the project serves the interests of a particular donor and the need to attract huge numbers of customers. This new direction could result in the remarkable transformation of the AGO into a vital and relevant hub of civic activity. But relationships are messy and require hard work — and they are not easily cost-recoverable. Do you think it's possible to do this work given the corporate realities of running a large institution?

— Anthony Kiendl:

I think in addition to the contexts outlined above, we must consider the underlying and almost unspoken values of growth that govern our institutions. The administrative status quo, which generally means something like a three percent annual increase in revenue, expenses, visitors, enrollment or whatever your indicators of institutional “health” are. It is beginning to be under-

stood that this kind of growth imperative is unsustainable. What would it look like to form an institution on the basis of a limited, say 10-year life span or in terms of a decreasing budget and activities until that 10-year end point? Maybe this is possible for institutions that are art projects as opposed to institutions founded on the assumptions of contemporary capitalism.

— Janna Graham:

Well, I suppose I still refuse the idea that corporate realities should dominate our work and that this is the only way that culture can be organized. Other models and processes are co-existent with this one. This is the terrain of a struggle. And I think that the only way to change this is by, as Gerald Raunig has suggested, re-imagining the field in which we are working, recasting our critical undertakings from institutional critique to “instituent practices” — that is, recuperating the publicness of culture by refusing the “experiential transformation” of the experience economy and drawing connections between our work and those engaged in processes of what he calls “emancipatory transformation.”

— Michelle Jacques:

What are the advantages to working in/with/for institutions? Is our continued belief in the potential of institutions driven by hope, naiveté or masochism?

— Anthony Kiendl:

For me it is definitely hope and maybe a strategic naiveté. As I said, I think art schools are potentially utopian. The Banff Centre still retains an essence of this. It is the idea of living-in-art. I have accepted the challenge of working within galleries of various sizes during a time when institutional critique has been a dominant discourse in the art world. I have focused on what to do inside and still feel interested in that despite all the problems. I do also value and admire other ways of working, including outside of institutions. I am thinking of artists like William Pope.L and his Black Factory, because I happen to be working with him right now. But more generally, the way he has positioned himself during his career, which is distinct from many of his contemporaries.

I continue to work within institutions because I think they can change and it is rewarding to be a part of this change. Plug In ICA is my current preoccupation, and I am particularly hopeful that an institution of this size can change dramatically and more rapidly than larger institutions. That was a conscious decision for me.

— Janna Graham:

Hope, definitely!

— Michelle Jacques:

So then, cultural institutions, despite their situations of extreme contradiction (between local and global, public and private, etc.), might be a particularly interesting site from which to launch these kinds of investigations? Are there any good processes that you know of?

— Janna Graham:

I think that we need to start working across social milieux, bringing together people from very different disciplines to re-compose cultural spaces as sites of new production aimed at the reclamation of time, life, democracy.

Paul Butler, Collage Party, 2001. Photo: Bill Eakin. Courtesy: Plug In ICA.



## Mentoring Artists for Women's Art began in part so that there was a place for women to discuss theory, as this was not publicly happening elsewhere in the city.

In Canada, I often think about the way that ISUMA Productions have modeled themselves around issues of community care through ethical organizing principles and compelling artistic production. Vtape has also always amazed me in this regard — that is, in their consistent ability to facilitate artistic, political and pedagogical practices together.

— Anthony Kiendl:

Winnipeg is an interesting example, where pedagogical practices and art institutions have played out together in idiosyncratic and fruitful ways. In some ways, I believe what is lacking in the School of Art here (by that I especially mean there is no graduate program), has led to the creation of artist-institutions where the frame actually speaks as emphatically as the “content.” Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) began in part so that there was a place for women to discuss theory, as this was not publicly happening elsewhere in the city. This frame was very consciously determined thanks to Diane Whitehouse and others. It was intentionally created not simply as an artist-run centre for women, but more provocatively as an alternative pedagogical model, one that is distinct in the country, focusing on mentorship. Crossing Communities is a more recent example and extension of this practice. I think this organizational frame is also visible in Winnipeg's less or even non-politicized artist collectives like the Royal Art Lodge, or Paul Butler's Collage Party, but I don't think it has been articulated as such. The Collage Party is definitely a reflection on ideas of art school, one that is artist-centred. There is something about the institutional context broadly speaking in Winnipeg that has led to an emphasis on or desire for alternative processes. Experimenting with these processes seems to be more of a preoccupation here than elsewhere.

— Michelle Jacques:

### TRANSFORMATION AND THE MUSEUM AS COLONIAL CONSTRUCT

I've been thinking a lot about the history of the museum as a construct — built to house the spoils of colonial exploitations, designed to address European fears by imposing order on the unfamiliar through systems of classification and display. Is there a way for museums to leave this regrettable legacy behind without wholesale overhaul of their structures and functions (of collecting, classification, display, etc.)? What happens when institutions don't acknowledge this problematic origin and yet try to move towards philosophies that embrace issues of diversity? Is it possible to present collections of Inuit, First Nations, African art, etc. in Canadian museum programs as indicators of our diverse present, not just our colonial past? If so, how?

— Anthony Kiendl:

It is exceedingly difficult to present such collections or alternatives in mainstream institutions without reenacting colonial histories. I recently had an interesting experience related to all these issues. I was invited to lead a couple of seminars with graduate students in the curating contemporary and modern art program at Christie's in London. Christie's, as one might expect, is a

Paul Butler, Collage Party, 2001. Photo: Bill Eakin. Courtesy: Plug In ICA.





fairly conservative institution. What was really encouraging, however, was the sophistication and awareness of the students around issues of public, identity, community and so on. As an opportunity to discuss these issues, we visited the National Portrait Gallery in London, which was featuring the exhibition *Between Worlds: Voyagers to Britain 1700 – 1850*. This exhibition featured paintings and other representations of the “Four Indian Kings,” Aboriginal representatives from the Iroquois confederacy who traveled to London in 1710. In conjunction with this, Canada House, the Canadian High Commission, organized an exhibition by Shelley Niro and Jeff Thomas as a contemporary complement to the presentation of the Indian King portraits that were on loan from Canada’s National Archives. These rather stolid institutions were expectedly ripe for institutional critique and the students were completely engaged with the process. What struck me was how various curatorial programs, even those that are relatively conservative, are producing knowledgeable and critical graduates. This has been going on for years. And still things in our institutions, in the cultural climate, do not change — or at least not as quickly or tangibly as I would expect with all these bright individuals. Why does the ongoing production and awareness of critical practices have so little impact in our lived experience and institutions?

— Janna Graham:

What Richard Hill created in the McLaughlin Gallery in the Canadian Wing at the AGO addressed the historical problem (in this case, the colonial narration of cultural separation, the complete absence of historical work by Aboriginal artists) and also developed strong ties with living communities. But it was closed down after only a few months, so it is difficult to assess what the long-term impacts of this approach might have been.

Colonial and racist histories are very much alive in the fear and discomfort that many arts administrators have with implementing “diversity” policies, often relying on the few people of colour or non-Western heritage to carry the entire responsibility for the acquisition, installation and public education on the work.

At the AGO it has become very clear that beyond the initiation of social processes with communities around historical and contemporary experiences, it is crucial (and this is a record that’s gone around a few too many times at this point) that all those working within the organization are also part of the social process of negotiating how colonial and racist legacies continue to manifest themselves in daily operations. This is what is at stake in moving from an understanding of the idea of an “institution” (that is impossible to change), to a series of personal networks and practices in which everyone takes responsibility and is held responsible for change. This, of course, is what it would mean to engage the spaces in which we work in real pedagogical processes of transformation.

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R. William Hill. Meeting Ground: Great Lakes and Eastern Woodlands Region, 1600-1845, 2003. Courtesy: Art Gallery of Ontario.

DIALOGUE

# BRING IT BACK: THINKING THE ETHNO-POLITICS OF IDENTITY AGAIN

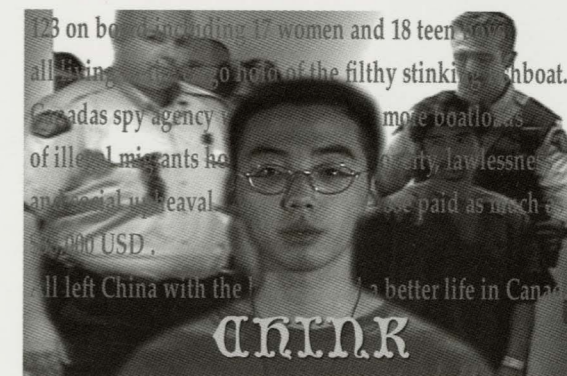
—A conversation between  
Andrea Fatona, Aruna Srivastava  
and Rinaldo Walcott

— Rinaldo Walcott:

Let’s begin this conversation with a point that I am thinking more and more about...

I want to propose a return to identity, without its “behaviour-orienting practices,” as a site for the expression of a Left and progressive politics that is willing to recognize that bodies are at stake in ways that make them identities and ethnicities. Thus I am suggesting that what I call the ethno-political is important, because we must confront the ways in which the new colonialism and imperialism have continued to make identity a locus of control, containment and regulation. Thus the recent past of a reflexive identity politics critique has now reached its conclusion. Past critiques of identity politics too easily dismissed appeal to identity in an effort to mobilize a politics that might move beyond self-recognition into one that might activate a practice of care for those with whom we did not share anything in common.

These critiques of identity politics that many of us so quickly fell victim to shifted the politics of the dispossessed. Interestingly, in the post-identity politics moment the only category that those of us on the Left have left stable is class, but we left it empty. There is then a curious moment, for clearly we did not do the work to make the interventionist politics of various identity groups garner real traction. The ethno-political is not an appeal to essentialize identity,



Left, Paul Wong. Chink.  
Right, Jig-a-Boo, 2000-2002,  
video/photo projects: television  
commercials commissioned  
by the Canadian Race  
Relations Board and bill-  
boards commissioned by  
Presentation House Gallery.

There exists an undercurrent of unease about where the identity politics of the 1970s through the 1990s have landed us.

and in this case ethnicity, but rather to highlight the ways in which identity and particularly, ethnicity, matters in our colonial present. Thus as Diana Fuss stated back in the heady days of the essentialist/constructionist argument: "To insist that essentialism is always and everywhere reactionary is, for the constructionists, to buy into essentialism in the very act of making the charge; *it is to act as if essentialism has an essence.*" (Fuss, 1989, p.21, italics in the original). Thus I am not making a case for ethno-politicality as the only ground for a renewed collective politics, but am instead arguing for the language of ethnicity as a central element to how we approach a collective politics of the possible and thus the postcolonial to come.

— Andrea Fatona:

What comes to mind for me are two recent art-based discussions I attended in Toronto and Hamilton that dealt with issues pertaining to how identity-based art is positioned and taken up by artists, curators and the larger art establishment in the present moment. Some of the participants and audience members welcomed the present contemporary moment because of the move away from identity labels while others were perturbed that identity as a category was deemed as no longer relevant to current debates on culture.

Much of the conversation in Toronto and Hamilton revolved around the silencing of the concerns of identity politics within the cultural sphere because of the shift back to a purely aestheticized understanding of art and culture and whether or not social justice issues pertaining primarily to race, gender and sexuality have indeed disappeared from the material and



Sandra Brewster.  
Face 14, 2007.  
Courtesy: the artist

everyday existence of First Nations artists and artists of colour. There exists an undercurrent of unease about where the identity politics of the 1970s through the 1990s have landed us. It seems as if a growing number of younger generation artists want to throw off the yoke of containment of identity-focused politics and participate in an ahistorical, depoliticized environment in which difference is not stigmatized. The concern is to carve out a space in which full participation in the culture of capitalism is possible on an equal basis. Faith in the marketplace seems to drive this desire. The answers being proposed by this group take up identity in a destigmatized, de-essentialized manner, but the collective/political is exorcized from the equation. It is a form of self-recognition, one that seems concerned with diversity but not with the redistribution of resources in a deep sense. Another group of artists seemed bewildered that the gains made in the name of identity politics have dissipated without much fuss or furor. Institutions have reverted to a lockout stance. The question, however, is how to reinscribe identity without it becoming a hermetic container that connotes, that immobilizes.

Perhaps the present situation is the natural outcome of a politics of inclusion that was based in anti-racist and identity based politics that evacuated class and elevated race, sexuality and gender. I agree that we did not do the work to engender lasting transformative coalition politics and real change at the political level. When I look at most institutions, whether they are in education, the arts, government, it appears that what we now have is the incorporation of some bodies into dominant cultural spaces and institutions yet practices of domination based on race, class, sex, nationality, etc., persist within these sites. We've learned from our past that our radical interventions have led to uncomfortable inclusions and inevitable exclusions of certain categories of bodies. Maybe the strategies of the past were somewhat conservative in that they served to reproduce the other middle class without questioning the ways in which political, social and economic elites reward contesting groups for their loyalties to the existing system. This would open the door for discussions about how identity hierarchies and silos of difference are maintained as discrete, therefore putting the brakes on any real politics.

I think the ethno-political is very much about a politics concerned with justice in real terms — social and economic. So, in order for the language of ethnicity to move forward, a politics of redistribution and equality that is simultaneously local, national and international and embraces a vision that takes into account all the casualties of our colonial present, is necessary. It requires an epistemological shift that attends to how we understand ourselves as a group and how we relate across and within the commonalities and differences we share. Rethinking the language of ethnicity and reemploying it, may serve as a useful tool for laying bare colonial and neocolonial histories as bodies and our present desires and affiliations shaped by power relationships that are circumscribed by ethnic and racialiologal thinking.<sup>1</sup>

— Aruna Srivastava:

I have organized and am participating in a panel for a conference of artists and academics in Cyprus in a week or two (Performing Identities/Crossing Borders), in which the always-present (for me) and vexed issues of "identity," politics and social justice are being revisited. In inviting participants for the panel, I used an old "identity" model, thinking fondly back to Desh Pardesh days, of South Asian diaspora and of women I knew who were performers, artists, academics who might want to collaborate in some loosely envisioned presentation. Yesterday, it struck me, as a colleague on this panel and I hunted down a t-shirt design for us to wear at our panel and performances, that "all I got was this t-shirt" might be a cynical way of looking at the legacy of the work many of us did in the 1980s and 1990s (and indeed continue to do). It was clear to me, possibly to all the participants, that whether we called ourselves "desi grrls" or "South Asian Women," the naming does not matter as it once did, is in most ways a performance only very loosely connected to our "desi-ness" or "South-Asianness," much more indeed constellating around varying and conflicting notions of desire, sexuality, class, what we used to call privilege, tourism, travel, diaspora in a very limited sense.

Even a decade ago, such an organization would have had a sense of political urgency (and lots of fun as well), and I am struck, as Andrea is, by both the ways in which earnest struggles that involved great labour and often a great deal of grief, anger and transformation seem to have had very little lasting institutional and cultural transformative effect. On the other hand, those of us involved in anti-racist work then, and in its different manifestations now — I can't help feeling these days far more apologetic for it than I used to — may we, in our pronouncement and theorizing about the death of identity politics, be doing not only ourselves but those

What I find particularly interesting in my observations of the artists who appear to refuse collective identity claims as political strategy is that those same artists are wedded to individual identity claims as the modus operandi of market values.

who build on our work and make it better, a profound disservice. Indeed, in some of these observations about escaping what people perceived to be the yoke of identity politics, including my own, I sense a yearning and a real unease myself with the facile and amnesiac ways in which the fruitfulness and importance of social justice work — old-fashioned consciousness-raising included — around what was swiftly labeled “identity politics” has been forgotten, easily swept aside.

Even in our identitarian heyday, there were really very few of us who did not acknowledge difference: we had to, an effective activism depended on the notion of coalition (who was it that said that if your coalition was comfortable it was too small?), and of addressing those sometimes vast disagreements, both inside and outside activist, identitarian groups. My own reading of Fuss and, of course, the Spivakian notion of “strategic essentialism” helped me enormously in those years, in both my internal and external battle with what I thought to be a bit of a red herring. How many of us involved in organizing conferences, events, or groups (for myself “Writing Thru Race” sounded the death knell for a certain kind of idealism and yet was an enormous success in many ways) actually insisted on or believed in our essential sameness and/or in absolute exclusion (the favourite buzzword) of those-not-our-own? And very many of us moved through and among different groups and identity formations as we were moved, as they moved us, day-to-day. That was the power of the coalitional vision: the (not outmoded and in other political contexts much celebrated) notion of the caucus.

For me, then, the debate in its most basic terms has often been a false one: the charge of essentialism often being laid (for example) at the feet of those of us who wish to address the continued, material realities and consequences of racism. Indeed, the critique of identity “politics” was something I heard quite differently when I considered the source, the intent, the agenda, the audience. Perhaps, for those of us floundering a little, in that “what happened to us?” mode, we confused a reflexive critique of identity politics with its seductively similar interloper: the critique of identity politics that works through denial of the way our own bodies and those of many truly dispossessed others, are at stake. This is the kind of egalitarian denial that works from its own form of “we’re all the same under the skin” essentialism, if you like and, to this day, elicits knee-jerk charges of “reverse racism” or sexism, or whatever. For me, what is increasingly crucial in our engagement with a progressive politics is what Rinaldo has called “a practice of care,” which, indeed, recent cultural commentators have begun to spend time discussing. I feel entirely defeated, myself, however, in how we engage in such a practice in the face of the vacuous (and I use the word in response to both your senses of analytical categories like class being “empty” or “evacuated”) sameness of responses to and critiques of the events at Virginia Tech and the excruciating analyses of Cho Seung-Hui which (at my last investigation) were curiously silent about the ethno-political and about racism in its most obvious, bloggiest forms. That silence does seem louder in the current moment, both with this particular event and in the way that attention to it has overshadowed the ways in which the ethno-political is played out in North America and globally on a daily basis.

— Rinaldo Walcott:

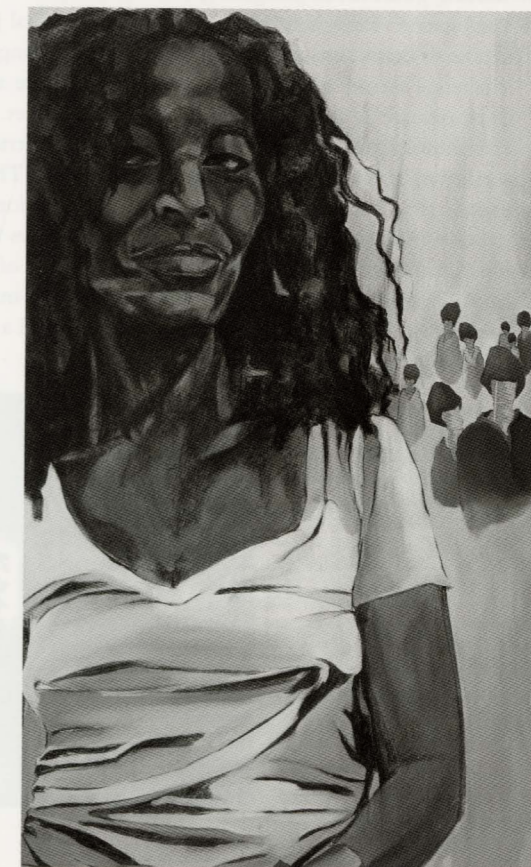
In both of your replies the recognition that the 1980/90s moment of identity politics did not produce a wholesale transformation of the politics of many artists and the institutions in which art happens is for me a very real consequence of the too-quick dismissal of identity as a category of analysis. When I assert the use of the term ethno-political, I am attempting to place into conversation an understanding of identity, through ethnicity, the politics of claiming an identity, its potential for political action and the ethics that a claim of a subaltern identity might activate in us while also requiring us to think differently about the world and the institutions that make it up.

What I find particularly interesting in my observations of the artists who appear to refuse collective identity claims as political strategy is that those same artists are wedded to individual identity claims as the modus operandi of market values. So many of those artists, while disavowing community, are fully conversant with marketing the self as exceptional from or of a particular community (we all know the bio note that begins: “the only black or woman or gay or Muslim artist to...”). What we then get is the art market’s corporate use of identity and multiculturalism as a guise to circumvent real and sustained change. We need to figure out modes of responding to such cooptation. I am suggesting that a renewed discourse of and on identity is required.

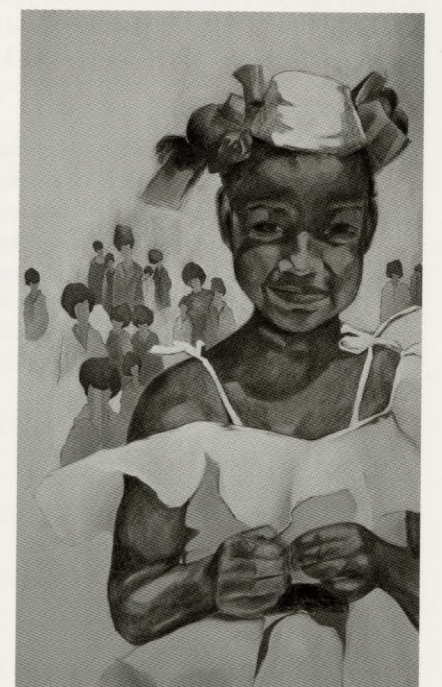
Aruna’s reminder that at Desh, as one example, identity was never a settled question calls to mind that in the heady days of identity politics, few spaces had settled the terms of coming together. What identity allowed for was a meeting ground to do politics, to do political work and ask questions about community, institutions and a different future. It seems that some of us have now come to a time and place where the inability to imagine anything beyond the market has immobilized politics and the desire to act in collective interests for human good. Even when we talk of the greening of the earth, again we talk of it only on the terms of capital. Thus it seems to me that we need to activate an understanding of identity that does not have market values attached to it. In this regard, my call for an ethno-politics/politicality recognizes identity as a quality of human life that must push against the intensive forms of capitalist cooptation that all of us must consistently refuse and struggle against. I want to bring back to the conversation some of what people would call old language but to re-tool it for the new context of late capitalism where many of us have now fallen for the individual entrepreneurial model of self-fashioning. Self-fashion is not ethno-political and it does not even begin to seriously reference the political desires that identity politics sought to change in the 1980/90s.

— Aruna Srivastava:

I have returned from my trip to Cyprus, where the slow release of the border at this historical moment enabled us to think about and move through, in an embodied way, considerations of identity, or what Rinaldo is calling the ethno-political, as we proffered our passports and visas to cross north in a divided city for dinner, to sightsee, to learn something about (post)colonial histories and peoples, and about contemporary migrancy. Our “desi grrlz” panel, indeed, while it revived some interesting and nostalgic debates, and retooled them for this decade (which of us were desi? Was our intergenerationality the cause for comfort with ironizing and performing



Left: Sandra Brewster.  
Maharite, 2006.  
Courtesy: the artist



Right: Sandra Brewster.  
Sunday, 2006. Courtesy:  
the artist.

the terms around South Asianness, gender, sexuality? Was there an increased comfort in this day and age for irony and humour and play around the performance and slippage of identities?) — still paled in the face of certain political realities in Cyprus, where the stark visibility of ethno-political division, identity politics of the kind critiqued earlier by many were evident. Or, in the face of the politics of illegal migrancy, where Filipino and Sri Lankan/South Indian migrant workers form a labour underclass that informs much of Greek Cypriot racism, classism (and sexism).

All of this thinking returned me then to a “practice of care,” words I took with me to Cyprus and, in performing there with Louise Saldanha, suggested this: Our failures of imagination are signal. Rinaldo reminds me of the importance of a “practice of care” and how our push for community and identity, comfort and like-mindedness, a kind of border-policing that marked the underside of our social justice efforts in the 1980s and 1990s (even now) undermined that practice of care, across difference, perceived difference, constructed difference (because we knew these were constructed). What are the ethics we bring to bear on the need for comfort, community, tradition, friendship, solidarity, the demands of coalition-building (by nature built on difference, across boundaries), the sincere and thoughtful request of the other for a hand across the bridge, a bridge that is stolid and immovable now, may be ephemeral, disappear, break down, tear away, in another context? What are the ethics of suspicion in a practice of care?

And, in the context of this performance, and to this idea of suspicion, raised by my later riff on the Virginia Tech killings, Louise responded: “But our lived experiences as women of colour leave us continually with this need to engage for social justice that necessitates that we move outside our zones of comfort and community, our places where we feel at home, in order to feel at home, in order to affect — somehow — the workings of the larger world of our unease and discomfort. I wonder. Do I have the stamina for such migrations?”

This stamina, I suspect, is what returns many people to the container of self and to the market, rather than outward to the careful forging of “identity” or “ethno-politics,” for one of the lessons learned, certainly, whether our activism was in the arts or elsewhere, was that this kind of practice was laborious and engaged us, necessarily, in a good deal of intellectual, emotional and political soul-searching.

— *Andrea Fatona:*

I am particularly interested in the efficacy of claiming identities rooted in ethnicity as the starting point for re-imagining and activating new relationships in the world in the context of the burnout being felt by many involved in social justice concerns. Claiming an identity seems to draw on our human propensity to distinguish between I and you or not me and the challenge seems to be to find a way to reimagine and activate different conceptions of the performance of those identity pronoun categories. Aruna returned us to Rinaldo’s earlier statement re: a practice of care, which for me carries an implication that empathy and responsibility play important roles in our redefinitions. The sense of exhaustion that many of us feel signals to me that overtly attending to the emotions becomes a part of the equation if what is at stake in the political is informed by our desires for place in a socially just world. Regarding the notion of an ethic of suspicion in a practice of care, I’m wondering if an ethic of suspicion further widens the divide as far as identity-making and affiliations across difference go. Is it then a question of care, self-care included, and a responsibility for others and the world?

Paul Wong.  
Chinaman's Peak:  
Walking the  
Mountain, 1992,  
installation.  
Courtesy: the  
artist.



Syrus Marcus Ware. *Self-Portrait With Cotton Balls*, 2006. Courtesy: the artist.

— *Rinaldo Walcott:*

My question then is about the place of emotions in the discussion of material, political and social conditions brought about in the context of late capitalism and neoliberalism? I agree that self-fashion is not ethno-political, yet hegemony of the capitalist enterprise and its organizational structure has always called up race and ethnicity to its service, stifling all other alternate projects concerned with material sustenance.

I have always been taken by the notion of caring for those with whom you have nothing in common. That idea sets a really high standard but it also points to the very serious ethical concerns that require we think about our identities as only a beginning or an opening to a better kind of human life than the one we have. I wonder what it would mean to make such an idea a part of institutional practice. In this way, we might challenge institutions and those who populate them, not just to do lip service in aid of understanding difference but rather to care as a practice of our very difference. This might be abstract in its appeal to have us extend ourselves beyond how we know and live them, but I wonder about our inability to extend the self.

In the art world the object is cared for; the individual creating the object is sometimes cared for; but the larger community for which the object might be meaningful is hardly ever at issue. This is most clear to me as I read about the “repatriation” of Aboriginal cultural artifacts to BC and the ways in which simultaneously Aboriginal and First Nations People are still seeking justice on so many different fronts. I was amused when the recent exhibit of repatriated art in BC was snubbed by the leaders in face of the wealthy white folks who could afford to repatriate those artifacts. How can we get folks to shift those same concerns from objects to people? I feel myself headed into Marxist territory as I write this.

Let me stop for a while and think this through a bit more.

*Andrea Fatona is a curator and Ph.D. candidate at OISE/UT.*

*Rinaldo Walcott is a professor at OISE/UT. He is interested in a wide array of cultural practices, expressions and representations.*

*Aruna Srivastava teaches in the Department of English at the University of Calgary. She has spent many of her activist years engaged in anti-racism and social justice work in Calgary, within academia and where the spirit moves her.*

# TAKING IT UP: FIVE ORGANIZERS DEBATE IDENTITY

— *A Conversation between Mostafah Henaway, Nandita Sharma, Jaggi Singh, Harsha Walia and Rafeef Ziadah on the politicization of identity.*

— *Rafeef Ziadah:*

I am an indigenous woman from Palestine, a third-generation Palestinian refugee. This identity captures everything for me: the identity of a Palestinian nation; my relationship to Palestine, which is one of being at home yet in exile; that the displacement of Palestinian refugees is multigenerational; and that I have now become a settler on Turtle Island, although I do not identify as being Canadian.

— *Mostafah Henaway:*

I identify as a second-generation Egyptian. It is hard to identify as Canadian. When you are younger you are told you are part of this Canadian society, but as you grow older that identity starts to unravel as you realize you are not really wanted as part of Canada. The notion of Canadian multiculturalism is a myth; being Canadian is a white identity. Identifying as a Canadian multiculturalism is a myth; being Canadian is a white identity. Identifying as a Muslim would also not be accurate, as it does not encapsulate the element of culture for me. I identify culturally as an Arab, particularly given the shared political struggle of the Arab world. But I identify most specifically as Egyptian because that is where my family is from, so there is a sense of familiarity and it is also the identity my parents have ingrained in me. The national identification with Egypt is part of the vagueness of the attachment I feel as a second-generation Egyptian, I do not have an attachment to a specific region within Egypt. It is so complicated when you are born here, you struggle with the question of identity your whole life and being second-generation becomes an identity in itself.

— *Harsha Walia:*

How I identify continues to change and often depends on the context. I tend never to use any of the various labels that are generally ascribed to me such as “woman,” “working-class,” “of colour,” although I do have a strong affinity with those realities and struggles. The only descriptive identifier I use is being South Asian, which I understand as being physically and emotionally connected to my home in India rather than a replacement identifier for “person of colour” or a specific cultural identifier. I feel a tangible connection to the different parts of South Asia that I have spent years growing up in and where my families are from. They are the only places where I feel a tangible sense of home and belonging as much of the rest of my life has been spent in temporary and precarious migration. This reality of the criminalization of migration is a defining part of my identity and has legally, socially and psychologically denied me the right to claim a home anywhere other than India. If the context requires it, I will also identify with different political groups and movements that I am or have been part of. But I usually tend to keep identifications really short.

— *Jaggi Singh:*

I do not volunteer my identity, but will answer when asked. And depending on the context, I share parts of my identity, which are ever-changing and evolving; but nothing fully captures it. To give some examples: in some contexts, I would describe the backgrounds of my mother

and father; in other contexts I describe my politics and the organizing I am involved in; or I describe where I am born and where I live or where I have been; in some situations, I talk about my aspirations and my dreams; in certain places I seek common ground with others; in other contexts, I emphasize those parts of my identity that make me different. These are mutually reinforcing answers and all together they constitute how I identify myself. So, my partial response would be: I was born and raised in Toronto, my mom is a nurse originally from a tribal area of India called Chhattisgarh and my father is a cabbie originally from the Punjab; my sister and I grew up with a single mom. I've lived and organized in Montréal for the past decade, which is my political terrain of struggle. I'm a No Borders, anti-capitalist, immigrant and indigenous solidarity organizer. I'm a writer; I'm an activist; I'm an anarchist. And, I feel everything I just said is still incomplete.

— *Nandita Sharma:*

The question of identity is a hard one. My identities have changed so often. The more I think about it, the less there is anything I want to identify with. I used to be a “Woman of Colour,” “South Asian,” “Feminist,” “East Indian,” but I don't like any of those identities anymore. The “Queer” identity is still okay as it involves an element of resistance while also offering a challenge to the politics of identity by continuing to evolve, but now queer is becoming more of a replacement term for LGBT. I prefer to identify through practice rather than imposed definitions. When you read the history of where dominant identities came from such as race and nation, you see how those identities were created to destroy solidarities. For me, inspiration comes from those who identify through active practice; for example the Diggers who, in resisting the theft of their commons, came together to grow food on the land that had been stolen as a way to reclaim it. I find it inspiring that people were able to come together based on a shared practice of being producers, which was historically seen as the greatest threat to the modern capitalist order. I think identities based on shared oppressions are more abstract and less useful than identities based on shared practice.

— *Rafeef Ziadah:*

I think it depends on where people are at in their struggle. As Palestinians who are going through a national liberation struggle, the reclaiming of our national identity is central, given that the Israeli occupation is premised on the annihilation of the Palestinian identity. But identity does become exclusive, for example a Palestinian national identity is very gendered and class-based. There are significant class divisions between Palestinians in refugee camps, 1948 Palestinians and 1967 Palestinians. There is also a narrative of the veiled Muslim Palestinian woman, which is the counter-orientalist discourse of what and who an Arab woman is supposed to be. So, yes, struggles do ultimately need to be fought on the basis of liberation not identity. Within activist circles for example, some people claim more authenticity to a struggle by virtue of their identity. I do not believe that simply by being a Palestinian, I should lead the Palestine solidarity movement in Canada. I believe that Palestinians do, however, lead the movement based on the power of the arguments they make and their commitment to the struggle. The way to navigate all this, at the end of the day, is to do the work and just prove yourself.

— *Harsha Walia:*

I think it is a constant battle between embracing identity as a sense of empowerment and realizing its pitfalls. I do not think that identities based on shared oppressions are simply abstract; they are often based on some common lived experience or practice. Many anti-oppression identities such as race and gender are intended to be challenges to an exclusionary dominant order. The Canadian nation-state claims a racialized national identity that excludes indigenous people and people of colour, so the reclamation of those identities is a way to insert a sense of self worth and dignity into those daily struggles. Yet those identities, for example the homogenous “people of colour,” are also imposed; as Western imperialism continues to define itself as “us versus them,” we face greater pressures to accept narrower definitions of self. For me, the identity of “South Asian” can be equally socially constructed and exclusive, leading to a fundamentalist defense of the insider/outsider dichotomy. This is not to deny that there is a shared sense of history and tradition within the South Asian community, but the idea of “purity” is constantly invoked against those who contest certain cultural narratives, in particular women and queers. Another problem is when those identities become detached from the actual struggles and take on a life of their own. I find that the strength of an anti-oppression politics — that is to insert a radical analysis on privilege and systems of domination — has often resulted in a fetish of identity politics that is self-absorbed, alienating and does not allow for real political debate. It can create an environment where some are able

There are folks that I describe as "brown faces in high places," and they live comfortably within a neo-colonial, apartheid reality. I share no affinity with those people with whom I supposedly share an ethnic identity.

to — simply by virtue of their identity — be more "authentically" positioned than others or, even worse, are assumed to have greater shared affinities with each other despite significantly different class interests within the capitalist system. Being able to strike that balance of going beyond static identities yet being rooted in an anti-oppressive and anti-capitalist politics ultimately does come down to organizing; being actively involved with others and building relationships in the politics of struggle; fighting oppressive and exploitative systems; creating and transforming how we interact with one another; and reconstituting our communities along shared values and ideals.

— Jaggi Singh:

I embrace the dynamic nature of identity. Being skeptical of identity — which I feel is inherently limiting — does not mean I am not grounded in who I am and what I want to be. But, I prefer to let my actions speak for themselves. Identity also imposes a false commonality. For example, there are many folks that I describe as "brown faces in high places," and they live comfortably within a neo-colonial, apartheid reality. They do nothing to oppose oppression, but rather insidiously redefine it to uphold their privilege. I share no affinity with those people with whom I supposedly share an ethnic identity.

— Mostafah Henaway:

Within Egyptian identity, there is an ideal created that is middle-class and religious. This imposition gets policed internally and people deal with this conflict by trying to fake that identity rather than saying that they are being policed. For example, being queer is being a "bad Egyptian," so there is no belonging anymore. That policing is a very effective form of violence. Despite this criticism, however, of cultural border policing, I feel that I need to claim some sort of heritage that does not feel imposed. The identity I am trying to pull towards is easier in the diaspora as it is less rigid. Although it is based on the national identity of being Egyptian, it is as much a reclamation of that identity — of the Third World within the First World — as it is a rejection of what that identity is *supposed* to be.

COLUMN

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SIX NATIONS LAND RECLAMATION

BY COALITION IN SUPPORT OF INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY

On 28 February, 2006 members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community reclaimed a tract of land near Caledonia, Ontario, a property that the province had illegally sold to Henco Industries Ltd to develop into a residential complex. On 16 June, 2006 the Ontario government bought out Douglas Creek Estates developers and offered a substantial payment to Caledonia-area businesses, which alleged that they had been negatively impacted by the road barricades that resulted from the reclamation.

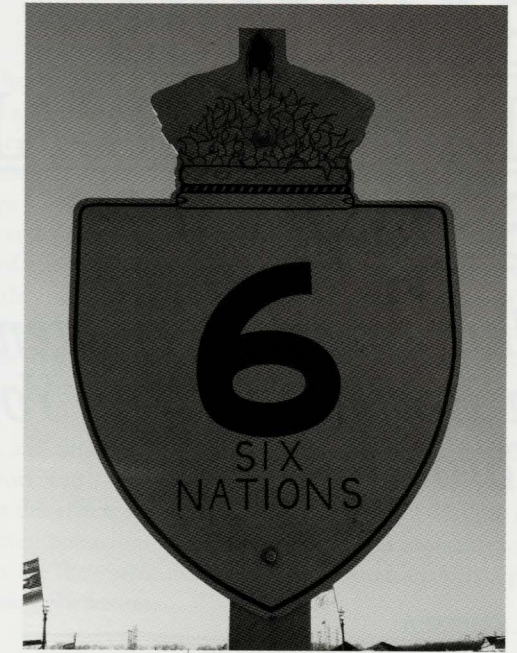
Inversely, Six Nations have mostly been dealt with through repression and a lack of serious commitment to negotiate. On 20 April, 2006 the OPP attacked the camp, armed with tasers, pepper spray and automatic weapons. A lot of people were injured and a few were arrested.

Astonishingly, the community was able to peacefully re-establish the camp renaming the site Kanenhstaton (the Protected Place). They subsequently blocked all roads leading into the tract of land in an

act of self-defence. Eventually, and in the interest of peaceful negotiations, the barricades came down on 23 May, 2006. Nonetheless, Caledonia residents have continued to engage in acts of provocation, to harass First Nations people and to invade the territory. As a result of some of these incidents, a number of First Nations people have been charged and arrested, and a few continue to be held in jail.

As of 10 November, 2006 the government position has been to continue to deny Six Nations rightful ownership of the land. In fact, the Provincial and Federal levels of government have been publicly arguing with each other over their responsibility, which only shows that they are reluctant to negotiate in good faith. In addition, the appointment of Julian Fantino as the OPP commissioner on 31 October, 2006, only heightens the fear that a military response is still a possibility.

At this moment, negotiations between the Six Nations Confederacy (legitimate government of the Grand River Community) and both levels of government can only take place once a month because that is the only time federal representatives are available. Meanwhile, the people camped out on Kanenhstaton are trying to help the land recover and donations to the effort are welcome.



New Highway Number 6 sign.  
Photo: Tracy Bomberly.

For more information please contact the Indigenous Caucus, Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty, [the.i.c@hotmail.com](mailto:the.i.c@hotmail.com)

# PRECARIOUS LIFE, POLITICAL POSSIBILITY

—Talking Across Tightening  
Urban Borders in New York  
and Toronto

BY PUNAM KHOSLA



Luxury condo  
construction at  
525 Clinton Ave.  
in Brooklyn, NY,  
March 2007.  
Photo: Punam  
Khosla.

Over the past four decades the demographic maps of large and small cities across North America, Europe and Australia have been reconfigured with rich and deepening hues of third-world migrations. The noisy spectacles of carnival capitalism, which increasingly co-opt these diversities into orgies of commodification cannot mask the divides and degradations of everyday life. As urban perimeters become utterly porous with residential sprawl and corporate agriculture, material and metaphoric walls are cutting through the centres of Eurocentric cities. Old and new colonial exploits are indeed coming home to roost. In the Anglo-American Imperialism of the early 21st century, the war on the home front is as critical as overseas conquest. And it is an urban war, pulsing like an approaching drumbeat under an increasingly transparent ideological skin.

From the defiant ghettos of the Paris suburbs to the tough inner cities of New York and Los Angeles, from the gentrifying waterfronts of Barcelona and Toronto to the branded Olympic competitiveness of London and Vancouver, western cities are a study in profound contradiction. Marketing rhetoric overlays deepening paradoxes: fear against unprecedented security; hunger alongside plenty; loneliness amongst festivity; desire married to violence. These instabilities are the axes of an emerging territorial, economic, political, cultural and bodily western urban logic as elite power faces off against the brewing threat of radical response from an exiled majority. The fires this time, as in James Baldwin's era, are sparked by unsettled histories of oppression collapsing into newly revived configurations of racialized, gendered and class exploitation. In the new millennium, patriarchal-religious, racist-imperialist and upper class capitalist control are being translated into new languages of power, control and resistance.<sup>1</sup>

The e-mail from FUSE reaches me in New York, where I have come to live, study Marx and urbanism, and immerse myself in a social and political landscape "other" than Toronto for the first time in many years.

I know Toronto as the site of hotly debated, but nonetheless uncannily inarticulate, contestations over racialized, gendered and classed segregation, abandonment, impoverishment and exclusion. I know it as a landscape of intense social control sometimes delivered through social work. A place where police, state and media, profiling, repression and violence are wrapped in a rhetoric that slips from blunt to paternalistic to coded hatred. A scene in which politicians, power brokers, poverty pimps, diversity darlings and media personalities slide around each other in privatized public policy meetings and less-than-glamorous receptions, nodding and glad-handing as they softly murmur reassurances in the language of participatory democracy, community consultation and reasonable compromise. Hypocrisy spreads like butter and clotted cream on the bland colonial crumpet they make of the city even as they sell it on the world stage as being among the most diverse and spicy in the western world.

I have come far from Toronto, and although I am less intimate with the contradictions, conceits and deceptions of New York and a touch infatuated with its quickened pulse, it is plain that this city is no escape from the effects of second-wave neoliberalism. On the contrary, it is a central global factory producing precarious life in which social and economic contours of race, class, gender and sexuality are the visible markers of land ownership, urban politics, cultural contestation and economic polarization.

Even as I know that each city is particular, I am convinced that identifying the nuggets of commonality in the detritus of everyday urban life within these dizzying new assaults is critical to an effective resistance.

The parallels are not precise but also not hard to see.

In Toronto I live on the edge of Regent Park, one of the oldest and largest social housing developments in Canada. Originally built as a suburban-style enclave to civilize, sanitize and clear the slums of the inner city, it is now being strangled from the outside by a ring of ultra-high priced private condo developments, and completely demolished on the inside to make way for a new wave of civilization through dispossession. Prime public land is being sold off in the name of improving social housing, while the city's waiting list for public housing swells to a staggering 70,000 households.

Just as Regent Park was the physical and ideological model for public housing in Canada after World War II, today's public-private partnership between developers and "public" officials use tax dollars, disproportionately paid by working and poor people, to finance the marketing and infrastructure for a new model. This new neoliberal mould literally pulls city land out from under the feet of an increasingly poor public and privatizes it into the hands of elites in the development industry. The communities of people of colour, immigrants and working people that make up Regent Park, who have suffered years of over-policing, under-funding, and



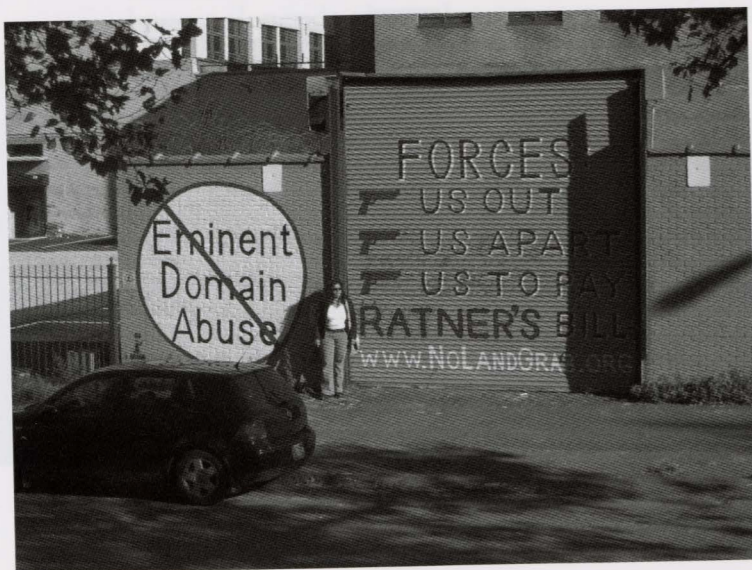
Left: Regent Park Phase One Demolition  
Site and Redevelopment Plan  
Right: Dundas and Parliament, Toronto,  
May 2006. Photos: Punam Khosla.

racist and sexist stigmatization as a neighbourhood of too many poor, black, single mothers are suddenly the centre of public attention. They are now inundated with promises of shiny new homes, personal upliftment and deliverance through the “mix” to be conjured magically by the mere presence of rich private condo owners in their midst. In fact, even before the first brick is laid, the promises are being broken. The proportion of social housing units in the Regent Park Plan has dropped from a starting guarantee of 40 percent to 2,000 homes. In one recent count it was hovering at less than a third of the 5,100 homes proposed for the whole site.<sup>2</sup> Spin doctors at the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), whose numbers appear to rise as fast as the buildings fall, are in denial. They offer vague but vehement reassurances that all existing units will be replaced somewhere in the “broader vicinity.”

Meanwhile opposition from otherwise savvy residents is being choked off by an intense ideological offensive mounted by the new incarnation of Toronto’s old, mainly white, progressive reform movement who are, ironically, mostly funded through public tax dollars. They import the rhetoric of “participatory democracy” with the same zeal as Starbucks displays for their free trade — oops, fair trade — coffee beans. This commodified consensus has been deployed with great success. A chorus of powerful endorsements from local councillors, the Mayor’s office, social service agencies and the CBC easily drown out any expressions of fear, uneasiness, skepticism or opposition from single mums, immigrants and people of colour in the area.

The contours of this story resonate deeply into past and present experiences in Montréal, Vancouver and Calgary and their frantic efforts to become “world class” by hosting World Expositions and Olympic Games. In this replicating storyline, the direct costs of the multi-million dollar bids and budgets and spectacular but shoddy architecture are paid for by taxpayers and marginalized city residents whose homes, lives and rights are wiped out by a crushing juggernaut of private enterprise and authoritarian aesthetics. Long after the ejaculatory events and the happy hype have given way to public fiscal crises, private developers reap the benefits of the ground “cleared” by social and physical devastation.<sup>3</sup> Vancouver, barely recovering from the Expo 86 disaster, is again under the broom of another sweep of “creative destruction” for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

In New York I emerge each day from my rented room in an overpriced, but beautiful, Brooklyn brownstone to a wall of angry murals and street posters denouncing a local developer, Bruce Ratner. His four billion dollar Atlantic Yards Project aims to build a stadium for the NBA Nets basketball team and a towering forest of condominiums, offices and retail stores on the site of the old railway yards at the foot of Flatbush Avenue. In this, one of the priciest real estate markets in the world, Ratner hopes to buy a third of the land for his development plan from New York’s public Metropolitan Transit Authority for a song. The rest of it is being bought up or taken by force from private homeowners and businesses. Like so many cities across the US, New York is using “eminent domain” laws, originally set up to allow the state to appropriate private lands for public interest, to force individual homeowners to sell. They then re-sell to private developers in the name of urban renewal. On top of this, millionaire Mayor Bloomberg has budgeted over \$200 million of New Yorkers’ tax dollars, twice the original estimate, to help Ratner with “property acquisitions.”<sup>4</sup>



Anti-Ratner Graffiti, Carlton Street in Brooklyn, NY, October 2005. Photo: Datejia Green.



Left: Stop Atlantic Yards campaign poster, 2007. Courtesy: Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. Right: Atlantic Yards site — land for sale sign.

— New York

A loud and well-organized local opposition of condo, home and small business owners are working with politicians and the fiercely anti-Ratner *Brooklyn Newspaper*. They are beating the streets, hitting the courts and generally doing everything in their power to fight Bloomberg’s City Hall. But many of these residents are part of the first wave of hip, gay, middle class, white gentry who bought and moved into Brooklyn before the property market boom and who now stand to lose both their neighbourhood and their increasingly lucrative property investments. Ratner is aggressively pitting the original, mostly low-income residents of colour against this, mostly bourgeois resistance, by buying their support. Like so many developers, he drapes himself in the garb of benevolent purpose through claims to clean up the area, eliminate “blight” and crime, along with promises of (temporary) rent subsidies for the poor in the new condos. One or two large social advocacy groups in the area, poverty pimps in the eyes of some, are brokering deals between developer and tenants using Margaret Thatcher’s now well-worn mantra of TINA (there is no alternative) — the argument that development can’t be stopped so marginalized people should grab what they can. These projects, although vast in scale and hotly debated in the public arena, are not exceptions in New York and Toronto where construction cranes perch across the skylines screaming out a scale of urban transformation not seen in half a century. These building booms are echoing across the financial heartlands of the wealthy west, kicking up dust storms of controversy. And big culture is called in to clear the air.

New York’s cultural establishment is stoking the redevelopment fervour by resurrecting the legacy of the city’s “master builder” Robert Moses. New Yorkers know Moses as “The bulldozing bully who callously displaced thousands of New Yorkers in the name of urban renewal. The public-works kingpin who championed highways as he starved mass transit.”<sup>5</sup> Apparently it takes not one, not two, but three simultaneous museum exhibitions to rehabilitate the man who destroyed vast swaths of New York’s social and physical landscape between the 1930s and the 1970s to make way for his racist vision of a tame, white middle-class American city of car drivers serviced by a spectacular array of public bridges, roads, parks and recreation facilities. “Robert Moses and the Modern City”<sup>6</sup> repackages the urban goliath fatally challenged by Jane Jacobs and others in the 1960s. While the Museum of the City of New York marks his “remaking the Metropolis” and the Queens Museum of Art his “Road to Recreation.” Columbia University, ironically embroiled in its own present-day plans to displace Harlem residents, is honoring Moses’ zeal for “Slum Clearance and the Superblock Solution,” at their Wallach Art Gallery.

Passionate as they are, cultural cover-ups are but a thin veneer over a new massive, elite gentrification scheme. As urban thinker David Harvey points out, “The whole of Manhattan has become a virtual gated community for the rich...for cultural institutions like MoMA cultivated so assiduously by Nelson Rockefeller in the 1970s as part of his campaign to civilize the city by culture.”<sup>7</sup>

In their own defense, development proponents hold out the carrot that they are creating “good” jobs for locals.



## The waterfront, schools, downtown neighborhoods, parks, culture and public housing projects are all slated for a golden shakedown.

Building and economic booms need workers. But these days, unlike the past, the demand for labour doesn't mean an abundance of stable or well-paid jobs. Brown and black people from around the world are greasing the wheels of a stalling American economy. I shake my head at the racist absurdities of growing anti-"immigrant" rhetoric on a continent of immigrants that absolutely depends on immigrant labour.

A new research report on unregulated work in New York tells me that unionized construction jobs have dropped to less than 50 percent, leaving the majority of workers, who are overwhelmingly immigrants and men of colour, unprotected against severe exploitation.<sup>8</sup>

A growing army of day-labourers looking for work on the streetcorners of New York faces dangerous and abusive conditions. Wages are low and often not paid at all.<sup>9</sup> Brooklyn grocery baggers work for tips only and women are on sale in a modern day version of a domestic "slave" market.

... the work at stake is \$8-an-hour housecleaning, and those vying for a day's scrubbing, mainly for Hasidic homemakers, stand in a crude ascending hierarchy of employer preference: Mexican and Central American women in their 30s at the back, Polish immigrant women in their 50s and 60s in the middle, and young Polish students with a command of English at the head of the line.<sup>10</sup>

But the story is not so new. Angela Davis reminds us that "even in the 1940's, there were streetcorner markets in New York and other large cities — modern versions of slavery's auction block — 2 inviting white women to take their pick from the crowds of black women seeking work..."<sup>11</sup>

This is the global south in the north. Under a veneer of lipstick and lingerie ads selling the American dream, third-world conditions are reproduced in the lives of migrants. It all seems like a sick joke. People traveling half way around the world to find themselves in the same place.

The unacknowledged lifeblood of American imperialism is domestic violence, robbery and slavery of non-Europeans. Today, as in 1492, people of colour and Aboriginal people are being unceremoniously stripped of their humanity, citizenship, labour and land. This brutal tug-of-war defines the racialized and gendered boundaries of urban neighbourhoods and the nation state.

### MAYDAY

The Mayday march for the rights of immigrant workers takes over Union Square with placards, banners and far too many American flags for my taste. In 30 years of left activism in the west I have never seen a Mayday rally organized almost exclusively by people of colour. And the leadership of women of colour is evident. Organizers have been worried about the turnout. Since last year's demonstrations, which were among the biggest the US has ever seen, ICE, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement arm of Homeland Security, has been on a steady and brutal intimidation campaign. ICE SWAT teams are raiding homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces leaving a trail of arrests, deportations and criminal charges against undocumented people and those who hire and shelter them.

In spite of these risks, the New York city block is spilling over with protesters. I recognize some women I met recently at Sisters on the Frontline, a conference of women trade unionists and community activists and march with their Immigrant Communities in Action banner. It is a coalition of Filipino domestic workers, gays and lesbians of colour in the Audre Lorde Project, South Asian youth and seniors from drum (Desis Rising Up and Moving) and women from Esperanza del Barrio — a neighbourhood group.

— Toronto

I come back to Toronto for short working visits.

During Black History Month I find myself in the rapidly gentrifying Queen St. West strip for an event at the hip and happening Gladstone Hotel. Here in Toronto the buzzword is "revitalization" and its enthusiastic backers are leaving no stone unturned. The waterfront, schools, downtown neighbourhoods, parks, culture and public housing projects are all slated for a golden shakedown. Toronto's civic establishment is having a love affair with the post-Marxist capitalist Richard Florida. His seductive idea of the "creative city" as a perfect tool for urban cleansing is the force behind Toronto's "Live with Culture" campaign.

The big-money glint of the Micheal Lee-Chin Crystal, the glitter of the new Opera House, the posh glam of the Drake and the arts spectacle of Nuit Blanche dovetail neatly with the city's beautification campaigns. They are the flipside of a new corporate version of indie culture promoted by City Hall, designed to make Toronto a competitive, neoliberal "global city."

As I enjoy the Gladstone's exposed brick atmosphere, listening to the defiant Black Canadian jazz of Joe Sealy's Trio, I fear we are being numbed into collusion with new undercurrents of inner city eviction and slum clearance restoring the city for a shrinking but nouveaux riche elite. The cultural, if not always phenotypical, white minority are eagerly restoring historical and structural façades, but making rubble of the rich social relationships of the "deviants" they are forcing out of house and home.

On another sojourn I participate in a symposium at York University marking 200 years since the Brits legally abolished their slave trade. Afterwards Canada's most "excellent" and "honourable" first black Governor General Michaëlle Jean is bestowed with an honorary degree. Her speech is politically elegant, advancing a careful but surprisingly frank critique of the racist contradictions of modernity and the enlightenment:

What many tend to forget is that these horizons were grafted on the sweat and blood of millions of enslaved Africans and Aboriginals, whose alienated labour became one of the main motors of modernity... As Cornel West wrote, "the great paradox of modernity is that democracy flourished for Europeans, especially men of property, alongside the flowering of the transatlantic slave trade and New World slavery."<sup>12</sup>

I well up with pride. But my heart also knows that if New York is guilty of making false claims to exceptionalism from American cruelty, Canada is guilty of a worse fraud in relationship to US-style racism.

Toronto's red, black, brown and yellow populace knows just how lethal these myths are. In the two decades I've lived here, police shootings of young, disabled and mentally ill people of colour have, by necessity, been a central focus of our anti-racist work. And now we are living out the horrific legacy of the ultra-conservative Harris government of the 1990s. Targetted policing campaigns, zero tolerance education policies and the authorized violence of a daddy-knows-best, poor-bashing, bootstraps, white supremacist state has trampled the delicate dreams of a new generation.

The deathly effects of an implosion of violence are being felt just across the street from where we are celebrating the end of the slave trade. From one end of the city to the other, in a wide belt along the Finch corridor, young people are losing their lives. The rise of guns and gangs are sensationalized by a racist media and political elite lost in their own constructed amnesia. In the desperation of the moment I see communities reaching for a familiar cocktail of home-ownership, policing, patriarchy and religion as a way of doing *something*. But can the forces of law-and-order, authoritarian discipline, privatization and absentee fathers solve the very problems they cause? Or are we pouring fuel onto a tragic blaze started by a muscular, racist-capitalist power and internalized through the masculinist dreams and get-rich-quick schemes of poor young men of colour trapped in its dangerous heat.

Listening to the impeccable and savvy Governor General, once an immigrant, single mum herself, I remember the women of these neighbourhoods. The burden of blame implied by

It's as if, after a long cultural turn, we are turning back to the old stalwarts of state politics and capitalist economics to describe and make sense of our time.

traditional remedies lands squarely on their overloaded backs. They told me how poverty, two decades of cuts to social programs, state violations and male violence make their lives unworkable. For women of colour whose situation is compounded by multiple and intersecting disadvantages, social neglect is escalating into absolute erasure. Still, it falls to them, body and soul, to make the impossible possible.<sup>13</sup> It has been nearly four years since my report on these issues was presented to the city and low-income women of colour have been speaking out. But they are still not part of the public conversation about the cause and consequences of a situation that pushes their lives onto the frontlines of daily disaster.

Online from New York I am heartened to see that No One is Illegal has pulled out 2,500 people for a Toronto immigrant rights rally on 5 May. They are calling for access to all city services regardless of status, a program to regularize undocumented immigrants, and an end to deportations and detentions. I remember the construction workers deported by our Tory minority government now elbowing its way into a leading role in global malevolence. As the newest, bluest eye on the international scene, Harper is sadistically turning Trudeau's legacy upside down as the media turn into lapdogs basking in his pious paternal presence.

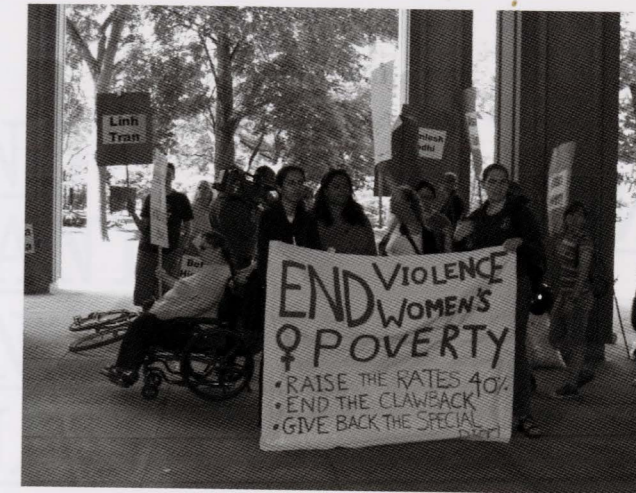
In spite of the Canadian tendency to stockpile denial, the situation is irrefutable. My colleague Grace-Edward Galabuzi's book, *Canada's Economic Apartheid*, is out on the shelves. It defies a public arena still busy congratulating itself for being more racially "tolerant" than the US. He gently but firmly breaks open the realities of Canadian segregation, exposing how people of colour bear the brunt of "precarious work" through a deeply entrenched history of racism.

Preparing to come home I find out that the people who persisted and set up Toronto's only workers' centre are releasing a new report, *Working on the Edge*.<sup>14</sup> As one of the few frontline advocacy groups in the city, The Workers Action Centre is intimately familiar with the increasingly nightmarish experiences of working immigrants, and women and men of colour in Toronto. Their organizing exposes the reality of precarious work, low wages and mistreatment on the job. The report's conclusion, that employers don't see the humanity of their workers, reminds me of the struggle of the Brooklyn grocery baggers. For women this exclusion from humanity casts an even wider net. Many can't find paid work. It seems that any relationship to the paid labour force, precarious as it is, is fast becoming a social privilege.

THE IDENTITY AND POLITICS OF PRECARIETY

As I pack up my room in Brooklyn and make my solo journey back to Toronto I am keenly alert to the work ahead. This conversation on "precarity" has clarified much but I am aware it is just a beginning. Economic polarization and the rise of authoritarianism — aggressive surveillance, law and order policing and militarization at home and abroad — are still the most widely discussed features of neoliberalism and economic and social precariousness. It's as if, after a long cultural turn, we are turning back to the old stalwarts of state politics and capitalist economics to describe and make sense of our time. It's easy to bring it all down to class and capitalism. But does it help us to reduce our realities to these reassuringly simple forces? Or does it play into a refusal to look into the face of a renewed white supremacy, a new kind of patriarchy and hetero-normativity that can appear in a dark skin, a woman's body and a gay marriage?

It is too easy to dismiss the identity politics of the 1980s as diversions of a postmodern moment. Too easy to make our work as feminist, anti-racist, gay and lesbian advocates in the 1970s and 80s a scapegoat for the failures of class politics and the predations of the new tyrants. And, worse, it reinforces the paradigm of violent backlash by the most powerful against the most powerless that is the hallmark of our era.



Demonstration to raise welfare rates and end violence against women. Toronto, June 2006. Photo: Punam Khosla.

My time in New York has been precious and brought a rich multitude of people, places and ideas into my world. Traversing the city, checking into events at Cooper Union, the Brecht Forum and Bluestockings bookstore, I reconnected, for the first time in many years, with a rich vein of South Asian cultural and political organizing. My time at Desh Pardesh, Toronto's quintessential identity-political event for South Asian activists, artists and academics through the 1990s came back to me through the indelible mark it has made on New York's Left landscape. Many of the activists from that time are still at it. Feminists Activists from South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA) are organizing around queer and immigrant issues at the same time. The taxi drivers' organizing brought to us by Vivek Bald's film *Taxiwalla* has become multiracial now. I recognize these shifts in my own life as well. I am no longer willing to slice and dice feminist, anti-racist, queer and class-conscious politics into a disembodied politics. Identity and class are historically inseparable.

As I drive through the mountains between New York and Toronto I realize the distances between cities are much shorter than I had imagined. This has been the first of many crossings and conversations. If we, who have no home, can only hope to find it in the struggle — a wide and open road of solidarity awaits us.

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*Punam Khosla is a long-time activist-scholar who has returned to school after 25 years of activism to pursue a Doctorate in Urban/Environmental studies at York University. In 2003 she authored "If Low Income Women of Colour Counted in Toronto" based on an action-research project with low-income women in nine neighbourhoods. The struggle continues...*

# AFGHAN-ISTAN: BETWEEN THE TIGER AND THE PRECI- PICE

BY MARIAM GHANI

Since spring 2007, Helmand — a Southern province in Afghanistan that produces close to 40 percent of the world's opium — has become the flash-point for confrontations between NATO, the Taliban, local poppy farmers, drug traffickers, the International Security Assistance Force, Afghan National Army soldiers involved in the Afghan government's much-vaunted but largely failed drug eradication campaign and the local law officers who are increasingly perceived as corrupt and criminal. While Helmand's confusion between victors, victims, actors and reactors represents an extreme case even within Afghanistan, it is by no means an anomaly. In today's Afghanistan, those armed to fight the rule of law frequently don fake police uniforms to carry out their attacks, but the real highway police are arrested for real highway robbery; the same Talib who once burned fields of poppies now protects them (while swearing alternately

that he does and does not); the Mujahedin claim to have surrendered their guns to the disarmament process, but everyone has a brand new Kalashnikov; the government supports media freedom, as long as journalists are willing to issue retractions anytime an official objects to how he is represented on TV; and former enemies join hands in a new political United Front and talk of peace, all in order to grant themselves amnesty for the crimes they committed during years of brutal battle against one another. A stalled and infighting parliament and the President's role in a kidnapping negotiation that set free an Italian journalist while leaving his Afghan driver and translator to die at the hands of the Taliban have sown doubt and distrust of the central government in the provinces. When statistics were compiled for 2006, they revealed that it was the worst year since 2001 for school violence, with 191 schools torched and 64 students and teachers killed, the public saw that soon the current administration's educational programs, too, could crumble into dust. With only half of all school-age children in school, the government has now admitted it cannot protect them and organized local communities into their own school defense committees. Little wonder, then, that ordinary Afghans have come to view promises of support, hope and a better future with skepticism; whenever the military strikes — whichever military (or militia) it might be — all they see are the civilian casualties. And even when it comes to those casualties — an increasingly explosive issue in Afghanistan — no one can agree on the numbers, perhaps because in a place like Helmand, no one can walk between the tiger and the precipice forever without finally, reluctantly perhaps, choosing which way to fall.

#### Notes:

Sources include: Institute for War & Peace Reporting, Afghan Recovery Reports by Hafizullah Gardesh & Wahidullah Amani, Kabul; Sayed Yaqub Ibrahimi, Mazar-e-Sharif; and IWPR trainees, Helmand. [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org) Radio Free Liberty/Radio Europe Afghanistan Reports with reporting by Ron Synovitz and Farangis Najibullah of Radio Free Afghanistan. [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org)

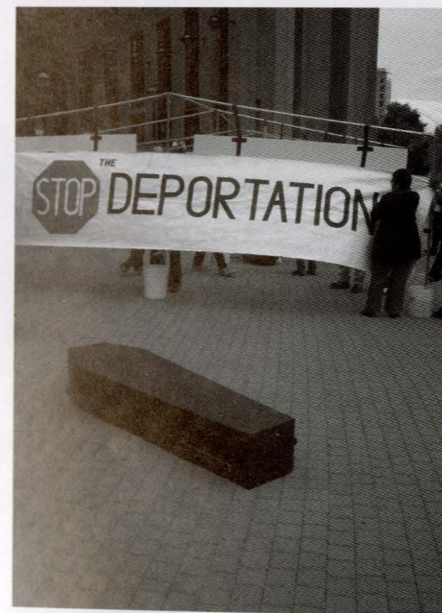
Mariam Ghani is a Brooklyn-based artist and teacher whose work in video, installation, new media, performance, photography, text, and public dialogue has been screened, exhibited and published internationally. Her interactive documentary about the post-conflict reconstructions of Kabul can be seen at [www.kabul-reconstructions.net](http://www.kabul-reconstructions.net).



Poppy pods, by Flickr user visual density, via Creative Commons attribution license, edited by Mariam Ghani.

# ORGANIZING FOR MIGRANT JUSTICE AND SELF- DETERMINATION

—*In conversation with Mostafah Henaway, Nandita Sharma, Jaggi Singh, Harsha Walia and Rafeef Ziadah.*



No One Is Illegal Vancouver, silent march to honour those kidnapped and "disappeared" (deported), 2005. Courtesy: Harsha Walia.

Over the past several years, groups and movements have coalesced around themes like No One is Illegal, Solidarity Across Borders and Open the Borders. In their day-to-day work of organizing with and for migrants, such groups are working against increasingly restrictive immigration policies, the heightened detention and deportation of migrants and the repressive national security apparatus that discriminates against racialized migrants, for example, through the use of security certificates.

At the same time, such movements are deeply connected to global movements resisting further expansion of the capitalist system and wars and occupations such as those throughout Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine that are the root causes of people's migration and displacement in the 21st century. Finally, the integrated focus on the relationship between the colonization of diverse indigenous people and the subjugation of migrants portrayed as not belonging in Canada has enabled such movements to make connections between the dispossession of people from their lands and livelihoods from the global South and encroachment onto indigenous lands throughout the Americas. Always alert to the danger of trivializing the serious differences that have come to form between groups, there is, at the same time, a recognition that without attempts to work against the idea, for example, that the social justice demands of indigenous people and migrants are inherently at odds with one another, we will contribute to the propping up of a global system that ensures our mutual destruction.

Many people continue to think that everyone has some "natural homeland" and that this, and only this, is where they "belong."

— Harsha Walia:

MOVEMENTS FOR MIGRANT JUSTICE

I think the migrant justice movement as it has evolved over the past few years has really been able to push a radical analysis on migration and has challenged the traditional dichotomy of legitimate versus illegitimate migrants. The very name No One Is Illegal is very powerful and rejects any reformist approaches to "improving" Canadian immigration policies. Such movements have been able to articulate an analysis that challenges the power of the state to construct categories that control people's rights to self-determination and links local and global issues of migration, race, nationalism, capitalism and imperialism. However, we still continue the struggle to build a more comprehensive movement on the ground because we are fighting a system that has been successful in dividing, isolating and individualizing the struggle for immigrants, refugees and non-status communities. This often gets internalized as the "model minority" syndrome, where migrants themselves internalize ideas of who is "worthy" and who is "unworthy."

— Mostafah Henaway:

One of the major ongoing debates in the migrant justice movement is the issue of casework, which is the constant need for tangible support work — including legal defense — for individuals and families going through the immigration or refugee process. There is a clear understanding that the professional immigrant and refugee service industry and infrastructure has contributed to channeling migrants' experiences into victimization and dependency. So instead, we try to do support work in a way that is part of a larger political context of organizing and helps build larger cultures of resistance. Direct casework is necessary in order to support those who are affected by the repressive policies of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and to build a movement that is rooted in people's lives, but it is an ongoing struggle to ensure that it does not become simply about service provision and that those directly affected are constantly empowering themselves through the process.

— Nandita Sharma:

I think the relationships being established and work being done by No Borders movements are full of great potential but they also continue to be highly tenuous. There is much excitement as we recognize our deep relationships with one another across the borders of "race" and "nation," for instance as migrants groups act in solidarity with indigenous struggles. At the

No One Is Illegal - Vancouver rally, 2006. Photo: Claudio Ekdahl.



same time there is a great deal of hesitation to let go of exclusive and divisive identities since these are so tied up with what it means to access power. For example, ideas of being "at home" are still very much racialized or nationalized. That is, many people continue to think that everyone has some "natural homeland" where they "belong." This is tied up with the current world order where only nations are seen as having any right to self-determination, an idea that is ultimately hostile to people's migration. Unfortunately, these anti-migrant politics are not only part of right wing thinking but also, in many cases, prevalent in the most radical parts of the left.

— Rafeef Ziadah:

THE IDEOLOGIES OF DISPLACEMENT AND SETTLEMENT

I believe the same definition of settlers can be applied to both Turtle Island and Palestine. In Palestine/Israel, anyone who espouses the ideology of Zionism and identifies with the project of Zionism is a settler. There is a minority of Israelis who are anti-Zionist and I do not see them as settlers as they are with us in the fight. There are also migrant workers, for example North African Jews and Arab Jews, brought into Israel to work in specific industries. Unfortunately, many of these people have internalized Zionist ideology and despite their second-class status in Israel, believe themselves to be above the Palestinians. Settlement is not only physical occupation; it is also ideology. You can have people who are physically on the land who are not settlers, while also having settlers who are not physically on the land, for example Zionists in New York who fund the physical settlement and occupation of Palestine. In terms of Turtle Island, the same logic applies. Immigrants or others who come from backgrounds of oppression and occupation do not absolve themselves of being settlers. Immigrants are settlers, especially as immigrants rise with class mobility. However, immigrants who decide to fight for indigenous self-determination free themselves of being settlers. It is horrible for Palestinians to imagine ourselves as being settlers; therefore it is even more important for us to commit ourselves to fighting for the liberation of Turtle Island.

— Nandita Sharma:

To me, not all those who live on occupied lands can or should be considered colonizers (which is really what is meant when people are called settlers.) To suggest that anyone who migrates is a colonizer is a perverse logic that has embedded within it a deep hostility to the whole process of human migration. The process of colonization (in which the term settler colonist was developed) refers to a specific kind of relationship in which some people attempt to destroy previously existing societies in order to gain privileged access to land, resources and labour. We must recognize that not all migrants do this and that most migrants today, including many indigenous people, are caught up in a vicious cycle of displacement and migration. If we see the entire process of capitalist globalization as a form of colonization, it is hard to imagine a single place in the world today that is not occupied territory. To say that people should not move to places that are occupied would in fact be an argument that people shouldn't move. For example, there is a part of the anti-occupation Hawaiian sovereignty movement that calls for a Hawaiian governing body (that is a national state in all but name) that would issue passports and implement border controls. Such practices are very dangerous as they are not at all transformative and only change *who* rules rather than eliminating the colonial practice of a group of ruling elites. To me, that kind of movement is not going to get us anywhere.

— Rafeef Ziadah:

I do not believe claims of ownership over land. Capitalism is a political and economic system that has created the framework of private property ownership and ideas about entitlement to land. I believe in the philosophy of "indigenism" in which no one owns the land; instead, everybody shares it. And certainly such a philosophy is radically anti-capitalist, concerned with living respectfully toward one another and the land. An ultimate goal for me is to have the liberation of a Palestine that is not exclusionary and where rights are not based on religion and ethnicity.

— Jaggi Singh:

I believe active struggle against colonialism — and for indigenous sovereignty and self-determination — is the main point here. Settlement is as much an ideology as a practice, and the only way to escape complicity with settlement is active opposition to it. I do organize on the basis of a vision for no borders and free movement. But, I have never heard of an indigenous theory of decolonization that is about expulsion — expulsion of a corporate mine perhaps — but never of people who migrate to achieve dignity in their lives. The Mohawk Two Row Wampum, which represents the idea of natives and non-natives traveling side-by-side in mutual respect, provides us with one example of a basis for understanding a relationship of

The concept of who is indigenous to a land needs to be rethought. Indigenous people are also displaced and become migrants.

respectful and just coexistence between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Decolonization — understood as the active practice of self-determination against colonialism and neo-colonialism by non-natives — is something we need to actively be thinking about and taking responsibility for. That only happens in the context of on the ground, day-to-day organizing, creating and cultivating the spaces where we can begin dialogues and discussions as natives and non-natives, within a shared terrain of struggle.

— Nandita Sharma:

We must deal with the fundamental issue of colonialism and recognize that after 1492, the relationship between people and place is crucial; is there a connection that is timeless that allows no room for migration? The concept of who is indigenous to a land needs to be rethought. Indigenous people are also displaced and become migrants, for example 25 percent of migrants from Mexico are indigenous. So to me those dichotomies of indigenous/migrant and displacement/homeland are false. People need to see themselves as part of the whole world that they live in and we need to forge new identities that are transformative in breaking down the structures that oppress us, while also challenging ourselves about who we see ourselves in the struggle with. All people have an inherent relationship to land; the question becomes which land. The divisions are not between indigenous and migrants, they are between different ideas of what to do with land. There are indigenous capitalists who want to follow the project of economic development and private indigenous ownership and there are those who believe in the values of common use. The vision I support is this non-industrial model of common use and self-sufficiency. So we need to shift the debate from *who* is entitled to the land to *what* people want to do with it.

— Harsha Walia:

The crucial idea around identifying oneself as a settler is in acknowledging and taking deep responsibility as a person on an occupied land, understanding how we all, regardless of our backgrounds, do benefit in various ways from this process of colonization. This awareness leads to the necessity of engaging in a struggle of decolonization, acting in tangible solidarity with indigenous peoples and building greater awareness within and across communities. However, I also think we need to de-link the idea of migration from settler-colonialism, which is a capitalist and colonial ideology. We have been conditioned to believe that all those who migrate are settler-colonialists because the migration of the “discoverers” is celebrated by a colonial education system. Although the distances and frequency with which people migrate has rapidly expanded, people have always moved, traded and connected with each other without being colonizers. Therefore, we need to expand on a radical praxis that acknowledges the inherent claims to land and territory that diverse communities hold, while maintaining an ethics of anti-segregation as cultures are constantly re-founding themselves. This does not suggest a simple call for “unity” across our differences — in particular those that are rooted in systems of power and privilege — but to struggle from our specific locations while building genuine alliances with each other. This requires us to exercise our sovereignties differently, to think of our identities as a place of connection rather than exclusion and to radically recon-



Left: Migrant Youth Are Warriors Poster via Creative Commons attribution license. Courtesy: Harsha Walia. Right: National Day of Action for Status for All, Vancouver rally, 2006. Photo: Jon Elmer.

figure our kinship and solidarities based on shared experiences and visions. In terms of the relationships between immigrant and indigenous communities, I think we have a shared experience of racism and colonization. However, I would be cautious in over-simplifying the relationship. Certainly comments such as “our struggles are the same/ equal” are patronizing and deny the current violent reality of the genocide of indigenous people that is distinct from the colonial agendas we have fled in the South or are facing as migrants in the North.

— Jaggi Singh:

I also want to note that the presumed link between diverse communities is not natural. The term “people of colour” is too generalized (as most folks who use it admit). It lumps migrants from diverse backgrounds, with descendants of slaves, with indigenous peoples, in a really crude way. Again, it’s through on-the-ground organizing that meaningful alliances are created, as well as meaningful “identities” that flow from struggles, rather than being abstracted onto them.

— Mostafah Henaway:

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO REMAIN AND THE RIGHT TO MIGRATE

Migration is an extension of foreign policy. Most people in the world today migrate because their right and their ability to remain in their homes is violated by Western imperialist governments. The further south that northern government outposts extend into, the further north the Southern migrants enter. The borders between the First and the Third Worlds have shifted rapidly, and the First World is equally becoming a space for fighting national liberation struggles in the south as the south itself is. An extension of the right to remain in your home in Algeria, Palestine or Iran is your right to remain in your home in Montréal and fight your deportation.

— Nandita Sharma:

If we continue to romanticize the liberatory possibilities of national liberation, we are setting up future generations. People are not coming to grips with how things changed in 1492. One of those things is human migration and the ways in which the encounters of people have intensified. Yet many of us are behaving as if we are living in a world where continents are separate or that it is desirable for them to be separate. For me, unless we are able to acknowledge the impossibility and undesirability of that, we cannot move forward. For example, do we want to live in a world where someone like me can only claim rights to use the land in a place where I was born (India) but where I do not live or have significant ties to? Such arguments basically get boiled down to a politics of “everybody go home,” where home is a static idea, contrary to human reality.

— Harsha Walia:

I do not think the struggle for the right to remain and the struggle for the right to migrate are contradictory; I think they are the paramount struggles we face globally today. The reality is that we fight for a world in which no one is forced to migrate against their will and also for a world in which people are able to move freely. The reality of migration today is that millions are forced to migrate due to colonial, capitalist and oppressive forces. However, even without these forces, people should have the right to migrate and I think we need to challenge the assertion that people are only able to migrate if they are forced to do so. In the ideal anti-capitalist world that I wish to live in, the borders between fighting in the homeland/fighting in exile disappear as the idea of ownership and entitlements to different spaces is eradicated.

— Rafeef Ziadah:

In the context of Palestine and Palestinian refugees, I see no contradiction between demanding the right of return for Palestinian refugees to their homes before the 1948 Al-Nakba, while at the same time demanding that the Canadian state not deport Palestinian refugees. There were, for example, some Arab community leaders in Canada who were trying to suggest that Palestinian refugees should “stay” in Palestine and fight for Al-Awda (right of return) and that the struggle against deportation of Palestinian refugees in Canada was undermining the struggle in Palestine. I believe, however, that the underlying motivation amongst the people making those arguments was a desire to maintain their privilege and an unwillingness to confront the Canadian state’s ongoing practices of deportation.

— Jaggi Singh:

It is a false debate, imposed by people with a superficial understanding of what it means to be a migrant. Free movement and the right not to be displaced are two essential elements to the assertion of collective and individual self-determination. That’s exactly the premise of the day-to-day organizing work of groups like No One Is Illegal and why activists in such groups see

All over the world people are calling for our solidarity and I wish more people understood the absolute necessity of political engagement in the struggle.

no contradiction between engaging in indigenous solidarity work while fighting deportations and repressive border regimes.

#### THE WAY FORWARD

I want us to imagine a struggle that is more united and less sectarian. All over the world people are calling for our solidarity and I wish more people understood the absolute necessity of political engagement and struggle. We need more people to commit to the work of daily organizing and to build a base of meaningful organizing. I think we also need to critically think about the difference between political work and simple sloganeering and constantly question the effectiveness of what we are doing and whether it is grounded in the lived realities of people.

— Rafeef Ziadah:

— Mostafah Henaway:

Sometimes our analysis is comprehensive and all encompassing, but in reality and in practice, we need to build stronger connections between diverse issues and movements. People need to come to terms with the reality that the borders of national liberation and of the global south really do extend out to North America. An effective movement must profoundly shift how we negotiate the borders that separate us and prevent us from making meaningful connections in the fight for a more just society.

— Nandita Sharma:

Our greatest challenge is to build a strong, grassroots movement demanding free mobility within the context of a world where people are not continuously displaced by the daily practices of global capitalist wars, plunder and destruction of our environment. This is tied to the way we think about our relationships with one another and our identities. Our most effective models for disrupting these systems are those that are attentive to changing both the way we think and identify and to changing the dominant structures of our world.

— Harsha Walia:

I think we face various challenges — to build more sustainable movements, more effective movements, more nurturing movements, more transformative movements, more comprehensive movements, more anti-oppressive movements, more community-rooted movements, more creative movements, more relevant movements, more emancipatory movements, more disruptive movements. But I do believe that the only way to come closer to achieving any of these is to actually engage in the struggle for liberation and freedom and to actively participate in the collective organizing to build movements that we desire and demand.

*Mostafah Henaway is a second-generation Egyptian who has been involved with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, Toronto Taxi Drivers Association, Solidarity Across Borders Montréal and Block the Empire Montréal.*

*Nandita Sharma is an activist scholar who is part of a loose network of No Borders groups that challenge the legitimacy of national border controls with their regimes of citizenship and also work to ensure that everyone has the ability to both “stay” and to “move” as they so desire.*

*Jaggi Singh is a writer, activist, and anarchist living and organizing in Montréal. He is a no borders, anti-capitalist, immigrant and indigenous solidarity organizer involved in a wide range of movements.*

*Harsha Walia is a South Asian organizer and writer currently based in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories. She is involved in anti-war organizing, anti-capitalist movements, anarchist people of colour networks, migrant justice organizing, feminist and anti-racist collectives and South Asian community organizing.*

*Rafeef Ziadah is a third-generation Palestinian refugee who lost her parents in the 1982 Massacre at the Shatilla Refugee Camp. She is a member of the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid and Sumoud: A Palestinian Political Prisoner Solidarity Group and a political science student in Toronto.*

#### DIALOGUE

## RADICAL INDIGENEITY: CLAIMING CULTURAL SPACE

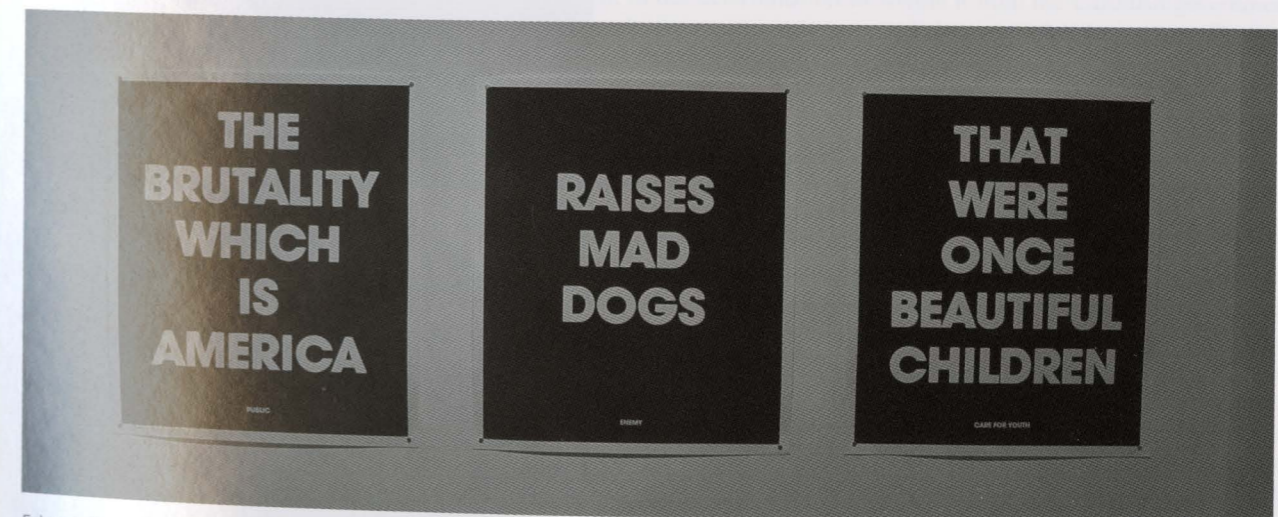
— *A conversation between  
Steve Loft and Marcia Crosby*

— Steve Loft:

Something to consider. In Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred's book *Peace, Power, Righteousness* he writes, “Working within a traditional framework, we must acknowledge the fact that cultures change and that any particular notion of what constitutes “tradition” will be contested. Nevertheless, we can identify certain common beliefs, values and principles that form the persistent core of a community's culture.”

I want to start here because I think Alfred gives us a point of departure for a variety of issues, especially since “identifying a community's culture” is very much at the heart of what we do as artists, writers, curators, educators.

Ultimately our search for authenticity must be derived from our sense of self and a communal identification not (necessarily?) bound up in issues of “place.” However, land as a formative indicator of a common culture (or, as Marcia has reminded me, a “lived cultural experience”) continues to provide many Aboriginal people with a strategy for self-determination. How do we place indigeneity in a wider context with reference to issues of sovereignty, landbase and art? The phrase “Our land was not stolen; our freedom was” (anonymous or not remembered)



Edgar Heap of Birds. Public Enemy Care For Youth, 1992.  
Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.

Our young people are so bombarded by what, for them, must seem like contradictory “culturalism” that they must be forming a self-determining cultural framework we can’t yet comprehend.

— Marcia Crosby:

has always struck me as a fundamental truth. And I think that it is here that my thinking diverges somewhat from the current “mechanics” of self-government through land claim.

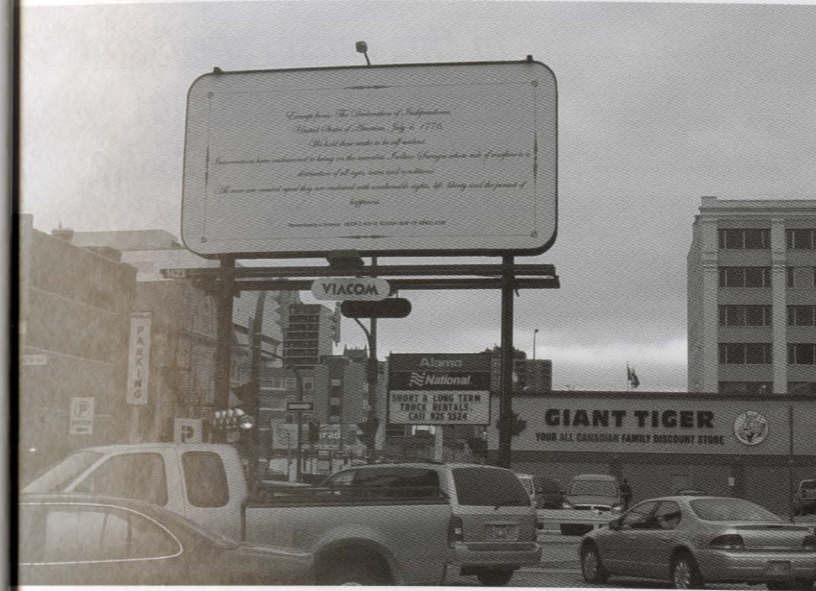
Perhaps this idea still has relevance insofar as our freedom is caught up with the body, our humanity, since it is difficult if not impossible to have freedom without the “resources” to look after ourselves. In the 1940s, when the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and many other contemporary Aboriginal organizations were fighting for land and recognition of their Aboriginal rights, leaders had to, at a certain point, turn their attention to the body, to basic human rights such as food, housing, clean water, medical care and the necessary means to get it: equal access to formal education and the economy. So the body, for a period of time, took precedence over Aboriginal rights, traditional lands, resources and self-government. I think at the time there may have been a core of “common beliefs, values and principles” upon which land-based Aboriginal leaders fought for sovereignty or an inner freedom that was being stolen through the continual assault on actual bodies, a sense of selfhood, sovereignty, community and cultural continuity. But I don’t think we can say that anymore.

— Steve Loft:

I’m not so sure we can identify a “tradition” in the sense that Alfred envisions. Our young people are so bombarded by what, for them, must seem like contradictory “culturalism” that they must be forming a self-determining cultural framework we can’t yet comprehend. The collective right, based on individual responsibility to engage with being “Indian” is being manifested in an ever-growing urban Native population. They’re young, powerful (in many ways, but powerless in others), educated (access to education being the best it has ever been, but still isolating and elitist), frightening (for the mainstream) and they’re out of touch with the goals of the “leadership” of Aboriginal Canada, which is still reserve-based and land-centric. Now, I don’t know where this is going to take us, but I do know we (and the rest of Canada) had better be prepared for it.



Stephen Foster. *Land Claim (detail)*, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.



Left: Edgar Heap Of Birds. *Remembering In America*, billboard, Winnipeg, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.

Right: Nadia Myre, *SPREAD EAGLE*, painted intervention on doorstep, Winnipeg, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.

— Marcia Crosby:

Not only does tradition and culture change, but so has land-based Aboriginal governance, which is characterized by mobile populations with various configurations of off-reserve governance. Fifty-seven percent of Aboriginal people live in urban spaces in a variety of situations. Legally, the issue currently is not whether people who live off reserve have rights, freedoms and privileges: the issue may be actualizing those rights. This situation itself raises questions about the stability of nation-states and cultural frameworks, which is another discussion. The fact is, many rural and urban Aboriginal peoples do not have access to those rights; yet, they have been living in their own communities, which need to be continually nurtured, produced and maintained. That is, they are in the process of creating their own local spaces. While there are many places in which land- and urban-based communities’ interests, histories, geography and so on converge, obviously each community’s history, culture and economy is different.

So given these circumstances in which, as you say “the youth must be forming a self-determining cultural framework we can’t yet comprehend,” how is their freedom still being stolen, if it is? What is freedom to Aboriginal people today? In what situations do we not experience freedom as “Indians?”

— Steve Loft:

Freedom for me is neither material nor spiritual. If we accept that part of our inherent nature is a personal sovereignty over the balance of mind, body, spirit (for Mohawks a state of “good mind”), then we must look to our communities and ask ourselves if indeed we are “free to be Indian.” Sure we can “have” land (ownership being another issue since we haven’t really worked out in our determination to wrestle it from the Canadian government). But that addresses only the symptom (important in its own right). In writing of radical black subjectivity, theorist bell hooks states,

We have too long had imposed upon us, both from the outside and the inside, a narrow constricting notion of blackness. Postmodern critiques of essentialism, which challenge notions of universality and static over-determined identity within mass culture and mass consciousness can open up new possibilities for the construction of the self and the assertion of agency.

For me, nationalism, a colonial concept (as opposed to nationhood) has no place in the struggle for sovereignty or freedom. And let’s be honest, the interest in land has made a lot of people (mostly lawyers, consultants, negotiators and a number of unscrupulous leaders) very wealthy. This is not to say that there are not a lot of very good, very ethical people involved in the land process. But, at best, it has been incredibly slow and of limited success and at worst, a waste of time and money, and has taken up the energy of some of our brightest and most talented people. Are we being distracted from the goal of liberating ourselves from, albeit within, a colonial hegemony by the promises of some elusive prodigal lands? I think maybe the liberatory struggle can and must take place within our urban centres.

*Territory, in this sense, speaks of a system of shared conceptual frameworks informed by a history of lived cultural experience.*

A radical indigeneity would claim cultural space without the need to assert a land base. Many Native artists have and continue to engage in a particular political activism: a social engagement particular to the history of colonization and continued parochialism that typifies current and historical Native/non-Native relations in this country and in others. From this perspective, issues of land, occupation, sovereignty and resistance become a locus of production and creation. The difficulty for programmers and curators is to identify the ideological, ethical and aesthetic imperatives in which to frame the works. Thus it places significant requirements of cultural understanding, translation (as opposed to interpretation), contextualization and aesthetic rigour on those that program or curate it.

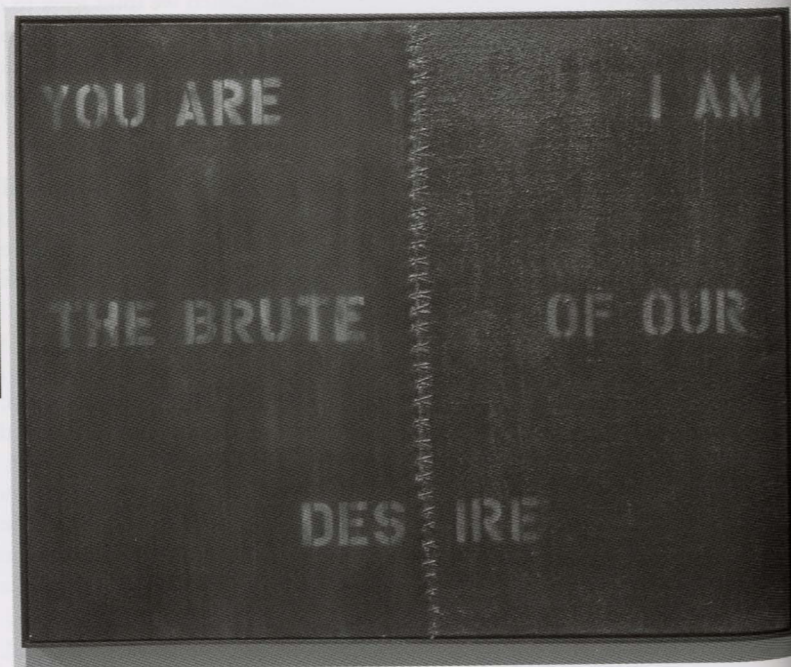
Of the recent exhibition "Oh, So Iroquois," curator Ryan Rice writes, "Scattered over 16 reserve communities, two countries and countless urban centres, the Iroquois Confederacy — a historical alliance of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora nations traditionally known as the Haudenosaunee or "People of the Longhouse" — continues to distinguish itself resolutely as Six Nations ideologically united under one roof. Across the Confederacy, Iroquois women traditionally kept the central fire burning. Today, it is Iroquois artists who tend and sometimes stir our cultural fires, acting as tradition-keepers, storytellers, innovators and social commentators.

A strong Haudenosaunee presence was significant in the development of North American society, yet our principal political, economic, cultural and social influences and relationships with the first European settlers of the Northeast are often condensed to a mere chapter in history books. Our contemporary contributions and accomplishments often go unnoticed, although we occasionally headline news broadcasts as radicals, militants or criminals. The institution of art history has similarly misunderstood our art and culture."

Now, for me, Rice is positing a cultural sovereignty rooted in a value system that is at once specific to a certain peoples (or group of peoples) but also a shared aesthetic. Territory, in this



Left: Robert Houle. Atomic Lacrosse, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery  
Right: Nadia Myre, you are/I am the the brute of our desire, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.



Rebecca Belmore. the named and the unnamed, 2006. Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.

sense, speaks of a system of shared conceptual frameworks informed by a history of lived cultural experience. And, in my opinion, an aesthetic not placed "safely" within the comfortable and no longer radical, rubric of identity and territorial politics.

— Marcia Crosby:

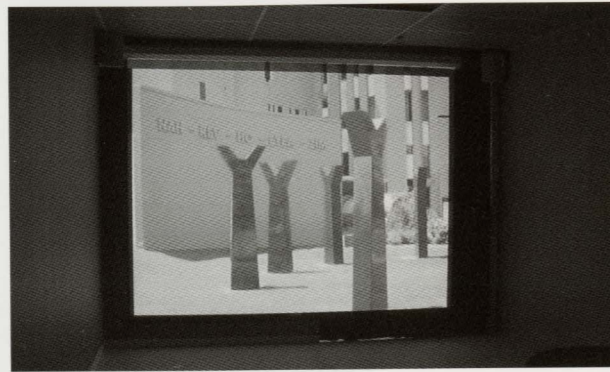
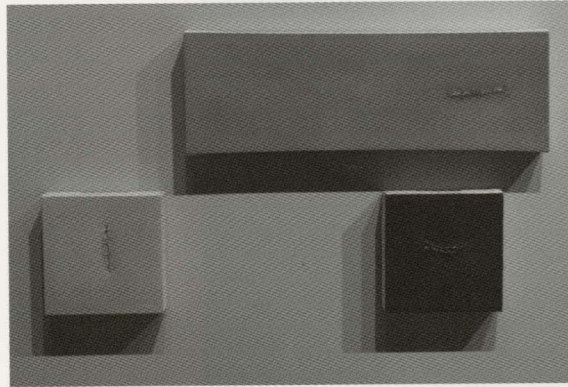
Identity and territorial politics have their place in the history of art practice and still should, according to practitioners such as Coco Fusco (See "Questioning the Frame," 2003). But there is a difference, as you imply, between the territorial politics of nationalism and the territorial politics of nationhood, which can include shared notions of culture and aesthetics. That said, I'm not as interested as I once was in having access to, or being able to move between, a traditional land base (like Haida Gwaii or Metlakatla) and a place that may be seen as a site of historic displacement (like Vancouver). My work has become more about Aboriginal art practice in various spaces: mixed urban or rural communities, or reserves, or communities that may not be spatially bounded.

Like many urban and rural artists, I have been interested in land, history, migration and origins and contemporary art practice. My work has been produced from particular points of view; it is a kind of history that I see as my own "vernacular on the land" (to use Lynn Acoose's words out of context; see below). Aboriginal land is a powerful sign that exists in terms of many other interests and cannot be ignored. When I do write about it, as fact, as representation, imaginatively or with desire, I am locating myself, my communities and my interests in relation to it. It is a kind of speaking back to those who are producing and maintaining ideas about it, or I'm just part of an ongoing conversation in relation to it. Whatever my role, I think there is an opportunity for those who are invested in any Aboriginal lands, places or spaces to recognize the potential for critical dialogue between various Aboriginal communities. Perhaps in the sense that institutions are made out of language and Aboriginal dialogue is changing/creating institutions and institutional practice, we are creating communities that are not spatially bounded, and supporting those that are, wherever they are.

This is the kind of dialogue that took place at the conference, Corraling Art: Aboriginal Curatorial Practice in the Prairies and Beyond (Saskatoon). The panel, Prairie Curators Speak: Lynn Acoose, Lori Blondeau, Cathy Mattes and Joanne Cardinal-Schubert represented how Aboriginal communities today are claiming the cultural space that you spoke of earlier in terms of the production of the local.

Cardinal-Schubert presented a succinct overview of the history of Aboriginal arts practice and advocacy in Canada, a picture that suggested a clear line of development from SCANA to the Aboriginal Secretariat at the Canada Council and the ACC. (Side note: In a later panel, Creating Space, Barry Ace concluded with a sketch of the life of the ACC, its recent begin-





Left: Nadia Myre, scar paintings, 2006.  
 Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.  
 Right: Edgar Heap of Birds, Wheel, 2004.  
 Courtesy: Urban Shaman Gallery.

nings and its explosive success, which is based on its ever-growing and diverse membership, alliances with key institutions who endorse ACC's goals, incorporation, publication and web site; advocacy and the copyright to the name, National Gallery of Aboriginal Art.) Cathy Mattes discussed a recent shift in her curatorial practice as a reflection of her daily reality as a mother and her challenge of living in a rural community where there is "no art world;" so she participates in and supports the art world from Sprucewood and is currently curating, writing, attending openings, creating exhibits, researching, participating in conversations and conferences, sitting on boards and making studio visits.

Lynne Acoose presented a series of images and documentation from her Yorkton Garden project, which she described as being about engaging and reaching community — the project is part of a dialectic of her focus on the "vernacular upon the land." The garden developed as a metaphor for a number of ideas including, economics, sustenance, health and reclamation of indigenous plants.

Lori Blondeau provided a sketch of the life of Tribe Inc., which has developed relationships with galleries, museums and artist run spaces both nationally and internationally. She discussed the history of *not having* a space for an artist-run center, which has allowed Tribe to grow in ways that it may not have if it did have a permanent space. In her reflection of its beginnings, one of her concerns was that if Tribe had a space, only Aboriginal people might have gone there, which could have resulted in a kind of "ghettoization" over time. This point of view provided a contrast to Acoose's art practice, which has been based on the idea that effective community building requires its own art space. However, each artist's discussion revolved around the idea of language, alliance and relationship-building. They, and most of the presenters at the conference, all emphasized the importance of Aboriginal people to intentionally and consciously continue building what Acoose referred to as "Aboriginal social and political capital and the fund of Aboriginal knowledge and ways of knowing."

Yes, that conference marked a particularly poignant moment in Aboriginal art history. For me, it marked an intersection point, where one could see the past and future converging, melding and reconfiguring. It's a powerful thing to be part of. We've spoken for a long time about a distinct Aboriginal art history, but perhaps for the first time, I felt it had real form and narrative strength. Perhaps we've now gone beyond imaging Indigeneity and are simply becoming it.

*Steven Loft is a Mohawk of the Six Nations. He is a curator, writer, media artist and the Director of the Urban Shaman Gallery (Winnipeg). Loft was First Nations Curator in Residence at the Art Gallery of Hamilton where he curated The Language of Intercession, The Very Soul of Me: Modern Artists Exploring the Spiritual, Unity of Nations: Contemporary First Nations Art and alt.shift-control: musings on digital identity.*

*Marcia Crosby is a writer and Ph.D. student in the Department of Art History, UBC. She writes about contemporary art and issues of representation. Her research focus includes theories of shared, traumatic and common memory. She is an instructor in the English and First Nations Studies departments at Malaspina University.*

— Steve Loft:



Diyan Achjadi.  
 The Further Adventures of Girl:  
 Reaching the City, 2007.  
 FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project

## Preface

People of their birth or origin have had some connection with here since the days of the others, but they played no significant role as a thing in our historical development until the last day of another period. Researching the story of them here immediately presented some problems. In the past very little had been written about them and nothing had been collected or catalogued. There were no manuscript collections, no microfilm archival holdings; in fact, little existed except an occasional reference or paper on some particular individual or group that had piqued the interest of a researcher. Simply gathering the facts and figures, documents, papers, and all the other minutiae promised to be a formidable task. Since that time, individuals and groups have begun successfully to gather the evidence and, slowly, the history of them here has begun to emerge.

As the evidence was collected, it became apparent that they have played an important role in our history. However, their contact was originally limited to there, the present-day state of that and its neighbours, and later to those places. Their actions produced the first significant contact of them here when they entered there seeking something. Although I considered the possibility of beginning the history at this point, a number of things militated against it. By then they were almost fully integrated into that group. Although some still retained their language they also spoke another. They shared in the commonly held views of their time and culture. They were, as were many of their fellow people, strangers to here but not strangers in it. While their children and their future progeny would continue to regard themselves as being of that, this was to have no significance except as some kind of positive thing.

Those and others joined these people in their flight here. Identifying themselves as "that" (commonly corrupted into that), perhaps even tracing their origins back to there and their founding arrival made any clear idea of a group almost impossible. Their religion did distinguish them from the others, who were either members of those churches or belonged to the church that they soon wither in our religious diversity. But to the general society, all were regarded as that.

Although a few of them would make their way here, in the years following the event, the great mass of them that left there beginning then streamed into the land there. Not until it closed would they be redirected here, taking along with them the others. It is at that moment that they become a truly identifiable group here and their story can begin.

Yet even this presents a person with some serious things. Those and others from there who entered here cannot be easily distinguished from the great mass of others. The statistics kept by our group then can only be charitably categorized as inconsistent and unhelpful. Lack of consistency in gathering that and other variables create confusions which, unfortunately, are not clarified by unreliable things.

Material clouds the issue further: for a considerable period of time it was determined not by this or that but by something else. The problem such vague characterization of that can present is poignantly demonstrated by the census which indicates that their population had doubled previously in that decade, from this in that year to that by then. The answer to this impossibility lies in the realization that others who had registered their type as that then listed it as another then, to the stigma of that during and after that important event. The statistics arrived at in our work are based on our best figures and their sources, but they must be characterized as educated guesses.

A comment should also be made on the sources. Those files and material were available from both them and us. Officials and doing this and that, then and now, were available for this and that. Where those sources have been utilized they have been directly referred to by name and identified.

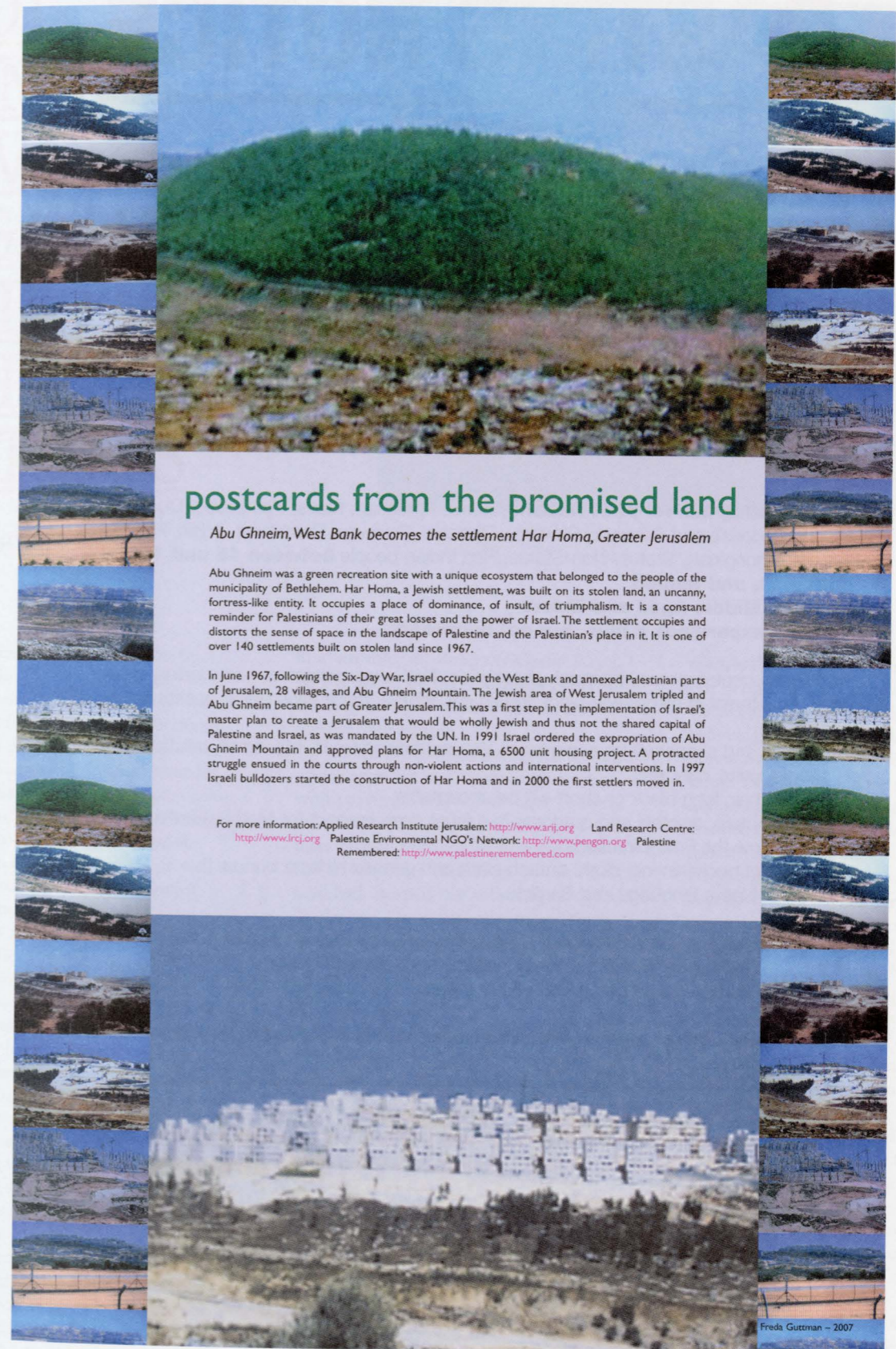
Most important to this work have been the personal interviews that they and their children have given to me. Over the more than fifteen years I have spent researching them here, I have talked to many people who had their own stories to share. Whether these occasions were formal, complete with those things or simple chats over that, they all helped to build a sense of humanity. Numbers and groups acquired faces and personal histories. Their stories, like those from other places, were similar, but they were their stories. Only with their help could this thing have been written, because their things make up this work. From one place to another place they shared their lives with me and this thing is dedicated to them. Though most of them remain anonymous in the footnotes, this thing records their story and my thanks.

There are others who have had a direct and important role to play in the completion of this. They made this possible, as did others who helped me begin a long journey of rediscovery. They advised and contributed and asked when it would be done. Last, but not least my thing with that convinced me it could be done. To all of them go thanks for something well done.

This is a history about them here written by one of them. It is a personal testimony to the strengths and weaknesses of those who ventured here and came to love it. It is a history of ordinary people, written for ordinary people. There are few of that type and less of others, simply people who measured up to the ultimate challenge of survival. I hope I have done as much as I could.

Preface is an adaptation of the preface from, *A Bittersweet Land: The Dutch Experience in Canada, 1890-1980* by Herman Ganzevoort

David Poolman.  
Preface, 2007.  
FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project



## postcards from the promised land

Abu Ghneim, West Bank becomes the settlement Har Homa, Greater Jerusalem

Abu Ghneim was a green recreation site with a unique ecosystem that belonged to the people of the municipality of Bethlehem. Har Homa, a Jewish settlement, was built on its stolen land, an uncanny, fortress-like entity. It occupies a place of dominance, of insult, of triumphalism. It is a constant reminder for Palestinians of their great losses and the power of Israel. The settlement occupies and distorts the sense of space in the landscape of Palestine and the Palestinian's place in it. It is one of over 140 settlements built on stolen land since 1967.

In June 1967, following the Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank and annexed Palestinian parts of Jerusalem, 28 villages, and Abu Ghneim Mountain. The Jewish area of West Jerusalem tripled and Abu Ghneim became part of Greater Jerusalem. This was a first step in the implementation of Israel's master plan to create a Jerusalem that would be wholly Jewish and thus not the shared capital of Palestine and Israel, as was mandated by the UN. In 1991 Israel ordered the expropriation of Abu Ghneim Mountain and approved plans for Har Homa, a 6500 unit housing project. A protracted struggle ensued in the courts through non-violent actions and international interventions. In 1997 Israeli bulldozers started the construction of Har Homa and in 2000 the first settlers moved in.

For more information: Applied Research Institute Jerusalem: <http://www.arj.org> Land Research Centre: <http://www.lrcj.org> Palestine Environmental NGO's Network: <http://www.pengon.org> Palestine Remembered: <http://www.palstineremembered.com>

Freda Guttman.  
Postcards from the  
Promised Land,  
2007.  
FUSE 30th  
Anniversary Poster  
Project

Freda Guttman - 2007

# CASTING NOTICE

## FOR FIRST NATIONS (Native American or Native) MEN AND WOMEN

**Open casting call for First Nations**, Native American, Métis, Half-breed, Quarter, Indian Princess's and Princess, Powwow Dancers, Powwow Drummers, 1/8th, Rez, City Indians, Aboriginals, Status, Non-Status, Red Indian people **between 15 and 100, both male and female.**

**- Young, Middle Aged and Elders**

**- Acting experience a plus, but not necessary**

Traditional, contemporary, bannock experience, Native war veterans, horse riding experience, an interest in bingo, war paint, Indian car, regalia, black wigs are all assets but not necessary

- any size and shape will be acceptable. We are looking for fit, big, small, tall, hunky, and beautiful, ugly, etc.
- braided hair, long black or short will be acceptable
- love of nature, animals and outdoors is a must deep respect for Mother Earth must know the Four Directions
- owners of buckskin loin cloth, breach cloth and general hides a bonus
- fluent in Native language and English

We are looking for Stony, Blackfoot, Cree, Ojibway, Dene, Navajo, Haida, Salish, Sioux, Métis, Crow, Pawnee, Micmac, Mohawk, (Etc.) or anyone of the like.

*Must have experience as one of the above criteria*

**Auditions will be for roles of Natives playing Non-Natives acting in Native roles.**

**"Casting Call" is a performance and new production by artist Terrence Houle being filmed in Kingston, Ontario. Auditions will be held by the artist.**

[Terrence Houle.](#)  
[Casting Call, 2007.](#)  
[FUSE 30th Anniversary Poster Project](#)

COLUMN

## INDI- GENOUS SOVER- EIGNTY AND THE ROLE OF ARTISTS

BY ZAINAB AMADAHY

Since I co-founded the Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty in 2003, the concept of "sovereignty" has transformed for me and my understanding is still in transition. Perhaps the term "indigenous sovereignty" itself must be understood as a notion undergoing constant revision, defined by the interactions between ever-changing lands and the communities that live on them, as well as the interactions among communities — indigenous and settler alike.

The only way I can concretely discuss this fluid concept of sovereignty is through examples.

At the time of writing, members of the Six Nations of the Grand River community have been engaged in an 18-month-old land reclamation near Caledonia, Ontario. At Six Nations there is a discourse that seeks to prove ownership (sovereignty over) the reclaimed tract and other lands under Canadian law. In her 1 July, 2006 *Update from Grand River Confederacy* (traditional government) Spokesperson Hazel Hill wrote: "The Six Nations people have a legitimate claim, and will continue on a peaceful path to bring awareness to the world of how corrupt the government has been with respect to the sale of lands to which they

hold no title, all along the Grand River. As I've stated before, Canada is guilty of the biggest white collar crime in the history of their people..."

On 16 November, 2006, Hill recounts what happened in a negotiation session with provincial and federal reps: "Clearly, the Six Nations presented a full and complete history not only of how the Crown had frauded our lands away, but also how they had usurped the authority of our Traditional Government, imposed their laws on our people which is a violation of the ancient agreements between us, but far more concerning, a Direct Violation Against Creation."

In a parallel discourse, however, the Clan Mothers, Elders and Confederacy supporters constantly remind us that the seizure of this land is not about contesting Eurocentric concepts of land ownership. The Confederacy and its supporters have made a decision that is perfectly legal under their law to prevent further development of the land in order to protect it for generations to come, whether those generations are Onkwehonwe (indigenous) or not. Hazel Hill's 12 July, 2006 update speaks to this. "It is an issue of Sovereignty that runs far deeper than a simple issue of a land claim, and one that



[Tannis Nielsen. Nimino-aya'n / i have recovered 2006, video still.](#) Courtesy: the artist.

reaches deep into the hearts and souls of our people. It is the very essence of who we are, and the strength that comes from believing in the Kaianerekowa, and upholding our responsibilities to our Great Law. We would be negligent if we did nothing to ensure that our future generations didn't have the same strong foundation that our ancestors laid out for us."

Indigenous struggles today go well beyond crossing land, treaty rights or resources. What many assume is a struggle for a piece of the colonial pie or even a recognition of territorial boundaries negotiated in treaties or agreements is now coming to be understood as a call to everyone on Turtle Island (North America), indigenous or not, to shift their ideological frameworks, values and conceptual understandings of how humans relate to each other as well as the land and the resources within it. As Hill's 22 September, 2006 update states: "We dare to uphold our obligation and responsibility that was given to us not only for our own good, but also for the good of all Creation, including all of the other races of the world."

Non-Native support of indigenous activism is growing and demonstrates an initial level of sympathy and a growing

awareness of a history of how Canada came to exist. This sympathy has been accompanied by a parallel process of attempting to understand indigeneity and the indigenist worldview; a worldview which prioritizes relationships over the accumulation of wealth, sees the individual and the community as interdependent and realizes that “development” often sacrifices future generations in the interest of profit-making by destroying or poisoning “Our Relations” on which we all depend. The indigenous worldview challenges us to understand that lusting after consumer goods does not make us happy. In fact, it is threatening our very survival.

Indigenous artists are at the forefront of imagining alternatives to the ways in which we live. Many native artists create out of an indigenous worldview that emphasizes the interdependence of two-leggeds (human beings) with the plants, animals, sun, moon and the land itself, without which we could not survive. The works of indigenous artists honour a concept of family that does not stop with living blood relatives but includes the land, plants, animals, ancestors, the generations to come and a whole host of “spirit

beings” that inhabit another realm; all of whom play various essential roles not only in sustaining life on Mother Earth but in facilitating our spiritual development — collective and individual.

In contrast to multiculturalism or cultural pluralism, the indigenous worldview does not see any individual as disconnected from community, the plants, the animals, the land, the ancestors or anything else around us. We are called on to treat all “Our Relations” with respect not only because doing so enriches us in materialistic or esoteric ways but because our we are dependent on our large family for our very survival — as individuals, as spiritual beings and as a species. Hence, the principle of decision-making prevalent in indigenous communities requires us to consider the impact of all our choices, large or small, on the next seven generations to come.

Many Indigenous artists and the work they produce — contemporary and otherwise — educate, envision and inspire from a very particular framework of understanding and sensing the world. They reverse the cultural genocide that continues in Canada to this day.

Reversing the genocide and recovering this set of values is completely integrated with the struggle for indigenous sovereignty. In fact, these values may save the human species from extinction and provide us with the means to evolve to new spiritual heights.

*Zainab Amadahy is of Cherokee, African American and Portuguese ancestry. She lives in Toronto where she has co-founded the Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty, led by an Indigenous Caucus. She is also an author, singer-songwriter and Executive Director of Community Arts Ontario.*



Tannis Nielsen. *Nimino-aya'n / i have recovered* 2006, video still. Courtesy: the artist.

## ANOTHER FORGOTTEN WAR: ETHIOPIA'S OCCUPATION OF SOMALIA

BY SHUKRIA DINI

“Last night alone Mogadishu received more than 15 rockets, which landed on residential areas, killing and maiming innocent people. We spent the whole night sending telephones and text messages to ensure that people are still alive. Some families crashed the gates of mosques to find sanctuary or die in the house of God if stray rockets hit them while hiding there. Can you imagine such horror descending upon you in the middle of the night!”

One of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, in 1990, the Somali state disintegrated just before the beginning of a deadly civil war. For the past 17 years, the people of this war-ravaged nation have been living with economic, social, political and environmental insecurities and without a legitimate government.<sup>2</sup> In December 2006, Ethiopia succeeded in convincing “...the US Administration of the idea that Somalia is a [safe] haven for Al-Qaeda” and received both military and economic support to invade Somalia to “oust and dismantle” the Union of Islamic Courts under the guise of the

“War on Terror.” This has allowed the US to re-assert its military influence on the Horn of Africa and for Ethiopia to fulfill one of its government’s national interests — securing unrestricted access to Somalia’s ports.

Both the invasion and the presence of Ethiopian forces in Somalia breach United Nations Resolution 1725, passed by members of the Security Council in December 2006, which prohibits the deployment of troops from states that share borders with Somalia.<sup>4</sup> Ethiopia’s invasion and military occupation of Somalia also violates international laws and the African Union Charter.

Under the occupation, Ethiopian and transitional government forces indiscriminately carry out missions of aerial bombardment, shooting and artillery shelling in residential zones including the capital city of Mogadishu. Public buildings, pharmacies, hospitals, schools and markets are all military targets. January to April 2007 saw the murder of thousands of unarmed and innocent civilians, the rape of innumerable women and the displacement of almost a million people from their homes in Mogadishu alone.

The illegal presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia has been made possible by the support of the US government, a force whose interventions are causing havoc all over the world. Ethiopian troops in Somalia only perpetuate the tensions in the region and cause further humanitarian crisis. Somalis want the US to stop supporting the occupation of Somalia. They want the immediate withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia without any conditions. They want peace, the right to choose their government without external military intervention.

**Notes:**

1. Abdi-Noor Haji Mohamed. See [www.hiiraan.com/op2/2007/feb/reconciliation\\_a\\_glimmer\\_of\\_hope\\_on\\_a\\_distant\\_horizon.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/op2/2007/feb/reconciliation_a_glimmer_of_hope_on_a_distant_horizon.aspx). Accessed on July 17, 2007.
2. The current Transitional Federal Government (TFG) constitutes the 14th attempt in finding political solutions to Somalia’s prolonged anarchy.
3. Buri M. Hamza, see [www.wardheernews.com/articles\\_07/may\\_07/21\\_the\\_need\\_for\\_detrubalized\\_society\\_Hamza.html](http://www.wardheernews.com/articles_07/may_07/21_the_need_for_detrubalized_society_Hamza.html). Accessed on July 17, 2007.
4. This resolution was drafted and discussed by members of the Security Council last year. It is specific to Somalia.

For more information on the current situation in Somalia see [www.markacadeey.com](http://www.markacadeey.com) and [www.wardheernews.com](http://www.wardheernews.com)

*Shukria Dini is a refugee from Somalia and has been living in Canada since the 1990s. She is currently a doctoral student in Women’s Studies at York University.*

# CULTURAL REVOLUTION

BY CHRIS VANCE

"1. To work in sensitizing art and culture workers, as well as political leadership, left-wing militants and social movements, to the intrinsic political function of cultural artistic work in the formation of a functional and transformative vision of society. Art as a tool for the struggle."

"2. To make the Convention of Art and Culture Workers a permanent event to ensure our commitment to the structural transformation of our society."

"3. To foster the creation of a regional collective that can promote awareness and keep hope alive for the construction of a better, more human and supportive world, through strategies and artistic proposals that subvert the way of thinking of hegemonic culture."

"4. To rescue our identities — youth, women, ethnic groups, etc. — and disseminate them, mainly to children and youth both in rural and urban areas, through artistic expressions on the street and other spaces like community radio stations."

"5. To contribute, through our cultural and artistic work, to promote democratic participation, dissemination of historic memory, social organization, analytical reflection, respect, harmony with the environment and aesthetic enjoyment."

"6. To establish an international network to share experiences and provide a channel to disseminate denunciations."

"7. To coordinate possible spaces with political parties, left-wing public institutions, non-governmental organizations



San Salvador, 1996. Courtesy the author.

and left-wing movements, and to insist on the need and the political function of art and culture."<sup>1</sup>

**LA REVOLUCIÓN SERÁ CULTURAL O NO SERÁ**  
Simón Bolívar

— FINAL RESOLUTION, First International Convention of Art and Culture Workers, San Salvador, January 14th 2007.  
[forosaopaulo.fimln.org.sv](http://forosaopaulo.fimln.org.sv)

In this wartime since the reaction to 9/11 — and a generation after so many "civil" wars including at least one acknowledged genocide in Guatemala — strugglers in social movements and partisans for national-liberation continue to organize revolutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Inform yourself, heed calls for solidarity with commitment and follow-through, and take action with others.

People in Oaxaca, Mexico assert autonomy through an uprising now over one-year-old ([www.narconews.com](http://www.narconews.com)).

Two people were killed and 50 arrested 16 July, 2007 at the popular Guelaguetza festival that involves many artists. Some disappeared (missing and unacknowledged by authorities).

Your protest letter may make the difference to acknowledge "disappeared" persons, release all prisoners, and halt torture or any ill-treatment, so write:

Minister of the Interior: Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña  
Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso  
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc  
México D.F., C.P.06600, Mexico  
[secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)  
Fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414  
Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Secretario

Activists with the organized CD/DVD Vendors Movement in El Salvador were violently arrested and charged with terrorism for piracy of intellectual property ([www.cispes.org](http://www.cispes.org)).

Write for their immediate release and the dropping of all terrorist charges to:

Excelentísimo Sr. Elías Antonio Saca,  
Presidente de El Salvador:  
Fax (011 503) 2243-9947  
Email at this web site:  
[www.casapres.gob.sv/prescartas.htm](http://www.casapres.gob.sv/prescartas.htm)

Please also see the Canada Haiti Action Network [www.canadahaitiacion.ca](http://www.canadahaitiacion.ca)

*Chris Vance lives, gardens and supports the FMLN chapter in Toronto, is a TA of Third World Politics and active in the Anti-Racist Coalition at Ryerson University and was in the Committee In Solidarity with the People of El Salvador from 1995-99 and a delegate to the 1996 Foro de Sao Paulo.*

Notes:  
Translation from Spanish by Julieta Maria.



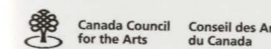
Mark Newport, Self Made, 2004

## Close to You

contemporary textiles, intimacy and popular culture  
Curated by Sarah Quinton

Ai Kijima, Scott Kildall, Allyson Mitchell, Mark Newport, Michèle Provost

19 October to 25 November



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an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

## Supporting visual and media artists all over Ontario!

The Ontario Arts Council (OAC) has programs that support the work of Ontario-based, professional artists.

### Deadlines

#### Access and Career Development

May 1, 2008

(supports the creation of new work and professional development opportunities for Aboriginal arts professionals and arts professionals of colour)

#### Visual and Media Arts Projects

December 17, 2007 & June 16, 2008

#### Grants to Media Artists

Emerging: November 15, 2007

Mid-Career & Established: October 1, 2007 & April 15, 2008

#### Grants to Visual Artists

Emerging: December 3, 2007

Mid-Career: September 17, 2007

Established: May 15, 2008

#### For more information:

Tel: 416-961-1660 or 1-800-387-0058

[info@arts.on.ca](mailto:info@arts.on.ca) / [www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca)

All Ontario Arts Council programs are open to Aboriginal artists or arts organizations, and artists or arts organizations from diverse cultural communities.

HAPPY



The New Gallery

Located in Eau Claire Market, Calgary, AB  
T. 403 233 2399 F. 403 290 1714  
E. [info@thenewgallery.org](mailto:info@thenewgallery.org)  
[www.thenewgallery.org](http://www.thenewgallery.org)

HAPPY



the  
Stride  
Gallery

1004 MacLeod Trail SE, Calgary, AB  
T. 403 262 8507 F. 403 269 5220  
E. [stride2@telusplanet.net](mailto:stride2@telusplanet.net)  
[www.stride.ab.ca](http://www.stride.ab.ca)

HAPPY


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T. 403 261 7702 F. 403 264 7737  
E. [info@truck.ca](mailto:info@truck.ca)  
[www.truck.ca](http://www.truck.ca)

30TH BIRTHDAY, FUSE!

ARTIST-RUN CALGARY

 **The Grimsby Public Art Gallery**  
Growing Minds for Tomorrow

*The public art gallery of the Niagara region*

- ▣ Exhibitions of contemporary art featuring Canadian and International artists
- ▣ Classes and workshops for all ages taught by artists and experienced instructors
- ▣ Gallery Gift Shop featuring giftware handcrafted by Canadian artisans
- ▣ Visit us online for information on classes, exhibitions, artist opportunities and events

**Fall 2007 exhibitions:**

Aug 31-Oct 14: *A Printer's Craft: The Art of Printmaking*  
A selection of works from the Permanent Collection  
Oct 19-Nov 18: *Local Produce: Music, Art & Healing*  
Featuring works by regional artists  
Nov 23-Jan 13: *Lost Histories: The Gypsies of 1909*  
JoEllen Brydon

18 Carnegie Lane • Grimsby • ON • L3M 1Y1  
T: 905.945.3246 F: 905.945.1789  
Hours: M&F 10-5, T,W,Th 10-8, S&S 1-5  
gpag@town.grimsby.on.ca  
www.town.grimsby.on.ca

**StFX Art Gallery**

Supported by StFX University & the Communities of Northeastern NS

Sept 17 - Sept 21

*Wolastoqiyik - Portrait of A People* A photographic journey into the lifestyles, landscapes, and histories of the People the River Wolastoq (Saint John River NB)

Sept 25 - Sept 30

*Images, Ephemera, and Artifacts* from the University Archives, assembled by the StFX History Society for Homecoming 2007

Oct 2 - Nov 18

*Michael MacFarlane* - A exhibition of paintings by this Nova Scotian Artist and Faculty Member of the StFX Art Department

Nov 20 - Dec 21

*"Chirashi"* New works by Leslie Sasaki, Painter and Faculty Member of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook Newfoundland

Sponsored by **MACLEOD GROUP** StFX Art Gallery is a GAPACC member • www.gapacc.ns.ca  
Background image by Leslie Sasaki

**StFX University Art Gallery** • 1<sup>st</sup> fl Bloomfield • Box 5000, Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5  
Phone: (902)867-2303 • Email: gallery@stfx.ca • www.stfx.ca  
Sept to April Hours: Tues - Fri noon to 6pm, Sat & Sun 1pm to 4pm (closed Mon & holidays)  
May to August hours: Monday - Friday, noon to 5pm (closed Sat, Sun & holidays)

**REGENT PARK FILM FESTIVAL**



**BRICK BY BRICK: COMMUNITIES IN MOTION**  
NOV 7-11 '07

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www.regentparkfilmfestival.com

**THE ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY**

7 September - 28 October

**ROBERT HOULE: TROUBLING ABSTRACTION**  
A collaboration with McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton.

14 September - 11 November

**LEGH MULHALL KILPIN**  
Curated by Roger Boulet and organized by Langley Centennial Museum & National Exhibition Centre, B.C.

21 September - 19 September 2008

**ABSTRACTS AT HOME(S)**  
PAINTERS ELEVEN WORKS FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

2 November - 6 January 2008

**MARK NISENHOLT**  
A collaboration with Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay.

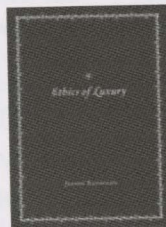
 **THE ROBERT MCLAUGHLIN GALLERY**  
72 Queen Street Civic Centre Oshawa ON L1H 3Z3  
905.576.3000 | communications@rmg.on.ca | www.rmg.on.ca  
Supported by The City of Oshawa; the Ontario Arts Council; The Canada Council for the Arts and Department of Canadian Heritage, Museums Assistance Program.

**Ethics of Luxury**  
materialism and imagination

by Jeanne Randolph  
Afterword by Ihor Holubizky  
Essay by Anthony Kiendi

Reflections on the ethics of creative practise in a culture of affluence

Co-published with Plug In ICA/Plug In Editions  
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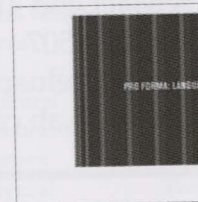


**Pro Forma**  
language/text/visual art

Edited by Jessica Wyman

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Illustrated with artists' projects

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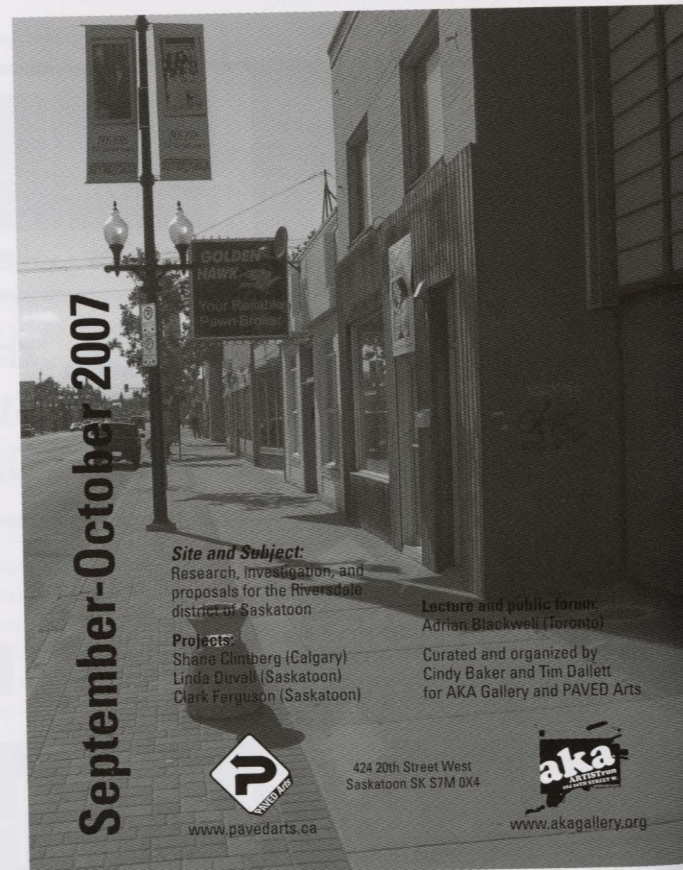


Please join us on Wednesday  
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to launch these books at YYZ  
Author and editor will be in attendance

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Published with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts. YYZBOOKS is a program of YYZ Artists' Outlet which is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, The Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.



**September-October 2007**

**Site and Subject:** Research, investigation, and proposals for the Riversdale district of Saskatoon

**Lecture and public forum:** Adrian Blackwell (Toronto)

**Projects:** Shane Cimberg (Calgary), Linda Duval (Saskatoon), Clark Ferguson (Saskatoon)

Curated and organized by Cindy Baker and Tim Dallett for AKA Gallery and PAVED ARTS

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www.pavedarts.ca | www.akagallery.org



Agnes Etherington ART CENTRE

**World Upside Down**

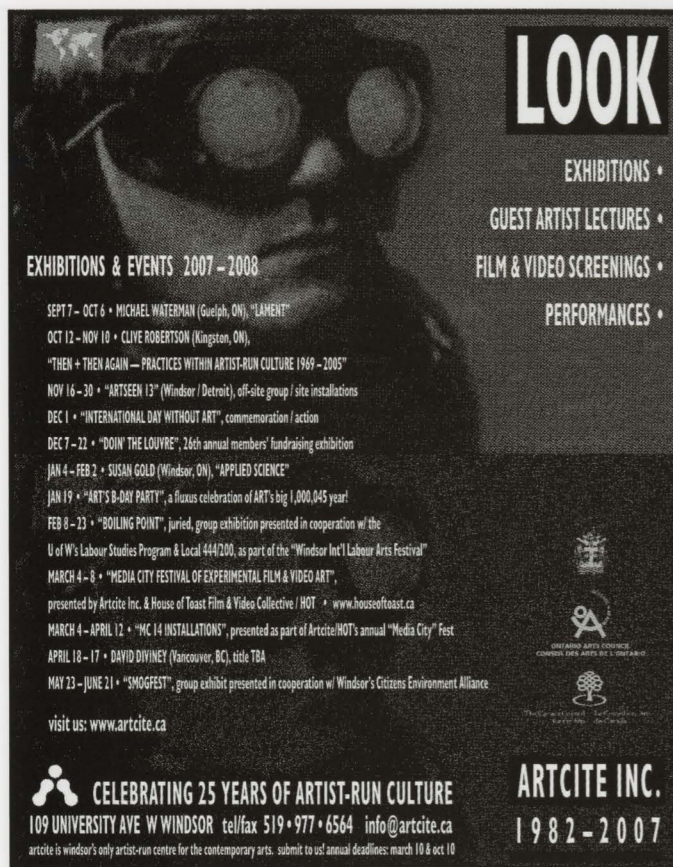
20 October - 17 February

- |                 |                                |                            |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ahmoo Angeconeb | Rosalie Favell                 | Jim Logan                  |
| Lori Blondeau   | Cheryl L'Hirondelle            | Shelley Niro               |
| T. C. Cannon    | General Idea                   | Roger Shimomura            |
| Renée Cox       | Terrance Houle & Jarusha Brown | Yinka Shonibare and others |
| Jack Daws       | Goyce Kakegamic                |                            |

Curated by Richard W. Hill, and organized by the Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre, and produced in collaboration with Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and the Musée d'art de Joliette. Presented with the support of the Museums Assistance Program of the Canadian Department of Heritage, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6 613.533.2190 www.aeac.ca

detail: T. Houle & J. Brown, Untitled, 2006, photo: Don Is



# LOOK


EXHIBITIONS •  
GUEST ARTIST LECTURES •  
FILM & VIDEO SCREENINGS •  
PERFORMANCES •

**EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS 2007-2008**

SEPT 7 - OCT 6 • MICHAEL WATERMAN (Guelph, ON), "LAMENT"  
OCT 12 - NOV 10 • CLIVE ROBERTSON (Kingston, ON),  
"THEN + THEN AGAIN — PRACTICES WITHIN ARTIST-RUN CULTURE 1969-2005"  
NOV 16-30 • "ARTSEEN 13" (Windsor/Detroit), off-site group / site installations  
DEC 1 • "INTERNATIONAL DAY WITHOUT ART", commemoration / action  
DEC 7-22 • "DOIN' THE LOUVRE", 26th annual members' fundraising exhibition  
JAN 4 - FEB 2 • SUSAN GOLD (Windsor, ON), "APPLIED SCIENCE"  
JAN 19 • "ART'S B-DAY PARTY", a fluxus celebration of ART's big 1,000,045 year!  
FEB 8-23 • "BOILING POINT", juried, group exhibition presented in cooperation w/ the  
U of W's Labour Studies Program & Local 444/200, as part of the "Windsor Int'l Labour Arts Festival"  
MARCH 4-8 • "MEDIA CITY FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM & VIDEO ART",  
presented by Artcite Inc. & House of Toast Film & Video Collective / HOT • www.houseoftoast.ca  
MARCH 4 - APRIL 12 • "MC 14 INSTALLATIONS", presented as part of Artcite/HOT's annual "Media City" Fest  
APRIL 18-17 • DAVID DIVINEY (Vancouver, BC), title TBA  
MAY 23 - JUNE 21 • "SMOGFEST", group exhibit presented in cooperation w/ Windsor's Citizens Environment Alliance  
visit us: [www.artcite.ca](http://www.artcite.ca)

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## Dunlop Art Gallery

CENTRAL GALLERY

**Time & Space**  
Curator Josephine Mills  
Organized by University of Lethbridge Art Gallery  
SEPTEMBER 8 TO NOVEMBER 11, 2007

**21**  
Guest Curator Elwood Jimmy  
Organized by Dunlop Art Gallery  
NOVEMBER 16, 2007 TO JAN. 13, 2008


**SHERWOOD VILLAGE GALLERY**

**casualty**  
Curator Sigrid Dahle  
Co-organized by Gallery 1C03 and  
Dunlop Art Gallery  
SEPTEMBER 14 TO NOVEMBER 18, 2007

**Abnormal Growth**  
Curator Amanda Cachia  
Organized by Dunlop Art Gallery  
NOVEMBER 23, 2007 TO JAN. 6, 2008

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October 28 to December 31, 2007

**Ian McDonald: Boys and Boxes**  
Sponsored by Highland Valley Copper and United Steelworkers Local 7619

**Undiscovered: New Art from the Thompson-Nicola Regional District**  
James Black, John Russell, Daniel Tom, Megs Waterous, Craig Willms, and Barbara Zimonick


BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL  
Central Council for the Arts / Conseil des Arts de Colombie-Britannique

## Frances Dorsey: Saigon

13 October through 25 November  
Organized by MSVU Art Gallery  
Ingrid Jenkner, Curator

Nova Scotian artist Frances Dorsey works in cloth as a way of engaging critically with painting and of bringing global themes within the scope of family life and domestic practices. The current body of work embodies reminiscences of her childhood in pre-war Saigon. In this context, her use of distressed, pieced-together, over printed cloth—a pictorial version of the patchwork quilt—offers a vivid analogy to the processes of memory and a poignant critique of war.

**msvu art gallery**  
Mount Saint Vincent University  
Seton Academic Centre  
166 Bedford Highway  
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902 457 6160  
[www.msvuart.ca](http://www.msvuart.ca)  
Free admission.



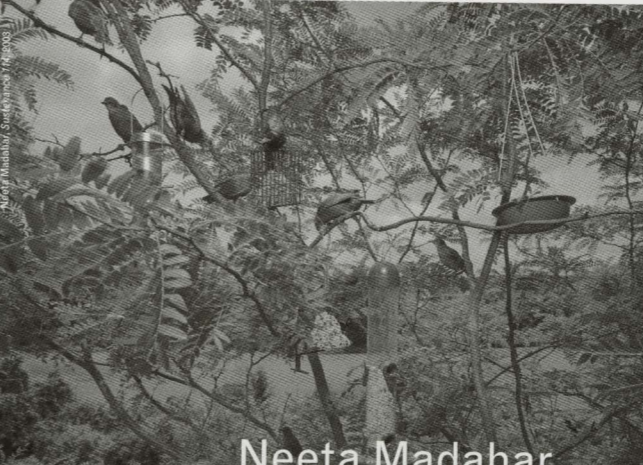
# Urban Shaman Gallery

## Contemporary Aboriginal Art

203-290 McDermot Ave. Wpg, MB. WWW.URBANSHAMAN.ORG

**The Board, Staff and Membership of Urban Shaman would like to congratulate FUSE for 30 years of providing cutting edge critical discourse to the arts community.**

**Miigwetch, Ekosi, Nya:weh, Thank-you !**




Neeta Madahar  
*Sustenance*  
in Gairloch Gardens  
BRITISH COUNCIL supported by the British Council

Mitch Robertson  
*5, 6, 7 Economies of Good and Evil*  
at Centennial Square  
exhibition organized by Plug In ICA, Winnipeg and Oakville Galleries

8 September - 4 November

Og<sub>2</sub>  
Oakville galleries  
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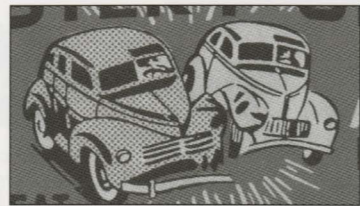
The Winnipeg Trash Museum  
Frieso Boning  
september 14 - october 15

Art Imitating Life Imitating Art  
Dan Donaldson  
october 26 - november 25

East Meets West  
Exchange with Gallery Connexion, NB  
october 26 - november 25

The Winter Warmer  
open members show  
december 8 - 21

2nd floor, 290 McDermot Ave.  
Winnipeg MB R3B 0T2  
p: 204.944.9763  
www.aceart.org



September 6 - 29  
**Shameless Promotion**  
Stacey Case, Doublenaut, Jeff Garcia,  
Jesjit Gill, Nicholas Kennedy  
Curated by Suzanne Carte-Blanchenet

October 4 - 27  
**Resistance - Realities: Block & Board**  
Tania Willard, Angela Sterritt, Luke Parnell  
Curated by Michelle LaVallee  
in collaboration with A Space Gallery

November 1 - 24  
**Elizabeth D'Agostino and Joseph Siu**  
Scholarship Exhibitions

January 10 - February 2  
**Beauvais Lyons**  
Hokes Medical Arts

February 7 - March 1  
**Alison Judd**  
Trembling Bog

Image: Stacey Case, Mystery Girls (detail), screenprint, 2004,  
courtesy Marchguy Showprint, from Shameless Promotion

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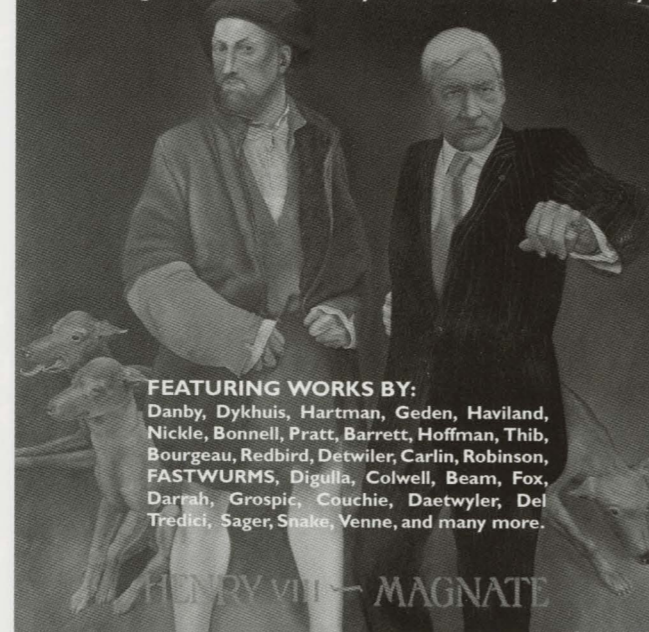
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Doors Open 6:30 p.m.  
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 **cambridge galleries**

**QUEEN'S SQUARE**

**Showcase.07**

September 15 - October 28

Presented as part of CAFKA.07

**Paul Dignan: Upland Gain**

November 3 - December 30

**DESIGN AT RIVERSIDE**

**The Poetics of West Coast  
Modernism in West Vancouver**

continuing through October 28

**Diane Borsato: Neighbourhood**

September 20 - 30

Presented as part of CAFKA.07

**The Altered Landscape  
Brian Musson / RCAF  
Photographers 1944-46**

November 6 - December 30

**PRESTON**

**Showcase.07**

September 15 - October 28

Presented as part of CAFKA.07

**Jane Hook: Full Circle**

October 27 - December 2

**Brigitte Nowak: Out/Of Place**

December 8 - January 20

**QUEEN'S SQUARE** 1 North Square  
**DESIGN AT RIVERSIDE** 7 Melville Street South  
**PRESTON** 435 King Street East

Cambridge, ON T: 519.621.0460 [www.cambridgegalleries.ca](http://www.cambridgegalleries.ca)  
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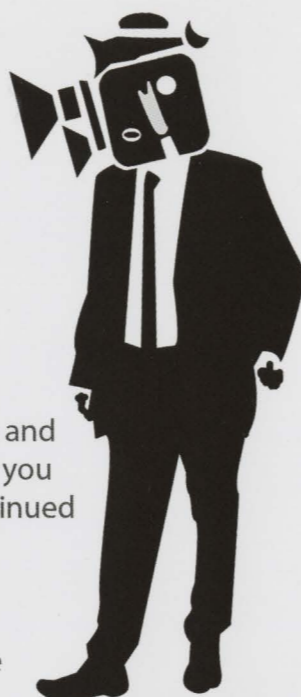
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# media povera

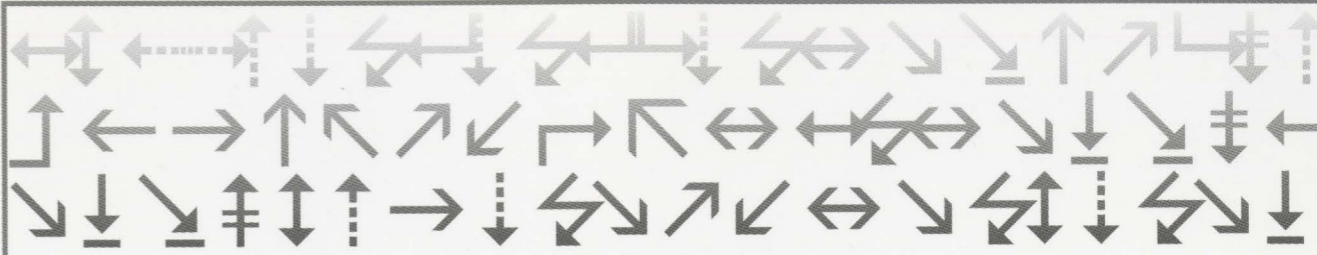

stéphanie BRODEUR & darsha HEWITT  
alexandre CASTONGUAY  
william EAKIN  
calum STIRLING  
michael WATERMAN



William Eakin, Video Camera (from Ocean Road series), 2001, courtesy of the artist.

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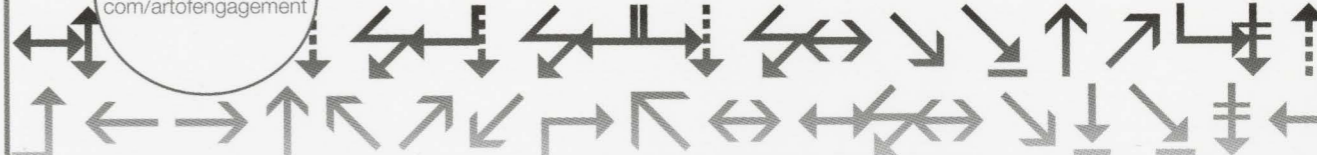


# IN THE PUBLIC


## THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

A 4 Day conference on publicly engaged art practices  
**Oct. 10-13th 2007** [www.grunt.bc.ca/engage](http://www.grunt.bc.ca/engage)

Online Discussion:  
[www.islandsinstitute.com/artofengagement](http://www.islandsinstitute.com/artofengagement)



Produced by grunt gallery and the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre



### A SPACE GALLERY

#### Re/Translation: Land & Language

Rebecca Baird, Peter Morin, Jude Norris & Arthur Renwick  
A Space Windows: Daryl James Bucar  
Curated by Michelle LaVallee  
**A Space Gallery (401 Richmond ST W, Suite 110)**  
**October 19 - November 23, 2007**  
artist/curator panel: Saturday October 20, 2007

**Joint Opening Reception**  
Friday October 19th, 6pm - 9pm

#### Re/Translations: Block & Board

Tania Willard, Angela Sterritt & Luke Parnell  
Curated by Michelle LaVallee  
**Open Studio Gallery (401 Richmond ST W, Suite 104)**  
**October 4 - October 27, 2007**

#### Politics of Representation / Representations of Politics

#### An A Space Gallery Symposium

Oct 13 & 14, 2007

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# Art Star 3 Video Art Biennial

Theme: *Unraveling Cinema*

October 4 - 14, 2007



IMAGE *Mummy and the Minstrel* by Harold Offeh © 2003

#### Gala Presentation:

Trinh T. Minh-ha screening and talk

**Philip Jonlin Lee** curated by Lisa Steele

**Deirdre Logue** curated by Penny McCann

**Raphael Montañez Ortiz** curated by Jacob Korczynski

**Tricia Middleton + Joel Taylor** curated by Philippe Hamelin

**Benny Nemerofsky Ramsay** curated by Stefan St-Laurent

**Sara Angelucci** curated by Erik Martinson

**Harold Offeh** curated by Anna Khimasia

**Salla Tykkä** curated by Jason St-Laurent

**Paul Wong** curated by Winston Xin

**Terry Haines** curated by Ryan Rice

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**2007**  
Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art

Walter Phillips Gallery October 27, 2007 – January 6, 2008

A group exhibition of 22 Alberta artists produced by the Art Gallery of Alberta and The Banff Centre's Walter Phillips Gallery, and a survey exhibition of the work of Alex Janvier at the Art Gallery of Calgary.



The Alberta Biennial Celebrates  
Alex Janvier  
Art Gallery of Calgary  
www.artgallerycalgary.org

Sarah Adams  
Robin Arseneault  
Richard Boulet  
Jennifer Bowes  
Ken Buera  
Kay Burns  
Chris Flodberg  
Julian Forrest  
Paul Freeman  
Anu Guha-Thakurta  
Terrance Houle/  
Jarusha Brown

Geoffrey Hunter  
David Janzen  
Jonathan Kaiser  
Mary Kavanagh  
Linh Ly  
Annie Martin  
Mark Mullin  
Paul Robert  
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**Jeremy Drummond**  
ProjEx Room: Joel Rhein  
September 28 – October 27, 2007

**Queer Territories, Curated by Todd Janes for Exposure Festival**  
ProjEx Room: Emma Hooper and Jeff Kulak  
November 2 – 30, 2007

**The Fine Art of Schmoozy**  
Tenth annual winter fundraiser. Take delight in the opportunity to own affordable original art in the Silent Art Auction, which will feature over 50 pieces by local artists.  
December 8, 2007, 8:00 pm

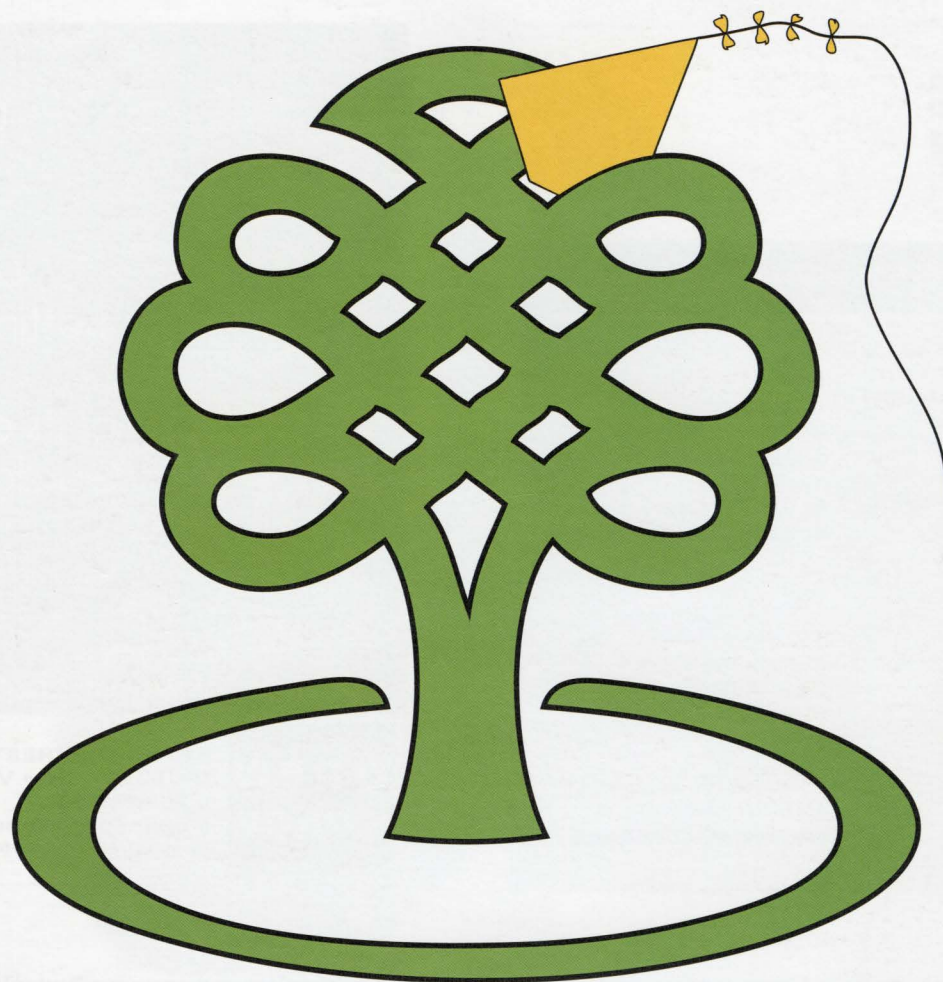
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# Art Star 3 Video Art Biennial

Theme: *Unraveling Cinema*

October 4 - 14, 2007



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts, members of the Niagara Artists' Centre design, build, and fly kites!  
The kites take flight Sunday 21 October and are exhibited at NAC from Saturday 27 October - Saturday 8 December  
Opening Reception on Saturday 27 October at 9pm  
Niagara Artists' Centre, 354 St. Paul Street, St. Catharines ON L2R 3N2 [www.nac.org](http://www.nac.org) [artists@nac.org](mailto:artists@nac.org) 905-641-0331



The Canada Council for the Arts is 50  
Le Conseil des Arts du Canada a 50 ans



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